

Giving in the Age of Grace—Part Two
“Grateful Giving”

Introduction: (Again to guests: week 3 of giving series)—Not an apology, but a clarification

- Giving as grace
- Giving generously
- Giving gratefully

Bible speaks often of gratitude

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Psalms 107:1 NKJV

This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalms 118:24 NKJV

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. Ephesians 3:20 NKJV

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15 NKJV

Let's talk about gratitude

I. A Hideous Disease

A. Leprosy, while hardly spoken of today, was prominent and greatly feared in the ancient world.

1. Rabbi's said curing it was “like raising the dead.”
2. Today it's called Hansen's Disease (Norwegian doctor in 1873 discovered the bacteria that causes it).

B. Several kinds of leprosy—worst kind (likely here) follows this pattern.

1. Patch of skin discolored
2. Patch turns white/pink begins spreading rapidly
3. Spreads to internal organs
4. Tissue disintegrates—hands/feet deformed

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5. Nerve endings die, no pain is felt

C. Great fear of ancients

1. Produced terrible results
2. Contagious
3. No cure

D. Old Testament instructions for leper

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3 The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. Leviticus 13:1-3 NKJV

But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days. 5 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore appears to be as it was, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. Leviticus 13:4-5 NKJV

He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. Leviticus 13:46 NKJV

1. A leper banishment

- a. Would have to warn people they were coming. Unclean! Unclean!
- b. Was going as if to his own burial.
- c. He was walking death.

2. Moses reminded them

"Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do. Deuteronomy 24:8 NKJV

E. The context of the story

1. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the last time (death was on His mind—meets the leper).
2. Meets between Galilee (home base for Jesus) and Samaria—issue of racism dating back to 722 BC.
3. Missed race/mixed religion

II. A Profound Miracle

A. Jesus met lepers (10) unwanted by either Jews or Samaritans

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Luke 17:12-13 NKJV

1. Had heard rumors He could heal.
2. Only thing that unifies them is their disease.
3. No more pitiful sight than 10 horrific outcasts crying out for mercy.
4. Had experienced so little in their lives.

B. Healed as they went

1. Not immediate miracle
2. Go show yourself to the priest

So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. Luke 17:14 NKJV

3. Why?
 - a. So priest could verify their healing
 - b. Leviticus 14—law of cleansing leper

- After 15-20 years of infection would leave if they survived
- Would have to see Priests

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. 3 And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper. Leviticus 14:1-3 NKJV

And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. 16 Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. 17 And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put some on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. 18 The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord. 19 "Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. 20 And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean. Leviticus 14:15-20 NKJV

4. As they went they were healed (not before)
 - a. When they left to see the Priest they still had leprosy
 - b. How they must have felt when sent away
 - c. 1 step nothing. 2 steps, no. 3 steps
 - d. Step 4? All ten healed at once

C. The importance of active faith

1. In the act of going/obedience—they were healed
2. No matter how they felt about it—God honored their going in spite of their doubt

NOTE: “Our faith moves mountains when our faith moves us.”

D. Passive religion is tragic

1. I need money—but won’t get a job or give
2. I want to lose weight—won’t quit eating and start exercising
3. God told Noah it was going to rain—couldn’t just pray for an ark
4. David—prays for victory, but pick up a stone while you are at it!
5. Trusting God/doing nothing

III. Shocking Reality

A. One returned to give thanks

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. Luke 17:15-16 NKJV

1. Suffered for so long
2. Now so thankful
3. Healthy again

NOTE: And He was a Samaritan/Samaritan leper

4. He knew how to be grateful

B. Luke doesn’t say but the story implies the other 9 were Jews—should have been the most grateful.

C. Story of life as it is

1. God's abundant grace
2. Prevalence of ingratitude
3. Unexpected gratitude

IV. Convicting Inquiry

So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." Luke 17:17-19 NKJV

A. 3 Questions

1. Weren't 10 healed?
2. Where are the other 9?
3. Is there anyone else other than this foreigner?

- B. Why didn't they come back and express gratitude?
- C. All lepers/all outcasts, all appealed to Him, all obeyed

But—Only 1 was grateful

(ILL) Like children at the dinner table. Take what we want. Filled up, leave without a word of thanks!

D. Two Crucial Truths

1. Gratitude is our highest aim. It is the expression of the truly devout believer. It is from a grateful heart that true passion flows and through that passion the fountain of all blessing is opened up.
2. Ingratitude is the leprosy of the soul. It destroys our inner man, stifles our joys, stamps out our happiness, and puts an end to our praise. It makes us numb to the blessings of God.

Conclusion: When we truly love and see what God has done—we cannot help but praise, give generously, without coercion.

- We finally count our blessings
- We finally understand every good and perfect gift comes from above
- We finally know that all of life is grace
- We praise, we talk, we serve, we give

TRUTH

- We learn we were all born lepers
- We see what Jesus has done for us
- We realize without God's grace we would have nothing of value

- Life breaks through
- What was duty is now privilege
- What was law is now grace
- What was forced is now free
- What was drudgery—is now joy

10 were healed that day
Only 1 was grateful
Are you the 1 or one of the 9?