

Scripture:

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Luke 17: 11-19

“It is God’s doing.”

“Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

The beginning of the 103 Psalm.

Verse 2 ----- again ---

“Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits -----”

And forget not his benefits ---- benefits such as ----- all of the things then
listed ---

--- the forgiveness of sins

----- healing

---- salvation

----- the love and compassion of God

---- the satisfaction of desires

----- and finally renewal

All God’s doing.

The Psalmist gives thanks --- and doesn’t forget all these blessings ----- that
are God’s doing.

And then our Old Testament reading today ----- Deuteronomy 8 --- picking it up midway through verse 14 -----

“The Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt --- out of the land of slavery.

He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions.

He brought you water out of hard rock.

He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known...”

Again ---- all God’s doing -----

----- brought out of Egypt --- freed from slavery

---- led home through the wilderness

----- kept safe

----- fed and nourished ---- in a difficult time.

All God’s doing.

And finally our Gospel reading today --- Luke 17.

Healing for all.

Restoration --- allowed back into community.

Acceptance --- home coming ----- going back to family members.

All because of God.

All God’s doing.

We might look at the passage from Luke’s gospel today ---- and think to ourselves why did only 1 out of 10 go back and thank Jesus?

Isn’t this passage a reminder to make sure we give thanks like the 1 ---- and not be like the other 9 who never did?

We might think about those 9 and wonder why they never even took the time to go back to Jesus and thank Him.

We might think to ourselves ----- maybe they were afraid to go back to Jesus to thank Him.

He was after all a marked man by this time --- maybe they didn't want to be associated with Him in any way ---- things were all of a sudden looking up -- -- they'd been healed ----- why take any risks --- why go and thank this man who yes --- was responsible for their healing --- but was also despised by many.

Going back to Him --- might cause more problems than it's worth.

Or ----- maybe after having been healed they were so eager to get back and see their families ---- after such a prolonged absence ---- that they forgot or planned on returning later.

Or --- maybe --- now that they could enter into society again ----- they ran to their favourite coffee shop ---- or bakery ----- to once again enjoy a long awaited cup of java after such a long time without any.

Or ---- maybe the first thing they did was run to the synagogue ----- their "church" ----- to pray and to give thanks.

Going to the priests as Jesus instructed them wasn't about running to the synagogue to worship --- going to the priests as Jesus instructed was for them to be declared clean ---- ritually clean and therefore allowed to re-integrate back into society instead of having to remain the mandatory 50 yards away from other human beings on account of their disease.

Reading Luke's gospel today it's all too easy to think to ourselves --- "Me -- - I'm not going to be like the 9 who were ungrateful ---- and forgot --- or neglected ----- or became so sidetracked that they forget to give thanks --- no ---- that's not me ---- I'm the 1 not the 9."

Or we might be thinking something like ----- "To me --- this is a story all about looking at the positives in life --- and remembering to be positive and grateful like the Samaritan ----- isn't there a positive spin in the story --- at least 1 was grateful."

Or we can read Luke's gospel and look a little deeper perhaps ----- and see it as another example of the inclusiveness of God's saving --- healing --- restoring love.

Thinking something along the lines of ----- "Well 10 people had leprosy ---- - some of them must have been Jews ----- why is it that only the foreigner --- the outsider gives thanks ----- isn't part of the message then that God's healing love is for all and not just some?"

That God would heal a foreign --- despised --- enemy of the Jews --- a Samaritan ----- shows us that God's healing ---- saving restoring love ---- is for everyone --- Jew --- Gentile ---- man ----- woman ---- rich poor ---- every colour of skin --- member of extremist terrorist groups like ISIS --- peace loving North Americans ----- and so on.

Or ----- we can go a little deeper still and consider what happened on a more theological level.

Thinking things like ----- "Everyone ----- all 10 lepers are healed ----- but really only one is actually saved ---- the one who returned and gave thanks."

Maybe the point is that only the grateful Christians --- only the one's who say thank you ---- grow in their understanding and appreciation of God's grace.

Maybe we truly only come to faith when we respond to God's reaching out and healing us.

And of course ----- there are other points to ponder too.

More than we could ever hope to explore in one sitting.

But along with all of these possibilities --- there is another far richer reality.

At the centre of the text --- at the centre of the gospel for today ---- is the healing.

The healing.

Not the 1 man.

Not the other 9.

Not even the need to give thanks.

At the centre of the passage ----- is God's healing presence.

God's saving presence in Jesus Christ.

And at the centre of our service today is the exact same healing and saving presence.

And it comes to us in the waters of Baptism.

In our call to worship today ---- we had these words ----

“By the power of the Holy Spirit

God acts through baptism.

It is the sacrament not of what we do

but of what God has done for us in Christ.”

The last words are the key ----- beginning with not of what we do but of what God has done for us in Christ.”

Often we read into passages --- and baptism for that matter ----- too much of ourselves --- us.

When in truth --- it's all about God's doing.

The gospel is not about what we do --- we ought to behave this way --- believe this and not that ---- adhere to such and such doctrine and so on ----- forget about it ---- at least for today.

And instead reflect upon all God has done for us in Christ.

We can look at the passage in Luke's gospel today --- and think about many things ---- the 1 ----- the 9 ----- the need to give thanks ---- why was it a Samaritan and not a Jew who in the end was the grateful one ---- am I a grateful person.

Who am I like in the passage?

Am I a thankful person or not so much?

How am I at treating outsiders? --- do I include them or am I prejudice?

Am I a judgmental person ----- did I first jump all over the 9 for not giving thanks --- thinking how ungrateful are they?

Do I focus on the positive and give thanks for the 1 --- and give thanks like the 1.

And so on.

And many of these same questions are raised in the Old testament reading as well ---- as the Israelites ----- are reminded not to forget God's goodness --- and to be humble and thankful.

Do yourself a favour this thanksgiving ----- go home sometime over the next few days and read Deuteronomy 8 --- we've barely touched on it --- but like Luke's Gospel reading today --- like baptism ----- it's all about God's goodness ---- pouring over us abundantly.

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for today ----- whether it be Luke 17 ---- - Deuteronomy 8 ---- or the sacrament of baptism --- is all about God's healing presence.

God's healing ----- saving presence in Jesus Christ.

After all the questions have been asked ---- after we've exhausted all the possibilities --- many of them good and faithful ones --- as to what we might learn from this gospel passage --- who we are ---- what we may be being called to do ----- and be in light of this passage.

After all of these considerations fall away as secondary ----- we are left with God's saving actions.

The first few times I read this gospel passage over this week I kept thinking - ---- wow Jonathan whatever you do make sure you're a thankful person --- make sure you're the kind of guy that goes and thanks people after they help you.

And then I thought -----no --- if that's you're focus you've missed the point
 ----- because it's not all about you ----- what matters here is the healing ---
 the fact that God acted --- and not any human action.

If we grasp that all the rest falls into place --- if you learn to truly appreciate
 that at the heart of life is God acting ----- healing ---- saving --- providing --
 ----- eventually you can't help but respond with thanks.

So ----- consider this -----

After all the songs have been sung ----- after all the prayers have been
 offered ----- we've heard scripture ----- endured the sermon --- shaken
 hands ----- exchanged pleasantries ----- enjoyed coffee ----- shared in
 fellowship ----- when all this has passed ----- what are we left with
 today?

Memories --- yes.

Encouragement --- hopefully.

Peace --- perhaps.

But -- beyond all of this.

A bit more maybe.

Consider this ----- in all its radiant beauty ----- stands the baptismal font.

A reminder ---- a statement.

A visible expression ---- the highest of highest.

God's doing.

God's saving presence.

Thanksgiving --- the holiday.

Thanks --- giving --- the act ----- are all about looking to God and standing in His presence in awe.

Hopefully that's what we're left with today.

A sense of awe.

1 out of 10 was in Luke's gospel today.

Perhaps a few of us will be too.

The message today ----- Luke ---- Deuteronomy ----- the water and the font and the beautiful little baby girl.

All God's doing.

This --- that --- the other ---- whatever we take from today ----- it's all God's doing.

“Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things”

God is good ----- Happy Thanksgiving!

Amen.