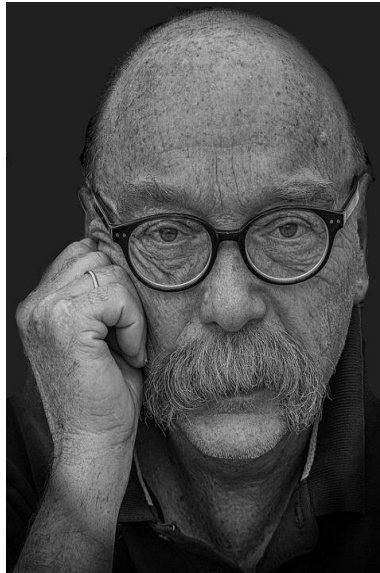


# ***DON'T THEY APPRECIATE ME?***



The U.S. and in Canada each have their special day of Thanksgiving, where people gather to reflect and give thanks. The message which is usually heard in one form or another is, "Every day is a day of thanksgiving....We need to be giving thanks all the time."

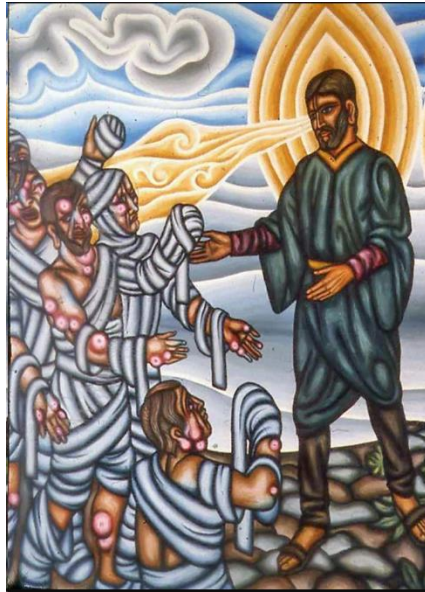
And it's true, thanksgiving and thankfulness ought to be the dominating spirit of our lives. People who have developed the mindset of continually giving thanks have found the way to true blessedness.

But most of us are more like those nine lepers who took their healing from Jesus and never looked back. When something really good happens to us, we're elated. We may even say, "Thanks a lot, God." But the idea of offering my life back to God in thanksgiving — of doing something costly to show my gratitude --- strikes us as fanatical. It's okay to be thankful, but let's not get carried away!

One of the reasons that this kind of radical thankfulness does not grip our souls --- why we're rarely the Samaritan praising God with a loud voice, throwing ourselves at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks --- is because we're all wrapped up in our own disappointments. We may not say it in so many words, but here's the question that lingers like a cloud in the back of our minds:

"Why don't they appreciate me? I go out of my way to help folks, and they don't even notice. I do the grungy jobs, nobody says, Thanks. I give them the shirt off my back, and they say, 'How 'bout your shoes, while your at it?'"

We know all about what Jesus went through that day, when those nine lepers hurried on, without a word of thanks. It happens to us all the time. After a while, you get cynical. You feel like sitting back and saying, "I paid my dues. Let somebody else be the sucker for a change."



***And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. "And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"***

*Luke 17:12-13*

Imagine if Jesus had said, "Okay you guys. I'll heal you on one condition: that, after you're healed, you show a little appreciation. I'm sick and tired of healing people and being ignored. If you guys walk away with your healing and don't know how to say Thank You, you're going to end up sicker than you were before."

Praise God, that's not how Jesus operated.

**He healed these men with no strings. No conditions.**

***When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."  
And as they went they were cleansed.***

All ten of them. Their leprosy was gone forever. This healing was a sign of God's kingdom. They could follow the sign right into God's world, or they could ignore the sign and go on living as they always lived.

***Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."***

*Luke 17:14-19*

We see two wonderful things in this episode:

We see a man with a thankful heart.

We see the Son of Man with a generous heart.

**A thankful heart.**

**A generous heart.**

When you and I arrive at the place where we have such hearts, we will never again complain , "Why don't people appreciate me?"

Because it won't matter.

**We will be too full of gratitude to God to worry about whether people appreciate us.**

**We will be too full of God's mercy to be upset when people take us for granted.**

I can hear someone saying, "What planet are you living on? It's all very well to talk about having a thankful heart when we're sitting in church, or reading these words in private. But take that thankful, generous heart out into the real world and they'll walk all over you and leave you flat as a pancake at the bottom of a ditch."

It's true, this world is no rose garden. There are some slick operators out there who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves. The Lord Jesus himself warns us to watch out for those guys, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Don't be a fool!

But keep in mind that the biggest fools on this earth are not the suckers and the patsies and the gullible idiots. The biggest fools in this world are the cynics and the misers, who only say "Thank you," when it pays off for them and only open their hands and give, when they expect to get something back.

***Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."***



**"Your faith has made you well."**

Jesus did not say that to the other nine, only to this man. For this man received something the other nine did not get. This man entered into God's World simply by giving thanks.

Let this be his way of life from now on, and, no matter what happens to him in the days ahead...

**This man is under the protection of God.**

**This man is surrounded by a wall of holy fire.**

**This man's grateful heart is flooded with God's peace.**

And here's what happens to people who travel the world with thankful hearts: they become anointed with an even greater blessing.

### **It's called generosity.**

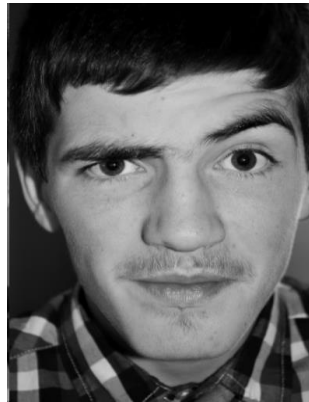
The Samaritan who's been healed goes home to his family in Samaria. They can't believe it's him! No more leprosy. His body is whole and clean. His eyes are shining. His children can hug him again. His wife can kiss him again. While they're rejoicing there's a knock at the door. It's his neighbor. Could they spare a little bread? His neighbor and his family haven't eaten in two days. "Here," says the leper who is no longer a leper, "Take these loaves. And here," as he pours some gold coins from his purse, "Go and buy whatever you need. And may the God of the Messiah Jesus open the windows of heaven upon you." After the neighbor leaves, the Samaritan's wife says, "Isn't that a little risky? Giving all that away at one time?" "My dear wife, you managed so well while I was an outcast leper. You held our family together during difficult days. And I thank you. I honor you. But look at what God has done for us! Surely we can share his mercy with our neighbor." And as the days passed, heaven not only opened its windows on his neighbor. It kept pouring out blessings on this thankful man with a generous heart.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not that Samaritan leper. I'm me. And I have to tell you, I do grow weary sometimes, doing for people, and never getting even a whisper of thanks. No appreciation. It dries up the soul. It would be nice to get a word of encouragement once-in-a-while."

Who of us has not felt that way? Who of us has not been "weary in well-doing?"

### **It's a dangerous place to be.**

### **It's right on the edge of a pit called Cynicism.**



You become a cynic, and pretty soon you can't see anything in the world to be thankful for.

### **Your heart turns cold.**

When we find ourselves getting depressed because nobody appreciates us, the best thing we can do is get over ourselves and look up. Instead of focusing on all the people who let us down, we focus on the One who never lets us down --- not even when we think he's letting us down.

He never does. He never will.

We may not be that Samaritan leper. But if we open our eyes, we too can see the kindness of the One who not only laid down his life for each of us, as if each were the only one, but who also is even now showering us with a thousand mercies.

Instead of bemoaning our sorry lot, we lift up our hearts and start giving thanks like that Samaritan.

**Let all that I am praise the LORD;  
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.  
Let all that I am praise the LORD;  
may I never forget the good things he does for me.  
He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.  
He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies.  
He fills my life with good things.  
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!**

**Psalm 103: 1-5 (NLT)**

Even if you don't feel like it, make yourself do it.

Just start praising the Lord God, until your soul catches fire with thankfulness.

***Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.***



Pretty soon you will forget all about those nine lepers who never said "Thanks" to you.

You'll be on your face with the Samaritan, at Jesus' feet, with a thankful, generous heart.

**And when you get up, you'll begin a new life.**

*Prayer: Lord, save us from the trap of feeling unappreciated, bitter, and cynical, and allowing ourselves to become cold hearted. Help us to never stop looking back and being grateful, thankful and overjoyed by all the blessings you have poured into our lives. And yes, fill our hearts so full of gratitude for your mercy that we have no room to feel unappreciated, taken advantage of, or let down. Instead in honor of you may we willingly continue to be merciful and kind even to the ungrateful. As we keep our eyes on you and all you have done for us...all the good things, all the healing, all the forgiveness, and for the sweet redemption and life you have poured into every aspect of our lives. We fall before you because we are awed by your tender mercy to us. We bless you, thank you, and praise your Holy name. Amen.*

*Maranatha Mirror*

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2011

Featured Art: Art courtesy of Peter Koenig. Photos via Pixabay

**Maranatha Mirror Messages**

[mmirror.net](http://mmirror.net)

[maranathamirror18@gmail.com](mailto:maranathamirror18@gmail.com)

