

Thanksgiving Eve Service 11.26

INTRO - We recently sent a wedding present to a friend, and the daughter of a friend. What do you think, will we receive a thank you note? We do not give gifts to receive the thank yous. But they seem fewer and farther between these days. Of course, people don't write letters much anymore. But, it was a given that if you gave a gift, you would receive a thank you. Perhaps people are unaware. Perhaps they are busy. Perhaps they intend to send thanks, and forget. But I would say that sadly, we receive thank you notes for less than a third of the gifts we give.

I. This is not a new phenomenon.

A. One of my favorite Psalms, a Psalm which describes the grace of God, is Psalm 103

1. This Psalm begins with these two verses, **1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,**
2. Your former pastor, Pastor Steve Kosberg taught me about this Psalm. He said, "That's the prayer you pray if people started eating the meal BEFORE grace was said. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME, bless His holy name!'"
3. However, when we listen, the Psalmist gives that warning because, even in 1000 B.C., God's people did forget His blessings, and forgot to say thank you.

B. Did you hear the account of Jesus healing the 10 lepers?

1. Ten men were in dire straits because of their disease. They could not go home. They could not work. They could not worship. But they cried to Jesus, calling him "Master", "Have Mercy on us." And he healed them and He gave them their lives back.
 2. One man did return and give thanks and praise. But nine did not.
 3. You might say they did what the Psalm warned, **Forget not all his benefits.**

C. Tomorrow is the National Day of Thanksgiving.

1. Have you taken time to list just SOME of the blessings of God? Are you thankful for **Spiritual** blessings, such as forgiveness, and love, and His Church? Are you thankful for **people blessings** like parents, or spouses, or children, or friends? Are you thankful for **opportunity** and life blessings like jobs, and travel, and hobbies? Thankful for **material** blessings such as homes, cars, finances?

2. God is so Good.
3. But, do we forget to give Him thanks?

II. If you are a sports fan, have you ever been disappointed in your team? It seems especially if they are good for a long time we just come to expect it. Do we expect the good, so that we are no longer thankful when it happens? I would suggest a number of reasons that God's people, not unbelievers but believers, sometimes forget to thank Him.

A. Sometimes our PRIORITIES are a little askew, even for believers.

1. Perhaps we are too busy with work, or play, or even family, to think of God.
2. Sometimes God is not always first in our lives, so we miss seeing His love.

B. But there is a lesson in today's account of the lepers.

1. One man returned thanking God, the other nine did not.
2. Did you hear the words of Jesus? **Where are the nine?** ¹⁸ **Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"**

3. The Samaritan returned to give thanks. Of all those healed he did not expect the mercy of the Jewish God.

4. The others did not return. Did they just expect the healing? Did they take God's goodness for granted?

III. When I was much younger, I often tried to surprise my wife with flowers. When I could actually surprise her, she seemed especially thankful. Maybe I should do that again, huh?

A. Let me suggest a reality check. All of us **deserve the trials of life** brought on by the sin in the world, because we are sinners.

1. But, did you make a list of blessings?
2. God is good in ways we do not deserve, and perhaps like the Samaritan, should not expect.

B. What we REALLY deserve is punishment and judgment.

1. But God sent His son into a world of sin, and disease, and leprousy, and . . . you name it.

2. The Holy Son of God has mercy on the 10 lepers, and on sinner like you and me.

3. He does heal us, and provide for us, and forgive us, and bless us.

4. If you look at Psalm 103? He forgives all our sins, heals all our diseases, redeems our life from the pit, crowns us with love and mercy, He gives good things. We deserve punishment. God gives love in Body and Spirit.

C. We are here tonight for many reasons, but FIRST, GOD IS GOOD. And SECOND, we WANT TO BE THANKFUL

1. If we remember what we deserve as sinful people, that helps us to be surprised, and thankful.

2. We can say with the Psalmist, **Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.**

3. With the Leper we can return thanking and praising God for all His blessings, and for Jesus!

CONCLUSION - This is a NATIONAL Day of Thanksgiving. Do you think our country has forgotten the goodness of God? Forgotten to give thanks? If we remember that we deserve none of the mercy of God, but that His love is as **“HIGH A THE HEAVENS ARE ABOVE THE EARTH.”** AND **As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us,** How can we NOT be surprised? How can we NOT be full of gratitude and thanks???