

DATE: November 20, 2011

TITLE: "GIVE THANKS"

TEXT: Luke 17:11-19

SERIES: "MADE FOR MORE" No. 9 (The Lifestyle of the Transformed)

We are made for more than just to receive the blessing of God; we are made to praise God and give thanks.

The lifestyle of the transformed is a lifestyle of giving thanks

INTRODUCTION: "We are made for more." We are made to give thanks and praise to God.

(*John draw cartoon of this, second copy with punch line - "...now I'd like to tell you about some things I'm not thankful for.") I heard about a small boy who was praying his bedtime prayer as his dad watched. The small boy continued his bedtime prayers with, "...now I'd like to tell you about some things I'm not thankful for."

How quick is your child or grandchild to say thanks? Researchers have proven what most parents probably knew instinctively: gratitude doesn't come naturally. In her book entitled, *The Gift of Thanks*, Margaret Visser cites a study which observed how parents teach their children to say "hi," "thanks," and good-bye." The children in the study spontaneously said "hi" 27 percent of the time, "good-bye" 25 percent of the time, and "thanks" 7 percent of the time. Parents had to prompt their children to say "hi" 28 percent of the time, "good-bye" 33 percent of the time, and "thanks" 51 percent of the time. In conclusion, children had a much more difficult time learning to say "thanks." Based on this research, Visser concludes that learning to be thankful involves a steep learning curve.

George Herbert's well-known prayer said, "Thou who hast given so much to me, give one thing more-a grateful heart!"

"We are made for more." We are made to give thanks and praise to God.

I. (vs.11-13) GIVE THANKS, FOR WE CAN CALL OUT TO HIM WITH OUR NEEDS

1. This is the story of ten men whose lives were transformed by Jesus.
2. We do not know their names, but we do know their condition.
3. The Bible simply describes them as men who had leprosy.
4. Leprosy was a dreaded disease of the time, with social as well as physical consequences.
5. The lepers of this time period were rejected and treated as outcasts, for they were declared to be unclean.
6. To protect against the disease spreading, these people had to leave their homes, the fellowship of God's community, go outside walls of the city, away from their livelihood and stay away from others, even those they loved.

7. (*Map showing this) Luke tells us that while on his way to Jerusalem, traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee, Jesus encountered these ten men from a distance.
8. In their desperate condition, the lepers cried out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"
9. These men needed more than the support or help they could give each other.
10. Facing situations they could not solve or fix, they called out to Jesus for mercy and help.
11. They called out to Jesus passionately with a loud voice, for they were aware of their need for his help.

Example: Matthew, in his gospel, tells of two blind men who were sitting by the road side, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us." The crowd told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder. "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes and they received their sight and followed Him. (Matthew 20:30)

Example: Mark tells of a time when Jesus was with the disciples in a boat and there was a fierce storm. Mark writes, "Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?' He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm." (Mark 4:38-39)

12. These two stories are about people who surrendered their self-sufficiency and pride and called out to the Lord for help.

ILLUSTRATION: The Barna Research Group asked Americans about the importance of religion. They discovered that the percentage of people that said it was important decreased in American as the mean of financial income increased. The study concluded, "It seems as though Americans think money diminishes one's need for God."

13. Self-sufficiency and pride can blind us to our need of him.
"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."
(Revelations 3:17-18)

14. These ten men came to Jesus, aware that they needed His help.
15. Being aware of their need and the presence of the Lord who was within the sound of their voices, they called out to Him.
16. Calling out to the Lord is admitting your need for His help and participation in your live.
17. We call out to God when we see the leprosy of our needs and call out to Him.

**ILLUSTRATION: **The songwriter wrote,
“I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.
I need Thee; Oh, I need Thee! Every hour I need Thee!
Oh, bless me now, my Savior I come to Thee!”**

18. The psalmist teaches us to call out to the Lord.

“Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.”

(Psalm 27:7)

**“From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm 61:2)**

**“You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to
you.” (Psalm 86:5)**

“Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.” (Psalm 86:6)

“In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

(Psalm 86:7)

“I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me.” (Psalm 120:1)

“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

(Psalm 145:18)

19. These ten lepers called out to Jesus, addressing Him as Master, which is Luke’s way of saying that Jesus had authority and power to help them.

20. Their need was an opportunity for them to experience what Jesus could do in their lives.

21. These men had nothing to offer Jesus, but they believed that Jesus had something to offer them.

22. They called out to Jesus, aware of their need and His ability to help.

23. They called out to the one that could help them, for they could not help themselves.

24. They called to the Lord where they were, just as they were.

25. These men chose not to live in bondage to their needs, but instead, called to God for help.

26. We don’t have to live in the bondage of sin that separates us from God when we can call out to Him for help.

27. God can help when you have sinned and disobeyed His will, for God has the power to forgive the sin that separates us from Him when we call out to Him with a repentant heart.

28. God can help when you have been deeply hurt, when you call out to Him, for God has the power to heal deep hurts.

29. God can help when you have lost trust, when you call out to Him, for He is trustworthy.

30. God can help when you have decisions to make, when you call out to Him, for God has the power to guide and grant wisdom.

31. God can help when you have a broken heart, when you call out to Him, for He is the healer of broken hearts.

ILLUSTRATION: **(Picture of Ann of Green Gables) Sharon, Amanda and I were watching together a little of the story of Ann of Green Gables, The Story Continues. The setting is during WWI, where Anne’s husband,

a doctor, was away serving as a military surgeon and doctor in the war. Not hearing from him, Ann went to find him. She arrived at a tent hospital during a time when they were bombing and shooting in the area just as her husband was getting into a military ambulance to go on to the next area of need. Seeing him, she calls out, but he does not hear her. He got into the vehicle and drove away. Her search continued, until much later, when they finally found each other, for he did not hear her call him earlier.

32. We have a God who hears when we call out with searching hearts.
33. Regardless of the noise in the world and in your life, God hears those who earnestly call out to Him.
34. The Lord is within the range of those who call with open and sincere hearts.
35. Jesus is in the range of those who call to Him with sincere hearts.
36. We give thanks because we have a God who hears us when we call out to Him.
37. We give thanks, for there is hope, for we have a God who hears us when we call out to Him with our needs.

II. (v.14) GIVE THANKS, FOR GOD WILL HELP US WHEN WE OBEY HIS WORD

1. Jesus responded to their call with some instructions.
“When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were cleansed.” (Luke 17:14)
2. The ceremonial law of the Jews placed the responsibility on the priests who acted as a kind of health inspector for pronouncing lepers clean or unclean.
3. Jesus sent them there to fulfill the law and to provide a credible witness to their healing.
4. He told them what to do to experience His healing and receive His help.
5. The request calls for faith expressed through action, since the men must turn and go to the priests without having experienced the healing first.

EXAMPLE: In the Old Testament, there is a story about a man who experienced healing through obedience and surrender. His name was Naaman. He was a valiant soldier, a commander of the army of the King of Aram yet, he had leprosy. A servant girl who knew of the God of Israel gave him hope, telling him to go to the prophet Elisha. Naaman pulled up at the door of Elisha’s house with his horses and chariots, but Elisha did not come out. He sent a messenger to tell him to wash seven times in the Jordan. Naaman was upset, for he came with expectations that the prophet would wave his hand over the spot and cure him. But it did not happen in a spectacular way. He had to surrender the spectacular for simple obedience. His servant said to him, “...if the prophet would have told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?”

Simple obedience was what was asked of him. He had to surrender his pride and go to the Jordan when there were cleaner rivers. Half-

hearted or partial obedience was not enough. He went in total obedience and was healed.

6. The healing came in response to their obedience, for all ten men were healed as they went in obedience.
7. Their lives were transformed by God through obedience to His word.
8. They obeyed the words of Jesus and, in the process of their obedience, they were healed.

ILLUSTRATION: **Someone said, "It is our business to see that we do right; God will see that we come out right."

9. Lack of obedience can rob you of God's answers in your life.
10. Lack of obedience can get in the way of experiencing God's blessings.
11. Obedience puts you on track to experience what God desires for you to experience.

EXAMPLE: The first miracle of Jesus - changing water into wine. "Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim."(John 2:7)

12. The water was changed into wine through their obedience.
13. Too many people have tried to make obedience optional.
14. Many have emphasized the grace of God to the point that they have ignored God's requirement of obedience.
15. People pray about finances; They want God to help, but they are not obedient to the principles of stewardship clearly laid out in His Word.
16. People want God's help in their marriage, but they are not making obedience to God's commands in their marriage central.

ILLUSTRATION: *Someone said "Enthusiasm is easier than obedience."

17. Obedience to God's Word is a matter of trust.
18. Do I trust God and His word enough to obey?
19. God gave us His word so that we will obey it.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)

20. God calls us to live in obedience to His word.

ILLUSTRATION: (PROP: A compass- Big one I could hold up purpose made of something) There is an old story about a person who had a boat, who repeatedly got lost at sea, so his friends gave him a compass and urged him to use it. The next time he went out in his boat, he followed their advice and took the compass with him. But, as usual, he became hopelessly confused and was unable to find land. Finally, he was rescued by his friends. Disgusted and impatient with him, they asked, "Why didn't you use that compass we gave you? You could have saved us a lot of trouble!"**

The sailor responded, "I didn't dare to! I wanted to go north, but as hard as I tried to make the needle aim in that direction, it just kept on pointing southeast."

The boat owner was so certain he knew which way was north that he stubbornly tried to force his own personal persuasion on his compass.

Unable to do so, he tossed it aside as worthless and failed to benefit from the guidance it offered.

21. God calls us to obey His Word.

22. We give thanks, for God can help us when we obey His word.

III. (vs.15-16) GIVE THANKS, FOR GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE

1 This story is not so much about the healing as it is about their reaction to it.

2 One of the men, seeing the healing, returned to the Lord.

3 This man did not let the gift blind him from seeing the giver.

4 He gave praise, for God is worthy of praise.

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.” (Psalm 145:3)

5 The cure awoke a chord of gratitude and he stepped away from the crowd to express thanks.

6 One of the ten could not maintain silence but burst forth with praise to God in a loud voice.

7 Praise is a choice; it is an act of the will.

8 The Psalmist said, “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.” (Psalm 145:1-2)

9 If you praised God in worship today, it is because you chose to come and praise Him.

10 If you gave God thanks today in worship, it is because you chose to, for it is a decision of the will.

11 This man refused to be silent about what God has done.

12 He knew praise was the appropriate response to God’s grace.

ILLUSTRATION: Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said that if the stars came out only once a year, everybody would stay up all night to behold them. We have seen the stars so often that we don’t bother to look at them anymore.

13 In like manner, we have grown blind to the blessings of God in our lives.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-” (Psalm 103:2)

ILLUSTRATION: *There is an old proverb that says, “When you drink from the stream, remember the spring.” – Chinese Proverb

14 He saw the hand of God and expressed praise to God.

15 The Psalmist said, “Praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his surpassing greatness.” (Psalm 150:2)

16 There are so many deep reasons to praise God and give Him thanks.

17 We praise Him for His peace, hope, joy, presence in our lives, forgiveness, strength, and so much more.

18 This man made expressing gratitude his priority, turning intention into reality.

ILLUSTRATION: **Philosopher Blaise Pascal said, “The last thing one knows is what to put first.”

19 For this man, expressing praise and thanks to God became his first priority.

20 He refused to put off or procrastinate expressing his gratitude to God.

ILLUSTRATION: **Someone else said, "Procrastination is opportunity's natural assassin."

21 May praise be a priority in our lives.

22 He did something tangible by going back to Jesus and praising God in a loud voice.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of Churchill and Alexander Fleming) Years ago, a wealthy English family was entertaining friends at their home. As the children swam, one ventured into the deep water and began to drown. The gardener heard the other children screaming and jumped into the water and saved the child. The youngster's name was Winston Churchill. Deeply grateful to the gardener, the parents asked how they could ever repay him. He hesitated, but then said, "I wish my son could go to college someday to be a doctor." "He will," said Churchill's parents. "We will pay his way." Years later, when Sir Winston was Prime Minister, he became ill with pneumonia. The best physician the king could find was called to the bedside of the ailing leader. His name was Sir Alexander Fleming, the developer of penicillin and the son of that gardener who long ago saved a drowning Winston. Churchill later said, "Rarely has a man owed his life twice to the same person." As believers, we owe a debt of gratitude and service to the Lord because He made and He saved us.

23 Living a life of praise and thanks to God impacts your actions.

24 The priority of praise changed his direction and brought him to Jesus.

"He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-and he was a Samaritan." Luke 17:16)

25 Gratitude took him away from the crowd and brought him to the feet of Jesus.

26 He expressed his gratitude by falling at the feet of Jesus in humility and reverence.

27 Author Lloyd John Ogilvie said, "Thanksgiving is the ultimate act of submission." (Lloyd John Ogilvie)

28 He expressed his gratitude by thanking Jesus.

Paul wrote, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:15-16)

29 Perhaps the others felt gratitude but they did not express it.

30 Worship is an expression of thanksgiving.

31 When we stop praising God, we start forgetting God.

32 Gratitude that is not expressed is like seed that is never planted.

ILLUSTRATION: **John Henry Jowett, a British preacher of an earlier generation, said this about gratitude: "Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic." What did he mean? He meant that gratitude, like a vaccine, can prevent the invasion of a disgruntled,

discouraged spirit. Like an antitoxin, gratitude can prevent the effects of the poisons of cynicism, criticalness, and grumbling. Like an antiseptic, a spirit of gratitude can soothe and heal the most troubled spirit.

33 We do not know his name, but in this verse, we are told he is a Samaritan.

34 An unlikely person to respond to a Jew in the way he did, but he had been transformed.

35 His transformation resulted in thanking Jesus for what he had done for him.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Can you find a picture of Roy Larson, etc.) Adapted from Cindy Urrea, "Instant Action, Instant Heroes," (The Sun (9-28-01)).

Roy Larson thought the most difficult part of his day would be maneuvering the unfamiliar stick shift on a "loaner" electric wheelchair as he ventured into downtown Glen Ellyn, Illinois for a haircut. But his day was about to become much more trying. As he was crossing the railroad tracks on Main Street, one of the chair's wheels became lodged in the track. As Larson struggled to free the wheel, something went wrong with the chair's electrical system, and the chair refused to move. Suddenly, the lights began to flash, and the signal bells started to ring. The gates in front of Larson and behind him began to lower. The first person Larson saw as he frantically looked for help was Mark Bade. Bade had been running an errand when he saw that Larson was in trouble. He sprinted to Larson's side and began to struggle with the chair. At almost the same moment, Don Burgeson had stopped his car at the gates and saw what was happening. He leaped out of the car and helped Bade wrench the chair free from the track and drag it out of harm's way. The three men looked up, just in time to see the train was less than 20 yards away. "After the train went by, I just said thanks," Larson said. "The only reason I am here today is because these two guys saved my life."

36. Jesus Christ came to save our lives. We, too, need to say thanks.

37. We give thanks, for the Lord is worthy of our praise.

IV. (vs.17-19) GIVE THANKS REGARDLESS OF WHAT OTHERS DO

1. The response of Jesus here is insightful and piercing.

"Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?'"(Luke 17:17-18)

2. The Lord was grieved by the ingratitude of the other nine.

3. God's graciousness is often ignored and unappreciated.

4. One pastor called it spiritual amnesia.

5. Ingratitude did not escape the Lord's attention.

6. The others failed to publicly acknowledge the source of their healing.

7. This one left the crowd and came to Jesus to give thanks.

8. Feeling thankful can be different than expressing thanks.

9. God's blessing can be appreciated or underappreciated.

ILLUSTRATION: “Our biggest problem in the church today is this vast majority of Sunday morning Christians who claim to have known the Master's cure and who return not [at other times] to thank Him by presence, prayer, testimony and support of His church.* In fact, the whole Christian life is one big ‘Thank You,’ the living expression of our gratitude to God for His goodness. But we take Him for granted, and what we take for granted, we never take seriously.” (Vance Havner in *The Vance Havner Quote Book*. Christianity Today, Vol. 31, no. 17).

10. The Samaritan took initiative and broke rank with the religious people of the day and went to express gratitude.

11. Don't let God be unappreciated.

ILLUSTRATION: Robert Lintner prayed, **“Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single day.” (Robert C. Lintner)

12. Gratitude is not an event but a lifestyle.

13. As one writer phrased in the 20th century, it is thanks-living.

14. Where are the nine? That question still stands as a constant reproach to all who fail to thank the Lord for His many blessings.

ILLUSTRATION: Matthew Henry was a pastor in 1662-1714 who is remembered today for his commentary, which could still be found in my library and the library of many pastors today. He was a man known for his gratitude. Once, while walking down a street, he was robbed. The thieves took everything of value. Later that night, Matthew Henry wrote the following in his diary: “I am thankful that during these years I have never been robbed until now. Also, even though they took my money, they did not take my life. And although they took all I had, it was not much. Finally, I am grateful that it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

15. Will you be overcome by your problems, or will you choose to thank God and go on?

16. **“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (I Thessalonians 5:18)**

17. This man's thanks was an expression of his faith.

“Then he said to him, ‘Rise and go; your faith has made you well.’” (Luke 17:19)

18. Ingratitude is a great thief that robbed the nine of what the man with gratitude received.

19. Faith for them was incomplete because it did not initiate gratitude.

20. This man had a faith that led him to Jesus to give thanks.

21. Where is your faith leading you?

22. Gratitude leads us into a deeper relationship with the Master.

23. This man experienced more of the blessing of Jesus and His healing words.

24. Jesus provided a spiritual healing.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

25. In Christ, we find the healing we need when we come to Him.
 26. He received a spiritual blessing and healing that the others did not receive.
 27. Living with gratitude enables us to experience greater levels of wholeness for broken lives.
 28. Thanksgiving becomes a window through which God's love shines.
 29. Jesus gave a word the others did not receive "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."
 30. He experienced Christ in a way the others didn't.
 31. No one ever thanks God without receiving more for which to thank Him.
 32. Praise brings us into the presence of God.
 33. Praise and gratitude keep us close to the Lord and to the sound of His voice.
 34. Gratitude enables God to do all He wants to do for us.
 35. Gratitude enables us to experience all that God has for us.
 36. True thankfulness is expressed in our actions and in the life we live.
 37. Let Jesus finish what He started in you.
 38. Give God praise for who He is and what He has done in your life.
 39. Praise, thanksgiving, and worship bring us into the presence of God.
- ILLUSTRATION: "When we started the PCA (Presbyterian Church in American) in 1973, we had no money—not a dime—and we were going to start a new denomination. One group gave us \$90,000 for world missions. The only two missionaries we had were down in Acapulco. We had Dick Dye and a young lady named Ellen Barnett. Dick Dye was down there for about 2 months and he was discouraged. He looked up every day, and on top of one of those mountains of Acapulco was a huge cross, and that encouraged him. Finally, after about 2 months of looking at it, he drove up there to find out about that cross. And when he did, he found it in a big hotel. He drove in and asked the secretary, "Can I speak to the man who runs this whole establishment?"**
- "Do you have an appointment?"**
- "No appointment, I just want to tell him something."**
- "What do you want to tell him?"**
- "I want to tell him thank you."**
- "Okay." So she got the owner. He was a German. Dick Dye explained:**
- "I'm a missionary from the U.S., here in Acapulco. I've been discouraged. It's been 2 months, and I see that cross and it so encourages me, and I want to thank you for having it up there."**
- The man looked at Dick Dye, put his head down on his desk, and began to weep. And he wept, and he wept, and he wept. Finally, he raised his head and said: "That cross has been up there for years. All I've heard is criticism. You're the first man that ever said 'thank you.' Now, who are you and what do you need?"**
- "Well, I'm just a missionary," Dick answered.**
- "Where do you meet?"**
- "We don't meet anywhere. I don't have any place to meet."**

The owner said, "Come with me." He took Dick to a beautiful chapel and said: "We have church here at 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. But from now on, at 10 A.M., it is yours. You begin services next week."

That was the beginning, and within a matter of years, we turned four congregations over to the Presbyterian Church of Mexico. How did it start? With one guy who said 'thank you.'

40. Give God thanks regardless of what others do and you will be blessed.

CONCLUSION We are made for more than to just receive the blessings of God. We are made to praise God and give thanks. **The lifestyle of the transformed is a lifestyle of giving thanks and praising God.**

I. (v.11-13) GIVE THANKS, FOR WE CAN CALL OUT TO HIM WITH OUR NEEDS

II. (v.14) GIVE THANKS, FOR GOD WILL HELP US WHEN WE OBEY HIS WORD

III. (v.15-16) GIVE THANKS, FOR GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE

IV. (v.17-19) GIVE THANKS REGARDLESS OF WHAT OTHERS DO