**Luke 17:11-19**

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. **12** And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance **13** and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” **14** When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. **15** Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; **16** and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. **17** Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? **18** Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” **19** And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

**“Give Thanks, God Turns To Us!”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Thanksgiving is not a church holiday, but a national observance. The act of giving thanks never needed a government mandate to make it so. Thanksgiving was already happening well over 150 years prior to the birth of this nation in 1776. Those Pilgrims arrived as foreign dissenters of England and the Anglican Church. Their first Thanksgiving had more loss than gain caused by sickness and cold weather. And there were no parades, football, and early-Black Friday sales. Only about 140 people were at the first Thanksgiving and the majority at that table was Native American.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Giving Thanks the Pilgrim way would seem strange to us as Lutherans. Rather than looking to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, they looked to their works to be a sign of God’s favor. Yet, we know God sends all kinds of crosses in life so that rather seeking justification by works, we finally just need Jesus. As the baptized, giving thanks is not about a date, but a way of life. St. Paul told the Ephesian, “…Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Even another name for the Lord’s Supper is, “Eucharist” which is to say, “A feast of thanksgiving.” Thanks be to God that we go our way heard, healed, and holy by Jesus.

1. **Give thanks that One does hear any who cry out to him.**
2. If ten lepers calling out to Jesus do not catch your attention what will?

* “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”
* After the Fall, a world felt all shades of grief.
* Leprosy was a severe sickness beyond bodily suffering.
* Their appeal to Christ was for mercy shaped in a prayer.

1. Appealing to God never hurts, especially when God has made Himself known in Jesus Christ.

* In the Old Testament, prayer was nothing foreign to a patriarch like Abraham or Daniel in a lion’s den, and even for a king like David.
* It was never about the work of praying, but what God gave as a promise, “call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” (Psalms 50:15).
* Jesus said, “ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11)
* Like the ten lepers, we can cry out knowing by faith God will answer in His way and at His own time.

1. **Give thanks that God does heal without objection.**
2. The Lepers received newness by God’s grace.

* Jesus command had a promise, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”
* Suffering ended for as they went they found themselves cleansed.
* Going to the priests would let them back into the community and religious life.
* Life was good for them once again.

1. Healing is far more than a moment in time.

* Consider those words, “Give us this day our daily bread.” (read Luther’s answer)
* Rather than favoritism, God’s healing grace goes out to all.
* Healing that comes as simple as our daily need for food or sleep that restores the body.
* Since healing is part and particle of this life, God always brings deliverance from evil.

1. **Give thanks that Christ does make sinners holy.**
2. One Leper kept faith, while the other nine drifted away.

* All the lepers had a reason for giving thanks!
* Yet, for most, it was a momentary thankfulness lasting only a time.
* Jesus gave the verdict, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”
* Beyond prayers for healing, Christ made a sinner holy, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.” (Soon faith would see the glory of God on the cross!)

1. God is not caught up over the nine, but is satisfied with just you.

* Many people are thankful they get better from surgery or escape death.
* Yet, ingratitude is to finally miss this most of all, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17).
* To give glory to God is victory greater than life, but holiness where no sin, death, or Devil keeps Christ from you.
* St. Paul said, “In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

Giving Thanks then as a Christian is to be like God, putting up with ingratitude and still being able to do good. God does nothing less for you, regardless whoever else forgets His Name. The pilgrims tried to build their promised land, but God had different plans. This country has expanded to accommodate many nations, tribes, and peoples, even Lutherans who came late to the party. We can be thankful for the hard work done by any in this great land. We can be thankful for freedom that inspires value for family, church, and state. Yet, around Word and Sacrament is the true glory of God that is His goodness and mercy alone for sinners that has no end. Amen. Thanks be to God that we go our way heard, healed, and holy by Jesus. Amen.

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving\_(United\_States)#History [↑](#footnote-ref-1)