

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, far too often in this life we are ungrateful and do not return thanks to You. We know that all good things come from You and that all things happen for our benefit... but we do not always see and recognize that. Lord, please forgive us our many sins. For the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke the seventeenth chapter beginning at the eleventh verse, and we read in Jesus' name:

Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ¹² 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!" ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ 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."

Heavenly Father, these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

More and more it seems like Thanksgiving is either being overtaken or is being shoved down our throats. That may not have been the opening statement you would have expected on a day like today, being Thanksgiving Day, and yet I think there is much truth in that statement.

From one side, we hear about all the horrible things that are going on: people are shopping... well, that's about as bad as it gets. Yet, some people, some Christians, have pretty much insinuated that if you shop on Thanksgiving Day you are not a Christian and you hate Jesus. And those same Christians are the ones who want to make sure that Thanksgiving stays around... yet they want it around for the turkey and the football and the family and the friends and often times they are forgetting the most important thing, Jesus.

Friends, I have no problem if you shop today. I have no problem if you don't shop today and spend it with family. I don't even have a problem if you want to make funny hats and fake turkeys and pass out food to strangers; regardless of what we do on this Thanksgiving Day, let us always be found ***Praising God!***

So what were you doing about nine (9) weeks ago? If you were part of this church and if you were attending, you were in church, I hope; but do you remember what we were celebrating nine weeks ago? It's okay if you do not remember but it goes to a bigger point, nine weeks ago this Sunday we were celebrating our week of Thanksgiving. We were spending an entire week focusing on the blessings that God has lavished upon us and we were thanking Him for it. If you want to double check, go look at Trinity 14 in your hymnals it is labeled as "Thanksgiving." We have already spent one

week praising and thanking God, so why are we at it again?

I mean isn't one weekend enough? Isn't one day enough to praise and thank God? If you ask those who are vehemently opposed to shopping and doing other things on Thanksgiving Day, this is THE DAY, the ONE DAY, we are to be thankful to God for what He has done for us... but what about the other 364 days? Do we just abandon them and not care as much about God? Those other 364 days is God merely an afterthought? Those other 364 days are we okay not thanking God because He doesn't really do too much in our lives? The obvious answer is no; so then why the stress on this day?

Maybe we should take a lesson from our text. In our text for today Jesus healed 10 lepers. Jesus healed ten men who had been societal outcasts. Jesus healed ten men who

could not spend any time with their families or friends. Jesus healed ten men who could not even approach a town or get a job. And so Jesus sent the ten men to the temple so that they could present themselves to the priests, cleansed, and so they could worship.

Jesus healed ten men and He wanted their attention to be on worshipping God and giving Him glory and thanks, but we know from the text that their attention was elsewhere.

And so it is with us. We had an entire week in which we were to be thanking God for all that He has done, and we let it slip by. Most of us probably did not even realize it had come and gone because we were so busy with all of our other duties and priorities. We were so overcome that we were like the nine lepers who just went away.

Notice, that in our text, Jesus' shock is not in that they had faith, or that they listened unquestioningly; rather, Jesus' shock lay in the fact that no one was found giving glory to God. Instead of praising God, maybe they were keeping it under wraps how they were healed... or maybe they did not even think about it. They just went about their lives, healed from their leprosy, and continued on in what they do... now that really sounds like us.

Each and every one of us has leprosy, the leprosy of sin. We have a disease, sin, which clings to us, which makes us apart from God, which causes us to lose relationships, which forces us to live as outcasts from our Savior... and once He heals us, we just go about our lives, plodding along, not giving it a second thought. Instead of returning thanks to God for all that He has done, we just move from one week to the next, one day to

the next, completely ignoring what God has done for us.

And what has God done for us? God sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ into this world to be our Savior. Instead of allowing us to live with this leprosy of sin, God sent us the antidote in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. When Jesus came into this world and lived a perfect life for us, when Jesus came into this world and died an innocent death for us, when Jesus came into this world and rose from the dead for us... He did it for us. He did not do it to rid Himself of sin; no, He did it to remove all stain of sin from us. Jesus came for us, He did everything for us, and now He continues to help us as we live this life.

Throughout this life Jesus continues to tell us about this forgiveness that He has earned for us through His Word and through His

sacraments. When we read and hear the Word of God, we hear about our Savior who came to live perfectly, die innocently, and rose gloriously for us. When we are baptized we know that God has claimed us as one of His own through His word and the water. And when we come to the Lord's Supper, we are assured that our sins are forgiven, for Jesus gives us His very own body and blood which hung on the cross paying for all of your sins.

And now that we have been cleansed from our spiritual leprosy, just as the ten men were cleansed of their physical leprosy, let us do as Jesus has asked us and return to Him giving glory to God along the way.

And as Gerhard says about this text, ***“True gratitude, however, must be properly constituted. It is not just with the tongue that we say, ‘Lord, I thank You;’ for God has blessed you not only with a tongue, but***

with a body and a soul as well. This is why your soul must give praise, and you must dedicate all of your limbs to His service. For He has not consoled you just with words, but He has often helped you also with deeds; hence, you should thank Him not only with your words but also with your deeds.” And now through faith in our Savior we can do that.

We can not only say our thanks to God, but we can show our thanks to God also. When we feed those who are hungry, when we give drink to the thirsty, when we clothe the naked, when we visit the sick and imprisoned, and when we welcome the stranger. We can say our thanks and we can also let our actions say it time and again...
THANK YOU LORD FOR SAVING ME!

Dear friends in Christ, at the beginning of our text Jesus came to men who were sick, leprous, and outcasts; at the beginning of

your life He came to you as you were sick, dead, and wallowing in your spiritual leprosy of sin and just like those lepers Jesus has healed you. He has cleansed you through His life, death, and resurrection and now He continues to strengthen and renew the faith that He has given to you. As Gerhard says, ***“God is more concerned with how our Christian walk ends than with how it began.”*** And praise be to God for that... He looked past my sins, He looked past my wrongs, He saw the child of God whom His Son would redeem and still He chose me.

Thanks be to God for allowing us to thank Him everyday, because everyday affords us opportunity to thank Him. Thanks be to God for sending His Son, my Savior, to cure me of my spiritual leprosy of sin. And thanks be to God for giving me more and more reasons every day to spend those days Praising Him!

Dear friends, thanks be to God. Amen.