

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / General Thanksgiving / Luke 17:11–19

Introduction

- <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/parents-welcome-14-pound-baby-largest-record-since-2010-everybody-making-bets> - 14 lb. baby! Largest baby born - 22 lbs in 1879 - Guinness book of world records.
- The gift of life is precious - we celebrate when a new baby is born.
- The gift of life is precious, and the gift of new life is even more precious. As precious as the gift of life is you, you were born into this life with a death sentence. You were born with a sin nature. BUT God, provided a way for you to have new life, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life with Him.
- When you think about what Jesus has done for you, you should be extremely thankful. First passage I ever memorized: [Psalm 100](#). [Psalm 100:4](#): “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name.”
- Would you describe yourself as a thankful person? Most of us would probably say “yes” because we don’t want to think of ourselves as ungrateful. However, an ungrateful heart comes far more naturally to us than a grateful heart.
- An ungrateful heart the result of a life that is not satisfied with the work of God. Or, “God, I deserve better than what you’ve given me.” A grateful heart is the result of a life that is fully satisfied with the work of God - so much so that can’t help but to be grateful and express thanksgiving.

- Looking at a familiar story of thanksgiving in Luke's Gospel - answer three questions: 1. Why do I struggle with thanksgiving? 2. Why should I be thankful? 3. How can I be more thankful?

Story

- Quite a few chapters since we've studied a miracle. ([Luke 11?](#))
- Remember the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth. Jesus read from [Isaiah 61:1-2](#). Jesus is the anointed One who has come to release the captives, cause the blind to see, and free the oppressed. He is the King who has come to rescue His people.
- Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of God and demonstrated the power of His Kingdom by performing miracles. Remember, when Jesus performs a miracle He is giving us a preview of what is to come. One day, the King will return, and all sickness and disease will be gone.
- In [Luke 17](#), Jesus on the way to Jerusalem - the road to the cross - passes between Samaria and Galilee (map). On the road, ten lepers. [Luke 5](#) - a story we already looked at about Jesus healing one leper.
- Leprosy a skin disease known as "walking death." The disease caused sores that overtook your body and caused it to rot - highly contagious. If you had leprosy, you were removed from the community. Likely, these ten men sat on the outskirts of town begging. According to Levitical law ([Lev. 13:45-46](#)), to identify themselves as lepers, they kept their hair unkempt, wore torn clothes, and cried out "Unclean! Unclean!" as people got close. Required to stay 50 paces away from people.
- Leper colonies - far away from their families - they commiserated in their pain together. These ten lepers had each other, but they hadn't seen their families in years. In this group, a Samaritan leper. Samaritans and Jews didn't typically associate with each other, but this Samaritan leper found friendship with Jewish lepers.

- On this day, as Jesus travels into an unnamed town, the ten don't cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" but, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" They believe that Jesus has the power to cleanse them from leprosy. They know His miracles, and they know He is their only hope for healing.
- In [Luke 5](#), Jesus touched the leper and healed him. In this passage, Jesus doesn't reach out and touch the lepers. Instead, He speaks, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."
- [Leviticus 14](#) - The priest was a "health inspector." If the priest declared you clean, you could go home. You could be reunited with your family. You could go to the temple to worship. Life could go back to normal.
- In faith, the ten go to the priest. Imagine they begin to slowly walk not quite understanding why Jesus asked them to go when their bodies were covered with sores. But, on the way, they were healed. What a sight it must have been! One leper looks at another, "Look at your body. The sores are gone." The joy of that moment as they saw they were cleansed. Started running... Wanted to get to the priest who would declare them clean so they could finally go home and after years be reunited with their family.
- But one - the samaritan - turns around. Don't know the conversation. Maybe, "I have to go back to Jesus."
- vs. 15 - returned - with loud voice (megaphone) gave glory to God - fell facedown (worship) and gave thanks.
- vs. 17 - Jesus: "Where are the nine? Your faith has **saved** you."
- Mind boggling - how could only 1 be thankful and the other 9 so ungrateful for what Jesus had done?
- I don't think the other 9 were necessarily ungrateful. I imagine that after the priest declared them clean, they praised God. However, the failure to recognize that God was in their midst. The One who told them to go to

the priest was God in the flesh who was worthy of their worship and thanksgiving.

- For this Samaritan - Jesus was the object of his gratitude. The nine - “Let’s go and be declared clean.” The Samaritan - “Jesus has made me clean. He is worthy of my worship.” The Samaritan not only healed of leprosy but also spiritual blindness. He saw Jesus for who He was - the ONE who restores and gives new life. For the 9 - thankful to be healed for sure - but ran to a priest who stood as a mediator between God and man rather than recognizing the true priest, the Great I Am, the ONE who makes us right with God because He is God was in their presence. God was among them, and they missed it. Sure, thankful to be healed, but failed to recognize Jesus as God who should be the object of all of our thanksgiving. To the Samaritan: “You’re saved.” And he was - not only healed from sickness but made right with God because he worshiped Jesus as God.
- A Samaritan! Original audience would expect the Jews to get it - not the Samaritan! Luke holds up the Samaritan as an example of faith in Jesus!
- A story of thanksgiving for sure, but even more important, a story of coming to faith in the ONE who gives life.

Why do you struggle with thanksgiving?

- **You don’t know God.** [Romans 1:21](#) - The failure to acknowledge God and thank Him for what He has done is a horrible sin. Maybe you’re ungrateful because you don’t understand what God has done for you. Not an outright denial of God like described in [Romans 1](#) but a lack of knowledge of the depths of God’s love for you.
- **You live in a culture that cultivates ingratitude.** [2 Timothy 3:2](#) - People who are lovers of self are naturally ungrateful - people who deny God and deny that the good things of life come from the hands of God. You think good things come to those who help themselves rather than

from the hands of a good God. In the words of Snoop Dogg, “I thank me...”

- **You are angry with God.** You are used to living in an entitled culture rather than a grateful culture. Therefore, you're angry with God when you don't get your way. You don't feel like He's delivered on His promises to you. Life has been one hardship after the other. In your mind, God is not good to you, so why should you give Him thanks?
- **You think you know better than God.** Your ungrateful because God has not worked according to your plan. Your pride keeps you from admitting that God knows best. Your pride keeps you ungrateful for God's goodness in your life.

Why should you be thankful?

- **You have been set free.** ([Luke 4](#)) Remember why the King came - to set captives free. That's who you were. You were a captive to sin. Because of your sin, you deserved death. But, through His death and resurrection, you have been set free from the penalty of sin that would have destroyed you.
- **You're not going to hell.** That's what you deserve, but the Gospel is the Good News that God gives you what you don't deserve - grace - eternity with Him - adoption into His family - the joy of being with Him forever - the hope of a new heaven and new earth.
- You might not get everything you want in this life, but so what? In Christ, You get something far better than everything you might want in this life. You might be mad at God because life isn't working out according you your plan, but God is at work in your life accomplishing His plan as He prepares you for eternity with Him.

How can you be more thankful?

- **Be sensitive to your ingratitude.** How do you know if you're ungrateful? Ungrateful people typically complain a lot. If you notice yourself constantly complaining, it's evidence of an ungrateful heart.
- **Start saying "Thank you."** Being more thankful often starts with just the words rolling off your lips. The Bible encourages us to regularly express thanksgiving (e.g., [Psalm 100:4](#), [1 Thess. 5:18](#), [Philippians 4:6](#), [Psalm 136](#))
- **Learn to say, "Thank you because..."** Be specific in your thanksgiving when you come before God. Thank God for saving you. Thank God for adopting you. Thank God for His love, etc. Thank God for people in your life who have helped you grow in your faith. Be specific in your thanksgiving. Specific thanksgiving will grow you in humility as you realize that "every good and perfect gift comes from above" ([James 1:17](#)). Being specific means you have to know why you need to thank God.
- **Ask God to help you see the blessings you cannot see.** Old hymn: "Count your blessings one by one..." You usually count the blessings you can see: good health, friendships, etc. What about the blessings you can't see as clearly? E.g., the hardships. The hardships of life are a blessing because God is using them to grow you in your faith ([James 1:2-3](#)). How often do you thank God for the trials? Thanking God for the trials demonstrates that you understand that God knows best.
- **Never stop setting your mind on things above ([Colossians 3:1](#)).** The more you think about what God has done for you in Christ, the more thankful you will be. This is why we talk so much about daily reading the Bible, disciplining yourself for godliness, etc. It gets you in the habit of thinking the things of God.

- Charles Spurgeon once shared the gospel with a woman who was so talkative that he could hardly get a word in edgewise with her. Eventually she listened to him long enough to hear the good news, and as she began to understand the mercy God had for her in Christ, she said, “Oh, Mr. Spurgeon, if Christ saves me he will never hear the end of it!”
- What about you? How often does Jesus hear your thanks? This morning, if you’ve never done so, believe that Jesus is the ONE who has come to save you if you will believe that He died in your place and rose again. Place your faith in Him.
- Believer, do you need to repent of an ungrateful heart? Maybe this morning, you need to repent and ask God to develop a grateful heart in your life.