

Dr. Ralph F. Wilson shares a fictional retelling of a story in Luke 17:

A Leper's Thanksgiving...

Ten men silhouetted along the low ridge called to the leader of a small band below: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

Bartholomew glanced up. Lepers, he thought. Ragged, pitiable lepers. From the time their skin disease was diagnosed, they were cut off from society, forced to live on their own in caves or huts away from towns. A fortunate few had relatives who would leave food for them, but many had no one. They weren't allowed close enough to beg for a living. Ragged, thin, rejected. Lepers. Even the word spoke an icy finality.

"Have mercy on us!"

Their pleading cut through Bart's thoughts. Jesus was cupping his hands now, and calling across the low valley which lay between the road and the ridge where the lepers stood. His voice rang out sharp and compelling in the stillness of the morning.

"Go! Show yourselves to the priests!"

The lepers looked at each other. You only went to the priests if your leprosy was gone. Only the priests could issue a clean bill of health so you could return to your family.

As they held up their decayed limbs, they were asking, "Why go unless we're healed?" They looked over to Jesus again, but he was conversing with Peter and John, and they didn't catch his eyes.

But then Bart heard a shout, a cry of exaltation, a loud eerie call that filled the valley and bounced off the hills: "I'm healed! I'm whole. My leprosy is gone! It's gone!"

Bart looked around in time to catch a smile at the corners of Jesus' mouth. The healing hadn't occurred as the lepers stood looking and wondering. It had taken place as they had begun to obey Jesus' words. "As they went" they were healed.

Suddenly a lone figure broke from the circle of rejoicing ex-lepers. He bounded over the little creek and raced towards them, rags fluttering behind him. He sped toward Jesus and then landed on his knees before the Master in a cloud of fine dust.

He spoke just a phrase -- "Thank you, Master" -- in a sort of broken accent, the accent of Samaria. Then he just knelt there sobbing.

Jesus spoke now, not really to the leper, but beyond him somehow, as if to the whole world. "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Bart's mind spun. He thought of the countless times God had answered his prayers, provided for his family, given him work, healed his sickly daughter. How often had he really said "Thanks"? Too often he had taken these blessings for granted, rejoicing in his good fortune, but seldom racing back to the Giver with a word of heartfelt thanks on his lips.

As the man knelt, Jesus' hand instinctively rested on his head, blessing, and at the same time stroking and smoothing the tangles left from years of sojourn. Jesus wept as he caressed the man's head, tears making rivulets down his cheeks into his beard.

Bart looked up. The leper band was now heading off towards the priests' village. They had received physical healing, indeed, but the man at Jesus' feet had received a healing of his whole person. As Jesus helped him up, he said, "Rise and go. Your faith has made you whole."


The newly-whole Samaritan embraced Jesus. Then they stood there for a moment looking at one another -- smile meeting smile. The gift of healing had sent him the message of God's love, but thanks had brought him home.

"The gift of healing had sent him the message of God's love, but thanks had brought him home." What a way to sum it up! There is power in a thankful heart. Without gratitude, we can never be complete. Count your blessings...name them one by one.

Trying to make everyday a day of thanks,
Pastor Rob



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

				1 Worship Team Practice 6:00 pm	2	3
4 L.I.F.T. L.I.F.T. Sunday School 9 am Worship 10am	5	6 Food Pantry 1-2 pm	7 Wednesday Night Services Dinner 5:30 Track Meet 6:15 Rock the House 6:15 Bible Study 6:30	8 Worship Team Practice 6:00 pm	9 L.I.F.T.	10
11 L.I.F.T. OCC: SHOE BOXES DUE Sunday School 9 am Worship 10am	12	13	14 Dinner 5:30 Track Meet 6:15 R the H 6:15 Bible Study 6:30	15 Worship Team Practice 6:00 pm	16	17
18 <i>Thanksgiving</i> <i>Dinner</i> Sunday School 9 am Worship 10am	19	20 Food Pantry 1-2 pm	21 NO WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICES	22 Happy Thanksgiving  Office Closed	23 MYF Office Closed	24 MYF
25 MYF Sunday School 9 am Worship 10am	26	27	28 Dinner 5:30 Track Meet 6:15 R the H 6:15 Bible Study 6:30	29 Worship Team Practice 6:00 pm	30 L.I.F.T.	

Faith in Action

November 2012

**First Church of God**
Connect. Grow. Serve.
1614 Southwest Blvd.-Jefferson City, MO 65109
573.635.0963 www.jeffcityfirstchurch.com

Schedules

11.04.12

Nursery: Travis & Lisa Glenn and Thom & Amanda Bolden
Early Elementary Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Children's Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Worship Team: Florine Tripp, Fred Proebsting, Courtney Kilmer, Mariah Gilliland, John Kriete and Mary Crader
Audio: Chris Bolton
Visual: Dan Gessman
Head Usher: Kent Denny
Greeters: Kent Denny and Nancy Kaplan
Ushers: Mike Nash, Elmer Redcay, Nathan Redcay and Robert Schwartze

11.18.12

Nursery: David Larimore, Laura Smith, Carmen Bentsch and Autumn Bush
Early Elementary Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Children's Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Worship Team: Kevin Highfill, Carmen Morris, Karen Kelly, Mariah Gilliland, John Kriete and Mary Crader
Audio: Mike Morris
Visual: Brian Bush
Head Usher: Kent Denny
Greeters: Kent Denny and Nancy Kaplan
Ushers: Michael Larimore, Chris Bolton, Zach Bolton and Brandon Redcay

11.11.12

Nursery: Debbie Whitener, Erin Larimore, Desiree Redcay and Courtney Kilmer
Early Elementary Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Children's Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Worship Team: Florine Tripp, Courtney Kilmer, Mariah Gilliland, John Kriete and Mary Crader
Audio: Mike Morris
Visual: Robert Schwartze
Head Usher: Kent Denny
Greeters: Kent Denny and Nancy Kaplan
Ushers: David Larimore, Adam Sneller, John Caples and Justin Caples

11.25.12

Nursery: Tresha McBaine, Alex Gilliland, Shelby Hoener and Pat Brown
Early Elementary Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Children's Church: Christmas Musical Practice
Worship Team: Kevin Highfill, John Kriete and Mary Crader
Audio: Aaron Larimore
Visual: Brian Bush
Head Usher: Kent Denny
Greeters: Kent Denny and Nancy Kaplan
Ushers: Keith Denny, Charlie Ruth, Junior Shikles and Kevin Griep