

Thanksgiving Day

Luke 17: 11-19

November 26, 2015

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

Gratitude Is Such A Simple Thing, And Yet Is It Not Always Or Consistently Expressed. We Can Easily See This In Children, Not Just Small Children, But Children Of All Ages. From The Moment Of Their Birth Children Are Dependent On Their Parents For Everything That They Have, Including Life Itself! Yet Children Of All Ages Often Take For Granted Those Many Blessings That Their Parents Provide. Not Only Do They Take Them For Granted, But Sometimes They Will Even Complain About What They Don't Have. Sometimes This Is Perplexing To Parent's: **"Why Can't Our Children See How Much We Love Them And How Much We Give Them And Do For Them? Why Don't They Appreciate Us More Than They Do?"** And For Some Parents This Disappointment With Ingratitude Is Made Even Worse With Out Right Rebellion.

I. With This Introduction Perhaps We Can Better Understand How God Feels About People And Especially Christians Who Can Act The Same Way Toward Him. Our Heavenly Father Has Given Us So Much, Including Life Itself, Physical, Spiritual And Eternal Life. From His Loving Arms We Have Received All We Need For Comfort, Security And Joy In Our Earthly Existence As Jesus Says In The Sermon On The Mount: **"Therefore Do Not Be Anxious, Saying, 'What Shall We Eat?' Or 'What Shall We Drink?' Or 'What Shall We Wear?' For The Gentiles Seek After All These Things, And Your Heavenly Father Knows That You Need Them All. But Seek First The Kingdom Of God And His Righteousness, And All These Things Will Be Added To You" (Matt. 6: 31-33)..** But He Has Given Us Even More: The Gift Of Eternal Life In His Son As Jesus Says Again In John's Gospel: **"For God So Loved The World That He Gave His Only Son, So That Whoever Believes In Him Might Not Perish But Have Eternal Life" (John 3: 16).** The Depth And Breadth Of God's Love For Us Is Especially Seen In Giving His Sinless Son Into Death And Damnation On The Cross For Our Sins As Paul Writes In His Letter To The Romans: **"But God Demonstrates His Own Love For Us In This: While We Were Still Sinners, Christ Died For Us" (5: 8).** In Jesus Christ Our Relationship With Our Creator Has Been Restored Through The Forgiveness Of Our Sins And We Have The Wonderful Hope Of Eternal Life In A New World Yet To Come, A World Without Sin Or Death. And God Gives Us All Of These Things Through His Word And The Sacraments Of Baptism And The Altar. Yes, God Gives Us So Much.

ii. And Yet, Much Like Children At Times We Might Not Be Grateful For All That He Gives Us. Or In Reference To Our Text At Times We Might Be Much Like The Nine Lepers Who Didn't Return To Give Thanks To Jesus. So Jesus Asks, **"Were Not Ten Cleansed? Where Are The Nine? (V. 17).** I Wonder

Why The Other Nine Did Not Return To Give Thanks To Jesus. Were They Not Thankful? That's Hard To Believe. They Must Have Been Ecstatic With Joy About Their Healing. Perhaps They Were Thankful But They Didn't Think It Was The Important To Make The Effort To Find Jesus And Tell Him How Thankful There Were. Or Maybe In Their Joy And Excitement They Rushed Off Instead To See Their Families And Tell Them The Good News Of Their Healing. Well, There Might Be Several Explanations, But ...Listen....Can You Hear The Disappointment In The Voice Of Jesus? **"Where Are The Nine?"**

Whatever The Reason Or Reasons That The Other Nine Did Not Return...They Should Have.....Clearly Jesus Expected It. Giving Thanks To God Is The Same As Glorifying Him, Honoring Him, Praising Hymn. And So Like A Parent Disappointed With The Ingratitude Of A Child....God Is Disappointed When He Is Not Thanked For His Blessings, **"Where Are The Nine?"**

iii. I Suppose We Could Say That Today....Where Is The Rest Of The Congregation In Giving Thanks To God This Day? But That Kind Of Thought Could Lead Us Into Self-Righteousness And Feeling Superior To Other People. True, Today We Are Acting Like The Leper Who Returned To Give Thanks To Jesus...But We Must Confess That There Are Other Times In Our Lives, Perhaps More Than We Know Of Or Are Willing To Admit, That We Act Like The Other Nine And Do Not Give Thanks To God. Do We Begin And End Each Day With Thanksgiving To God? Listen To Martin Luther's Morning And Evening Prayers Recorded In His **"Small Catechism"**. His Morning Prayer: **"I Thank You, My Heavenly Father, Through Jesus Christ Your Dear Son, That You Have Kept Me This Night From All Harm And Danger...."** Is Our First Thought In The Morning To Give Thanks To God For Keeping Us Safe Through The Night And Bringing Us To A New Day? And His Evening Prayer: **"I Thank You, My Heavenly Father, Through Jesus Christ, Your Dear Son, That You Have Graciously Kept Me This Day....."** At Night When The Day Is Over, Do We Think To Give Him Thanks And Praise For The Blessings Of The Day?

iv. But Notice.....Even Though The Other Nine Did Not Return To Give Thanks To Jesus.....They Were Still Healed...Jesus Didn't Take The Healing Away Just Because They Didn't Thank Him. And So It Is With Us. Even When We Fail To Give Thanks To Our Gracious God....He Still Gives Us So Many Blessings As Jesus Says In The Sermon On The Mount: **"But I Say To You, Love Your Enemies And Pray For Those Who Persecute You, So That You May Be Sons Of Your Father Who Is In Heaven. For He Makes His Sun Rise On The Evil And On The Good, And Sends Rain On The Just And On The Unjust" (Matt. 5: 44-45).** God's Love.....And His Blessings Are Unconditional. He Does Not Give Them To Us Because Of How Good We Are Or What We Do. He Gives....He Blesses.....Because That's What Love Does. And God Is Love. And When Jesus Died On That Cross.....He Also Died For Those Times That We Have Not Be Grateful....Those Times That We Have Not Given Him Thanks And Praise....And He Forgives. What A Wonderful God We Have. We Cannot Long

Be Ungrateful To Such A God. In Our Prayers We Usually Ask God For Something.... And That's Good And Pleasing To Our God. But May I Suggest That At Times You Don't Ask God For Anything....But Simply Give Him Thanks For What You Have...By Name....."**Dear Lord, I Thank You For...** And Name All Those Things That He Has Given You. If You Do ThisYou Will Not Only Be Reminded Of All Of Your Wonderful Blessings.....But Might Even Be Made More Thankful..

Conclusion: So On This Thanksgiving Day We Have Gathered Together As God's Children To Give Thanks To Our Gracious God--- Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, For All Of His Countless Blessings Both In This World And The World To Come. And We Pray That This Day Will Also Remind Us... To Give Thanks To Him Each And Every Day. Amen.