

Ten Were Healed:
October 12, 2025

There are a few things people say... **[1 People Say]**
That don't mean...
Exactly what they are saying.

For example...
When someone says...
It goes without saying...
You know... that they are going to say...
The thing... that goes without saying.

It goes without saying...
Then they give an extended explanation...

Of the thing that....
Does not need to be said...

Or when I make a call...
And get a machine...
That makes me wait for an extended period of time.
And the computer voice... on the other end... says...
Thank you for your patience.

That machine clearly does not know me.
I hate being put on hold.
I am not feeling patient...
And saying thank you for being patient...
Actually makes me less patient.

So I say... I'm not being patient.
Out loud... to the computer.
Yes. I really do. Ask my wife.

Or the other day...
I had to call the credit card company...
For the church account...

And first.. I was put on hold...
With obnoxious hold music.
Then... the person helping me... **[2 Bear With Me]**
Kept saying... bear with me.

I need to verify something. Bear with me.
I need to check something. Bear with me.
I'm almost done. Bear with me.
I'll be right back. Bear with me.

I said ok... no problem... the first few times...
Then... I realized she wasn't really talking to me...
It was just something she said...

Every single time... she talked.
It was like a verbal nervous tick.

So I stopped responding.
Then. When I was just about done...
With what I needed to do...
I picked up my phone... to move it...
And I hung up.
True story.

But... listen... I'm not saying these things...
To be critical... of other people or even of machines.
I realize... I do the same thing.
I say things all the time...
That aren't exactly what I mean.

Very often...
I will tell staff members...

If you need me...
I'll be in my office.

But the truth is...
I'm gonna be in my office...
Whether they need me or not.
It's where I'm going.

My existence and my location...
Are not dependent... are not conditional...
On their need.

I should say..
Hey everybody. I exist!
And I will continue to exist... in my office.

The reason I have engaged...
In all this verbal nonsense today...
Is because... we typically read the gospel lesson...
Like it's a conditional situation. **[3 Ten]**

But it's not. Did you notice...
The healing of the ten lepers...
Was not dependent... or conditional..
On their thankfulness.

It doesn't say...
Anywhere in the text...
That the only one who was healed...
Was the one who came back... to Jesus...
To say thank you.

That's not how it worked.

All ten were sick.
All ten saw Jesus from a distance.
All ten cried out to him.
Jesus... Master.
Have mercy on us.

You understand...
That all ten people...
Who cried out to Jesus...
Believed that he had the power...
To heal their sick bodies.

They all believed.
They all were healed.
But only one said thanks.

And I think it's easy for us...
To sit here in our nice church...
Next to our friends.
Shaking hands.
Giving hugs.
Saying good morning.
Showing our love and respect...
To each other.

Well... they couldn't do that.
They were unclean.
They were separated... by the law.

They needed to stay away from...
All the healthy people.
They needed to stay away from their homes.
They were completely cut off.

Then Jesus told them what to do.
Go show yourselves to the priests.
But they didn't make it that far...
On their way... to see the priests...
They were made clean.

Now just for one minute.
Imagine what that really means.
They had been separated...
From everybody and everything.

They couldn't hold their children.
They couldn't hug and kiss their spouse.
They couldn't even go...
To the market place...
And mingle among their friends.

NOTHING.
Until now. This moment. They were suddenly healed.
So I imagine... they stopped.

Realized what had happened.
And were completely overwhelmed.
They took a breath.
They saw their skin.
And immediately...
Their hearts filled with joy.
So they ran.

To their homes.
To their families.
To their friends.

They ran.
Because they were free.

They ran.
Wouldn't you?
I don't blame them...
When your heart is filled with joy...
You want to be with the people you love.

And so yes. **[4 One Came Back]**
Only one came back.
To say thank you to Jesus.

Only one.
And a foreigner no less.
But maybe that makes sense.
Since the Samaritan...
Didn't expect to be treated...
With love and respect and healing...
By a Jewish man.

They were enemies.

So maybe... that one...
Was especially grateful.
Because he knew...
He didn't deserve...
What he had received.

But... regardless...
Of the expressed thankfulness... or not...
They all received the healing...
They needed.

And that's the way God works.
It may not seem fair to us.
That people who are ungrateful...
People who don't believe...
People who do bad things...
Are blessed by God too. **[5 Matthew 5]**

But Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5...

God makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,
And sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

The provision of God...
Is not dependent... on who we are... on us.
God's grace... and God's love...
And even God's blessings in this world...
Are not conditional.
Are not about us.

About us... having a thankful heart.
About us... being good people.
About us... being any specific way.

GIVING THANKS IS NOT ABOUT GOD.
This is going to be hard to hear...
So hold on.

God does not need us...
To say thank you...
To somehow validate...
The gifts that we have been given.

God gives.
Because it is in God's nature...
To give.

God is generous.
Because it is in God's nature...
To be generous.

In our second lesson today...
The apostle Paul wrote...
If we are faithless, God remains faithful—
God cannot deny himself.

Nothing we do...
Can change the nature of God.
God is... who God is... I am who I am...
Eternal. Unchangeable.

But the result...
Of God's nature is that...
We benefit.
More than what...
We deserve.

Giving thanks to God...
Is not something that God needs...
So what is the reason... we give thanks?
Well... having a thankful heart...
Does something to us. Right?

You remember when...
We used to sing the liturgy...

The Lord be with you...
And also with you...
Lift up your hearts...
We lift them to the Lord...
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

And then the pastor...
Or the liturgist...
Would say... **[6 Right and Salutory]**

It is indeed right and salutary...
That we should at all times and in all places...
Offer thanks and praise to you...
O Lord, holy Father...
Through Christ our Lord;

Who on this day overcame death and the grave...
And by his glorious resurrection...
Opened to us the way of everlasting life.

And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven...
We praise your name and join their unending hymn:

I love the liturgy...
But I really love those words...
That the pastor speaks...
It is indeed RIGHT and SALUTARY.

The word right is easy.
It's the right thing to do.
Giving thanks and praise to God is right...
Because God deserves our thanks and praise.
So thankful is the right thing to do.

But that second word... SALUTARY.
This word indicates that...
The act of giving thanks is beneficial...
Wholesome, and conducive to spiritual health...

It suggests that gratitude...
Is not merely a ritual...
But has a positive impact...
On the individual and community.

The Latin root of the word SALUTARY means...
Health and remedy.
Thankfulness is what fixes us.

And there is research...
To back that up.

Two researchers...
Dr. Robert Emmons... University of California...
Dr. Michael McCullough... University of Miami...
Did a study on gratitude.

They asked the participants...
To write a few sentences each week. **[7 Grateful]**

One group wrote about things for which they were grateful...
That happened during the week.

A second group wrote about daily irritations...
Or things that had displeased them...

And a third group wrote about events...
That had affected them...
With no direction...
About positive or negative.

After 10 weeks... they found...
Those who wrote about gratitude...
Were more optimistic...
And felt better about life...
Than the other two groups.

They also exercised more.
And went to the doctor less.

And we're not talking about fake optimism...
That looks at the problems of the world...
And says... everything's ok...
All the time.

No. It's more than that... It's assessing...
Taking an inventory...
Of our daily life...
And understanding...
That we have so much...
To be thankful for.

Back in 1988, a Polish railway worker... **[8 Jan Grzebski]**
Named Jan Grzebski was hit by a train.
He survived... but only barely. For the next 19 years (until the year 2007),
Grzebski was in a coma.

He awoke in 2007 to a whole new world.
Nineteen years earlier...
Poland was a communist state.
Grzebski noted that back then...
Meat was rationed....

There were huge lines at nearly every gas station.
And, "there was only tea and vinegar in the shops."

But 19 years later,
He awoke to a free nation
Where he said there were
'people on the streets with cell phones
And there are so many goods in the shops
It makes my head spin."

But something puzzled him.
"What amazes me is all these people
Who walk around with their mobile phones
And yet they never stop moaning."

These people had freedom,
And food
And wealth
Greater than Poland had had for decades...
And yet Grzebski woke from his coma
To find that ALL they seemed to do... was grumble!

If you don't get into the habit of thanking God
For what you DO have,
You'll soon become ungrateful
About what you DON'T have.

Or I heard it said.. **[9 My Cup]**
"It is a rare person who,
When his cup frequently runs over,
Can give thanks to God
Instead of complaining
About the limited size of his mug!"

We have been so deeply and richly... **[10 Blessed]**
Blessed by God.

We are alive.
We have life and breath.
We have resources.
We have people.
Who will help us.
When our resources run low.

We have people...
Who God has given us...
Who will be there for us...
Through anything that comes.

We have a community of faith...
Who will inspire us...
And hold us accountable...
Who will laugh with us.

Who will cry with us.

Who will point us back...
Over and over again...
So that we can find our way back...
To God... every time.

And when the world...
Swirls out of control...

And when every one is telling us...
That it's all going to hell...
In a hand basket.

And when we are tempted...
To give in... to the negative...
To the pain...
To the despair.

We need to fight back.
We need to speak the truth...
Of God's love and generosity...
Against the lies.

We need to stand against...
All the trouble...
And say... that might be true...
It might be hard right now.

But...
There is more to this story.

We know...
God is good.
God is generous.
God has provided all that we need.

We have been given so much good.
And we will be thankful.

Thanks be to God.
Amen!