

11/29/09

**THE EPISTLE LESSON**

**1 Timothy 2:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone -- <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (NIV)

**THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Luke 17:11-19**

<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him -- and he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to **God** except **this foreigner**?" <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, "Rise and go; **your faith has made you well.**" (NIV)

11 Kai. evge,neto evn tw/| poreu,esqai eivj Vlerousalh.m kai. auvto.j dih,rceto dia. me,son Samarei,aj kai. Galilai,aj

12 Kai. eivsercome,nou auvtou/ ei;j tina kw,mhn avph,nthsan Îauvtw/|Ð de,ka leproi. a;ndrej( oi] e;sthsan po,rrwqen

avph,nthsan **Came forward to meet**

13 kai. auvtou. h=ran fwnh.n le,gontej\ Vlhsou/ evpista,ta( evle,hson h`ma/j

14 kai. ivdw.n ei=pen auvtou/j\ poreuqe,ntej evpidei,xate e`autou.j toi/j i`ereu/sin kai. evge,neto evn tw/| u`pa,gein auvtou.j evkaqari,sqhsan

they were **cleansed**

15 ei-j de. evx auvtw/n( ivdw.n o[ti iva,qh( u`pe,streyen meta. fwnh/j mega,lhj doxa,zwn to.n qeo,n(

One of them, having seen that he was cleansed **TURNED BACK** with a loud voice glorifying God

16 kai. e;pesen evpi. pro,swpon para. tou.j po,daj auvtou/ euvcaristw/n auvtw/|\ kai.

auvto.j h=n Samari,thjÅ

17 avpokriqei.j de. o` Vlh sou/j ei=pen\ ouvci. oi` de,ka evkaqari,sqhsanÈ oi` de.  
evnne,a pou/È

18 ouvci eu`re,qhsan u`postre,yantej dou/nai do,xan tw/| qew/| eiv mh. o` avllogenh.j  
ou-tojÈ

Is there not found, having returned, to give thanks **TO GOD** except this foreigner?

19 kai. ei=pen auvtw/|\ avnasta.j poreu,ou\ h` pi,stij sou se,swke,n seÅ

And he said to him, having arisen, Go. **Your faith has saved you.**

INTRO - About 2 years ago the FBI raided the offices of some legislators. Later we many of the Alaskan lawmakers were charged with breaking they laws they had helped to write themselves. If any one should have known the laws, it was those who had written them. If anyone should have known better, it was these men. Actually, they might have known better, but . . . in some cases they did not show it.

Today we learn about ourselves by seeing people in our lesson people who should have known better.

I. Did you hear the words of Jesus in our lesson for today? After the Transfiguration Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem to be crucified. Jesus was walking between Samaria and Galilee and he was met by 10 lepers. He was met by 10 men whose disease was so bad they were quarantined outside the city so they did not spread their disease. They called to Jesus and asked his mercy, and Jesus healed them, all 10. But, only one returned praising God, a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> *Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"* <sup>18</sup> *Was no one found to return and give praise **to God** except **this foreigner**?"*

A. First, Jesus shows that in response to life's blessings, thanks is owed **to God**.

1. The Samaritan returned shouting praise to God and fell at Jesus' feet with thanks.
2. Jesus points out that it is to God, the Creator, the Savior, the Comforter that thanks should be given for all gifts and blessings.

B. But, look again at what Jesus says, <sup>18</sup> *Was no one found to return and give praise **to God** except **this foreigner**?"* Those who should have known better, those who should have given thanks to God, did not give thanks. At least that is what Jesus said

1. The nine men who were not foreigners grew up with a Jewish heritage.
2. They grew up learning the Hebrew Scriptures as children. They knew God's great acts in history.
3. They had been taught to look to God for good and to praise Him for His blessings.
4. But, those who were Jews, who knew God's acts of love in history and should have known to thank God, these men did not return and give thanks.

C. However, remember what Jesus says, <sup>18</sup> *Was no one found to return and give praise **to God** except **this foreigner**?"*

1. The only one who returned and gave thanks was a 'foreigner,' a Samaritan we are told
2. This man was the one whose faith background might have been in question. He was not raised with the same religious heritage to expect the Messiah in the same way the Jews were.
3. This was the one man who might not have been expected to give thanks TO GOD, for his healing.
4. Yet, he returned to Jesus after his healing and fell on his face and praised God for what had happened.

II. So, why the difference in the reaction to Jesus' healing? Why was it that the one who shouldn't have known better did, and gave God thanks? Why is it that those who should have known better didn't, or at least didn't act like it? We can look at the background behind this account to find some answers.

A. The 9 Jewish lepers had been raised learning of God's love to their people.

1. They not only knew the history of God's blessings, but in Scriptures we are told

there were some of the Jews who thought they deserved God's blessings because they were God's chosen people.

3. So when the blessing of healing came it came they were not surprised, or even if they were they did not show their thanks.

4. When God's healing and love came, they were also not thankful, or at least they did not show their thanks, as Jesus pointed out.

B. Please consider the faulty reason in this thinking, however.

1. Just because they were God's chosen people did not make this healing something deserved.

2. God's love is always a gift.

3. They just did not give thanks.

C. I recently read a book called "UNChristian." This book talks about how many young people view the institutional church, and Christians. In many ways, even if it is not true, the church is seen as arrogant and unloving. Many see Christians as acting like they think they deserve God's love, not that God's love is a gift. And so Christians today can seem unthankful, and perhaps if these appearances are true, be unthankful. If this IS true, it means we act like the nine men in this story.

1. How often have we taken our blessings for Granted?

2. When we are ungrateful, Do we think we deserve them because we believe in Jesus?

3. When we are unloving, did we forget the love of God to forgive us?

III. Remember Jesus' words again, <sup>17</sup>"Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise **to God** except **this foreigner?**"

A. The Samaritan had been raised knowing he was not a Jew, not one of God's chosen.

1. He did not necessarily believe he deserved God's grace, or mercy, or healing.

2. He had been raised being told by Jews that He would not receive the same blessings from God.

3. So, when he received something he did not feel he deserved, or expected, the gift was overwhelming. He could not help himself.

4. No wonder he returned shouting, fell at Jesus feet, and praised God. The healing, undeserved, was a real gift!

B. When we are ungrateful we act like we deserve God's love. However, what we deserve is not God's love, but his punishment.

1. In our words and actions we have told God we want to do our will rather than His will.

2. We have selfishly taken care of ourselves, and at times neglected the needy.

3. If we forget our sin, we forget that God's goodness is a gift, and like the 9 men who did not give thanks we can think we deserve it.

C. But, when we remember our rebellion, our lack of love, when we remember our sin deserves God's punishment, then we know we don't deserve His love. But, God still gives it.

1. Then the life and death of Jesus is an undeserved, overwhelming gift.

2. Then blessings of forgiveness and eternal life, the blessings of healing, and family, and country are seen as undeserved gifts.

3. When we remember our sin we know God's blessings are not deserved, but a gracious gift.

4. And like the Samaritan who did not expect Jesus' healing, but saw it as an undeserved gift, when we remember God's grace, and know we don't deserve His love but He gives it anyway, then we are led to be thankful.

D. And, when we are thankful we return to praise and serve God willingly and joyfully.

CONCLUSION - Remember the lawmakers who should have known better, but didn't, let me tell you the other story. Around 2000 I was visiting an elderly member in the hospital. He was sick, and near death, though he did later recover and go home. I asked how he was feeling, and sick as he was he said, "I am blessed." This man had not always been a believer, but come to God late in life. So he continued, "For so many years I rejected the Lord, and yet he loves and blesses me. I don't deserve all his blessings. Even in this hospital I am so blessed." This man's knowledge of God's grace made him thankful even while he was sick. His thanks and faith and joy blessed me while I was visiting him.

Like the Samaritan, when we know that God's love is undeserved, but simply a gift, then we can't help but be thankful, and serve our Lord with Gladness.