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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

Luke 17:17

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"What do we say when we receive a gift?" a mother prompted her little girl after she had just opened her gift from Grandma and Grandpa. "Thank you!" she chirped excitedly as she remembered her manners. Thanksgiving Day, celebrated on the fourth Thursday of this month, is a reminder for us to say "thank you" to our gracious God.

Earlier, the leper who prompted Jesus' words above, had begged with nine others, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Unlike them, however, he returned, knowing how much he had received. Before, he was a walking dead man; afterward, he was restored to life with his family and community. Before, he was headed for hell; afterward, he was ready for heaven. Little wonder he fell with his face to the ground at Jesus' feet.

Why do we forget to say "thank you"? Could it be that unlike that leper, we forget how much we have received? Thanksgiving is a time to remember that what we truly deserve from God is eternal death in hell. We don't deserve Jesus and the forgiveness of sins that He bought and paid for with His precious blood on Calvary. Nor do we rightfully have coming to us all the other blessings God as our merciful Father graciously bestows on us. He is the only reason we have a slice of bread ... enjoy. Gratitude begins with our remembering His unfathomable mercy in spite of our unworthiness.

May genuine gratitude fill our lives, not only on Thanksgiving Day, but on every day our loving God gives us. I like the way St. Paul puts it, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17).

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Skelton

