The Righteous Give Thanks

Luke 17:11-19

I. Introduction:

A. First National Thanksgiving Proclamation

1. "Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; Whereas, both the houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceable to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness!"

2. "Now therefore, I do recommend next, to be devoted by the people of the states to the service of that great and glorious being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be, that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country."

3. George Washington, 1779

B. Our Heavenly Father truly is the source of all that is good in our world. How thankful we should be.

II. The attitudes of thankfulness.

A. Words are very important. They make or break us.

1. I once heard, and I believe it, that the three sweetest words in the English language are: "I love you."

2. Likewise, the two sweetest words are said to be, "Thank you."

B. "Thank you!" There is something unique about these words:

1. It has been called in recent years the "lost expression."

2. It is lost only because it is rarely used in our day.

3. For some reason — no doubt one is selfishness — people have abandoned these two precious words.

C. Every Christian should have the attitude of gratitude, especially to God.

1. Col. 3:17, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*"

2. It's not difficult to be thankful when we count our many blessings.

a) Psalms 126:3, "*The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*"

D. An attitude of thankfulness for the blessing we have:

1. Will help to remove bitterness and apathy in our lives.

2. Will help to instill consistent attendance, sincere worship, holy living, mercy, and love in our lives.

III. The Thankful Samaritan

A. Luke 17:11-19, "*And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*"

B. Leprosy was a horrific disease. It started with sores and then began eating away at bodily tissues until the body begins to be consumed. The nose and lips disappear; fingers decay and fall off. The joints separate and finally the vital organs shut down. In the first century, it was incurable.

C. The lepers mentioned in our reading made a desperate appeal because Jesus was their last and only hope. They undoubtedly had heard of His power to heal. All ten needed His mercy. All ten were healed.

D. Only the Samaritan returned and poured out his thanks at Jesus' feet. Why didn't the other nine return?

E. Some possible excuses they may have had:

1. Maybe one waited to see if the cure was real.

2. Maybe one waited to see if the cure would last.

3. Maybe one said that he would see Jesus later.

4. Maybe one decided that he never had leprosy.

5. Maybe one said that he would have gotten well anyway.

6. Maybe one gave the glory to the priests.

7. Maybe one said, "Oh, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."

8. Maybe one said, "Just any rabbi could have done it."

9. Maybe one said, "I was already much improved."

F. Do any of these expressions sound like something you would have said?

IV. Being Thankful

A. Unceasing thankfulness. This behavior should be a part of who we are.

1. Eph. 1:16, "*Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.*"

2. Paul did not cease to give thanks for his converts. Paul had constant supplications for the beloved in Christ. He never forgot to pray for them. Thanksgiving was a prominent element in all of Paul's prayers that have come down to us. Whatever the circumstances, he always found something to be thankful for.

B. Being thankful even for the "little things"

1. Eph. 5:20, "*Giving thanks always for **all** things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*"

2. This cannot mean that a Christian should give thanks because illness, suffering, loss and adversity of many kinds may have fallen upon him, but that he should give thanks for "all things" in every situation that may afford a proper ground of gratitude to God.

3. Thus: When one is young, let him thank God for the strength of his youth and when he is old, let him thank God that he has been permitted so long to live and to have had a useful life in His service and even in death itself for the hope of eternal life.

C. Being thankful spontaneously.

1. Phil. 1:3-4, "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,*"

2. Significant in this prayer is the absence from it of any list of things Paul needed to receive from God, and the predominance of those things for which Paul felt the need of giving thanks to God! Paul's prayers were more like a list of things he has already received and for which thanksgiving was offered.

V. We honor Christ in the Lord's Supper.

A. Luke 22:19-20, "*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*"

B. After the church was formed on Pentecost, the church continued stedfastly in the "*breaking of bread.*"

1. Acts 2:42, "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"

C. The church at Corinth observed this sacred feast, and Paul rebuked those who were not partaking in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 10th chapter), then in the 11th chapter he instructed them how it was to be performed, just as the Lord had instructed beforehand.

1. 1 Cor. 11:23-29, "*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*"

D. From secular history of the early church we find that this practice prevailed during the first two centuries after the death of Christ.

E. Christians have an appointment with Christ to meet together on the first day of the week to break bread in memory of the Lord, and to thank Him for making that great sacrifice so that we might obtain eternal life. To neglect this observance and to give Christ our thanks is to dishonor Him and to sin against God.

VI. The Unthankful are foolish.

A. God's wrath will be revealed toward men for many reasons, but the scriptures tell is that it will also be for those who have become unthankful.

1. Rom. 1:18-21, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, <u>neither were thankful;</u> but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*"

2. I Tim. 4:1-5, "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*"

B. Have you ever been frustrated when somebody didn't thank you for something you did for them? How do you think God feels?

VII. Conclusion.

A. Why Should We Be Thankful?

1. God's goodness and mercy.

a) Psalms 106:1-2, "*Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can shew forth all his praise?*"

b) Psalms 107:8-9, "*Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*"

2. For Christ and salvation.

   a) 2 Cor. 9:15, "*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*"