

Uncommon Thankfulness

Luke 17:11-19

“Rudyard Kipling lived from 1865 to 1936. He was English, yet born in Bombay, India. He wrote poetry and is the author of books like *Captain Courageous*, *How the Leopard Got His Spots*, and *The Jungle Books*. Kipling’s writings not only made him famous but also brought him a fortune. A newspaper reporter came up to him once and said, “Mr. Kipling, I just read that somebody calculated that the money you make from your writings amounts to over one hundred dollars a word.” The reporter reached into his pocket and pulled out a one hundred-dollar bill and gave it to Kipling and said, “Here’s a one hundred dollar bill, Mr. Kipling. Now you give me one of your hundred dollar words.” Rudyard Kipling looked at the money, put it in his pocket and said, “Thanks!”

The word “thanks” is certainly a one hundred dollar word.

It’s a small word but it has a powerful meaning.

It might only have 6 letters but it gets across a message that few other words are capable of achieving.

1) Some important things that we could easily overlook.

a. (v.s. 11) Jesus was traveling along the boarder of Galilee and Samaria.

b. Jesus conducted much of His ministry in this area. - He had a reputation here.

c. Jesus expresses concern (v.s. 18) “was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner (Samaritan)?”

2) Differences between the Jews and the Samaritans

· Jews & Samaritans hated each other

· Samaritans were considered pagan half-breeds

· Jews would go to great lengths to bypass Samaria on a Journey

· Even though they had common roots in their heritage they preferred to feel as if they had nothing in common.

3) Some things brought these 9 Jews and 1 Samaritan together. What was it?

a. Their common affliction.

i. Leprosy.

Leprosy was the most feared illness in that time.

The term “leprosy,” as used in the Bible, referred to a wide variety of infectious skin rashes, scales, sores, or eruptions, not just clinical leprosy as we know it today.

ii. v.s. 12 tells us that these 10 lepers “stood at a distance”

They had to stand at a distance from Jesus.

They were not allowed to come near anybody.

They had to keep a distance of a minimum of six feet from other people including their family members.

Furthermore, lepers were not allowed to live within the walls of any city.

They were cast out and completely avoided by everyone.

(Lev 13:45-46) – “As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, “Unclean! Unclean!” He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

*They suffered together in the agony of their affliction

b. Their common need for mercy.

(They) called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity (mercy) on us!” (v.s. 13)

· There was no known treatment for their disease.

· The Jews saw this disease as a curse from God. – Though the Scripture never states that leprosy is always a curse from God.

· Mercy means – “not getting what you deserve.”

· They knew that if this rabbi Jesus had pity on them and healed them they would not be getting what they deserve.

· Other rabbi’s and piously religious people had told them that their disease was a curse from God – they deserved the disease not the cleansing.

· They cried out to the rabbi for the healing they did not deserve.

*They called out together for mercy.

c. **Their common faith.**

- They must have heard of the authority and healing power of Jesus.
- They must have heard of the compassion that set this rabbi apart.
- Much of Jesus' ministry took place in this region. – It would be impossible not to have heard something of the wonderful miracles this great teacher performed.
- i. Notice Jesus Never touched them.
 - 1. The Law commanded they stay 6 feet away. If Jesus touched them physically He would have broke the law.
 - 2. The OT Law prescribed that a person who was healed of leprosy was to go to the priest for official inspection and acclamation that the person was healed.
- ii. Notice that these 10 lepers continued to demonstrate their faith together.
 - *The lepers were demonstrating that they had faith in the words of Jesus – by turning around and walking towards the priest before they experienced their healing.
 - *They didn't question Jesus' command they believed Him.
 - *They believed together in faith.

d. **Their common cleansing.** (vs.14) tells us, *"And as they went, they were cleansed"*

- * They received their healing together.
- Even though these 9 Jews and 1 Samaritan had so many common experiences that had pulled them together across generations of prejudice and pride. – Something at the last separated them again!

4) **Something pulled this 10 member gang of lepers apart. What was it?**

a. **Maybe their ethnicity- severed the relationship.**

- It could have been the fact that now these 10 lepers were healed and if the 9 Jews kept a close relationship with a Samaritan – It would devastate their social status.
- Keeping a close relationship with a Samaritan would destroy any possibility of regaining popularity among their Jewish families and friends.
- Keeping a close relationship with a Samaritan would cause these 9 Jews to be just as alienated from Jewish society as if they had continued to have leprosy!
- *Perhaps the walls of racial prejudice and the hunger for regained social status were just too high to climb – and provided too much security to destroy.

b. **Maybe their religion – severed the relationship.**

- i. Remember Jesus had to told them in v.s14 "Go, show yourselves to the priests."
 - In the temple in Jerusalem - there was an inscription on a block in the wall. "Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary."
 - In v.s. 18 Jesus proclaims – *"Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"*
 - ***The word foreigner that Jesus used here is the same word that was inscribed on the wall of the temple to describe those who could not enter!
- ii. This gives us great insight into the faith of this Samaritan!****
 - He took Jesus at His word and began a journey to see the priest – a journey that he could have never finished!!!
 - The priest would have never seen this man...they would have considered him to be worth less than a stray dog!
- iii. After the healing
 - The 9 Jews still had the priest to go to so they could be declared clean.
 - The 9 Jews still had the law to fulfill so they could be considered good Jews
 - The 1 Samaritan had not where to go to but back to Jesus!
 - o Jesus was the source of his healing.
 - o Jesus was the one who had shown him the mercy he did not deserve.
 - This foreigner had no desire to go back to the Samaritan religion.
 - o Samaritan religion had rejected him and sent him to live with Jewish outcast.
 - o The Samaritan religion lacked the power to heal him.
 - o The Samaritan religion had failed to show him mercy
 - This foreigner had no desire to seek out a relationship with the Jewish religion
 - o It has also alienated its own followers when they needed support the most.
 - o It also would continue to reject him and hold a low value of his life because he

was still a Samaritan.

- This Samaritan only wanted to go one place...
 - o BACK TO JESUS!

c. **Maybe it was simply a flawed human perspective –severed the relationship.**

1. Maybe one of the Jews – wanted to wait to see if the cure was real.
2. Maybe a second of the Jews – wanted to wait to see if it would last.
3. Maybe a third one said – “I will go see Jesus later – after I visit my family.”
4. Maybe a fourth Jew - decided that he had never had leprosy in the first place.
5. Maybe the fifth Jew reasoned - “I must have had a temporary form of leprosy I would have gotten well anyway.”
6. Maybe the sixth - gave the glory to the priests.
7. Maybe the seventh said, “Jesus didn’t really do anything. All He did was tell me to go...”
8. Maybe the eighth Jew said - “Any rabbi could have done that.”
9. Maybe the ninth Jewish leper said, - “I was itching a lot less lately. I think I was already getting better anyway.”

d. **It was definitely the Samaritan thankfulness.**

We can presume a lot of things – but the greatest cause to separate this Samaritan from the 9 Jews – was his Uncommon Thankfulness!

- An attitude of Gratitude swelled up in this guy!

- This Samaritan was so excited – so thankful to Jesus – That he had to immediately go back and thank Him!

It was the thankfulness of this Samaritan that set him apart - and severed him from the other 9.

5) **Some powerful results of the Samaritans uncommon gratefulness.**

1. **He touched Jesus!** (vs. 16) - *“He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan.”*

The KJV reads, “He threw himself on Jesus’ feet...”

· Out of the 10 who were healed this Samaritan was the only one who got to touch Jesus!

2. **Jesus made him well.**

(vs. 19) - *“Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”*

Some Bible scholars say... “The word “well” is from the same word that is used in the New Testament to describe salvation: forgiveness from sin and a relationship with God and the promise of eternal life in heaven.

We do not need to split semanticall hairs to see...

· Even though all were healed only one was made well!

*The Samaritan had had much in common with his Jewish friends - but he was the only one who was made well.

· Why? -Because he was Uncommonly Thankful!

6) Application:

A. **Some striking similarities between this story in Scripture and ourselves.**

1. **Our common affliction has brought us together – Sin.**

* It has been said, “misery loves company”

· Our greatest misery is the leprosy of Sin.

- It is an affliction that brought us together – because we have all suffered from it.

- It is a disease that has contaminated each of us and caused us to be outcast from the camp of God.

- It is a disease which is fatal to the soul no one can cure it. **Except of course the Great Physician.

The Bible says, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

-We have all shared in the affliction of sin.

2. **Our common faith has brought us together – Faith in Jesus.**

- Something sparked in each of us that caused us to call out to Jesus.

- Something caused us to seek out the possibility of mercy from this Man.

- Each person in this room as a certain amount of Faith in Jesus (or else you would not be here at all).

3. **Our common cleansing has brought us together – Salvation.**

- A common cleansing has brought many in this place together.
- A cleansing that comes by believing in Jesus and having him wash our sins away.
- A clean that comes as we begin to Journey down the path commanded in the Scriptures.
- * If We have believed in Jesus and began to walk the narrow path – we know that His blood has cleansed the leprosy of our souls – HE HAS MADE US CLEAN!

· BUT THERE IS ONE THING THAT WILL SET US APPART FROM MOST OTHERS....

An Uncommon Thankfulness!

1. Those who are sincerely thankful get to experience the joy of touching the heart of God.
2. Those who express an uncommon thankfulness to the master are the ones who experience cleansing of sin – and get to experience the Joy of being made well!
3. We hate to be taken for granted we – get angry when we sacrifice and no one says thanks.... HOW CHRIST (WHO DIED ON THE CROSS FOR US) MUST HATE OUR INGRATITUDE!

What has Jesus ever done for you? –As if offering forgiving of our sins isn't enough!

-If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

-If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

-If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week

-If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

-If you can attend church meetings without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than three billion in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare, even in the United States.

***If anyone has a reason to be Uncommonly Thankful – It is us!

- 1) Have you had the faith to call out to Jesus for a cleansing from sin?
 - i. Or are you still alienated in the camp of sin – living a hopeless life?
- 2) If you have experienced the Cleansing of the Lord?
 - i. How often do you return to fall at His feet and touch Him with your thankfulness?

IF YOU HAVE FAILED TO BE UNCOMMONLY THANKFUL – IT IS THE THANKSGIVING SEASON – IT IS A GREAT TIME TO START.