

Thanksgiving Day

(Proper from TLH - "Day of General or Special Thanksgiving")

Hymns: 574, 572, 313, 568

THE INTROIT OF THE DAY

P: Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord:

C: praise ye the Lord.

P: Praise Him for His mighty acts:

C: praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

P: Praise ye the Lord; praise God in His sanctuary:

C: praise Him in the firmament of His power.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose mercies are new unto us every morning and who, though we have in no wise deserved Thy goodness, dost abundantly provide for all our wants of body and soul, give us, we pray Thee, Thy Holy Spirit that we may heartily acknowledge Thy merciful goodness toward us, give thanks for all Thy benefits, and serve Thee in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Lamentations 3:22-25

It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

THE GRADUAL

P: The eyes of all wait upon Thee:

C: and Thou givest them their meat in due season.

P: Thou openest Thine hand:

C: and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name:

C: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Hallelujah!

THE EPISTLE

1 Timothy 2:1-8

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in

faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

THE GOSPEL

St. Luke 17:11-19

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

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εκαθαρισθησαν ^{G2511 V-API-3P}

σεσωκεν ^{G4982 V-RAI-3S}

Luke 17:11-19 — “TURNED BACK”

INTRODUCTION

I. JESUS, MASTER, HAVE MERCY ON US

II. TURNED BACK

III. THE FAITH OF YOU HAS SAVED YOU

CONCLUSION

Thanksgiving Day

Hymns: 574, 572, 313, 568

Luke 17:11-19 — “Turned Back”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Gospel reading appointed for this day of national thanksgiving, Luke 17:11-19:

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

“I am soooo thankful!” How often is this statement made by people? When people say this in this very non-descript manner I tend to respond in two ways. One is to think, **“Oh really? How thankful is so thankful?”** The other is to think, **“To whom are you thankful?”**

It is notable that the first national day of Thanksgiving, declared by President George Washington on October 3, 1789, was declared to have two foci. The first was: **“to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.”** The second was: **“And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed, to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord.”**

Whether or not President Washington acknowledged the Lord Jesus as God, he and the nation were very much aware that Thanksgiving was not only for providential goodness, but also for the receiving of pardon for sins, both of the nation and of the individual citizens.

Today's Gospel reading most assuredly explains the fullness of what this means so that we may give thanks with right understanding and without doubt that our thanksgiving is heard beyond the confines of our own gatherings and for the great purpose of receiving yet again the true blessing that we most need.

I. JESUS, MASTER, HAVE MERCY ON US

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

In moving St. Luke to record this event, was the Holy Spirit holding irony before us? The cry that we hear is “**Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.**” In mercy, fully knowing what it would cost Him, Jesus created the world in which we would live. In mercy, Jesus called Adam out from his hiding to be confronted with his sin and turned back to the way of true faith. In mercy Jesus announced that He would be born of woman to crush the head of the serpent, namely, Satan. In mercy He was born in Bethlehem, raised up by Mary and Joseph in Nazareth, and now was on His way to Jerusalem to fulfill that terrible act of mercy that He had promised millennia earlier. Is the Holy Spirit manifesting a sense of irony in this pitiful plea of these ten lepers? Does the Holy Spirit mean for us to realize the insignificance of our near-sighted cries in our daily lives? Does the Holy Spirit mean for us to recognize that in view of the great mercy of God in Christ that we have cause for giving thanks in all things, even in our times of tribulation and suffering and sickness and weakness and loneliness?

Beyond this, the Holy Spirit also holds before us that God's mercy includes our daily needs. God does indeed hear our cries for mercy regarding the daily hurts and struggles. And the ultimate declaration of our text is that He hears us for the sake of Jesus. Truly Jesus is our Master or Over-stander. He is the one who stands over us both in time and from eternity, ready to come to our aid and rescue us from all evil, most especially from our everlasting damnation.

When these ten lepers called out, did they truly know Jesus as the almighty Master of all that is? At the very least they called to Him as the one who stands over leprosy with the power to set them free from the corruption of this dreadful disease of living-death.

Why does God even allow such a horrible disease? This is actually a very good question to ask. The answer is that this is a manifestation of our corrupt condition on account of sin. We are all lepers on account of sin. Because of the transgression of Adam, we all are born into this world in the corruption of living-death. In the final judgement this living-death will be manifested in its fullness for all who have rejected the faith of Jesus. But even now, it is the condition of mankind. As the LORD warned Adam from the beginning, eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would result in death. Mankind has been walking around as the living-dead ever since.

These ten lepers were entirely right to call Jesus the Over-stander or Master. He is the one who stands over us with ready hand to restore us to the life that exists only in the true communion of His body. He is truly the one to whom all cries for mercy should be made. He is Jesus, which means, the LORD saves. Moreover, He urges and even commands us to cry out to Him in EVERY trouble, to pray, praise and give thanks. He stands over us ready to restore us to

the life that is in Him.

II. TURNED BACK

And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

This is truly marvelous. They asked Jesus for mercy and His response is to send them to those who have been ordained as the LORD's representatives of mercy. For those who were unclean, the priests were to examine them to determine that they had been made clean again so as to declare them fit to return to the congregation of those who have been made clean in the LORD. Jesus hears their cries for mercy, turns to them, and tells them that having journeyed that they should show themselves to the priests to be declared as having been cleansed. As they went, they were cleansed.

At this point Luke now switches terminology. He records that **“one out of them, having seen that he had been healed, turned back with a voice great, glorifying God!”** Why does Luke switch from cleansed to healed in this portion of his account? He is directing us to realize the contrast between this man's response to being healed and the response of the others. They all were cleansed. They all were healed. They all saw that they had been healed. But this man did not respond with, **“I am soooo thankful!”** He realized that this healing was more than what the others thought. When this man saw that he had been healed, he realized that he had also been cleansed. The others simply were glad for the healing and that they could now go back to their life with their family and friends. But this man, having seen that he was healed, turned back from his family and friends to glorify God where He stood on the earth. This man recognized Jesus as the LORD his God and went running back to his God, glorifying him with a voice great.

Now comes the greatest contrast of all. This man's response was to fall on his face at the feet of God. Consider what most people imagine to be worship of God. Does contemporary worship in anyway resemble this? Does contemporary worship even remotely resemble falling on one's face before the feet of God? Does contemporary worship in any way acknowledge the flesh and blood Jesus at whose feet we should fall on our faces? Can you imagine this man saying anything as blasphemous as **“I believe worship should be uplifting and exciting!”**? Can you imagine this man suggesting that a praise band should lead the congregation in worship? Do people who partake of such worship even know where Jesus is so as to turn back to Him?

III. THE FAITH OF YOU HAS SAVED YOU

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Here the Lord Jesus, the *Over-stander*, brings this contrast into full view. He again

emphasizes that the ten men were all cleansed and not merely healed. Moreover, Jesus emphasizes that even though all ten of the men were cleansed by Jesus, only one of these ten recognized what had been done for them and who Jesus really is. Surely the other nine all gave thanks to God for healing them. Surely the other nine all rejoiced and praised God for making it possible for them to return to their lives with their family and friends. Surely they were *soooo thankful!* But only one truly understood that he had not only been healed but that he had been cleansed. Only one truly understood who God is so as to turn back to Him and fall on his face at the feet of God. The others all went on with worship as they had in the past, imaging that worship is something that they do. This man came back to Jesus, to worship God as He has made Himself known in the body of Jesus, the only way that we can truly know God as not only our sovereign but as our Father, Brother, and Counselor.

Anyone who in any way acknowledges that God is truly our creator also recognizes Him as sovereign and as Father. Most also recognize Him as Spirit and Counselor. But how many recognize that He is truly our flesh and blood Brother from eternity?

Is it possible to know the true God apart from His Holy Communion, His body, which is united in the gathering of the Holy Supper of His body and blood? Is it possible to know the Father apart from His coming to us in the body and blood of Jesus? How can we come to Jesus except to turn back humbly and fall down before Him where He gives Himself to us in the bread and the wine? Is this not where He has promised to be for us so as to keep us in His Holy Communion? Is this not where He promises to be with us so as to pour out the forgiveness and life of His blood to us? Yes, indeed, He stands over us in absolute sovereignty over all things and calls to us and says, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** (Matthew 11:28)

Yes, our flesh and blood Brother, Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, (Isaiah 9:6) calls us to come to Him and be refreshed by Him. He comes to us with His very body and blood conjoined to the consecrated bread and wine so that we may fall before Him and hear His wonderful words that the faith that is made to be born in us through Baptism has saved us and that this faith has been fed and nourished and renewed through the communion of His body and blood.

Is this not wonderful? The Lord Jesus tells this man that he and all of the ten were cleansed, and then goes on to tell this man: **“The faith of you has saved you.”** Luke emphasizes this with the word *sesoken*. It means, *has saved and continues to save*. Moreover, Jesus does not say that by believing you have been saved but that the faith of you has saved you. This is what St. Paul reiterates in Ephesians 2, saying,

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:4-10)

Jesus makes it wonderfully clear that we are not saved through the act of believing, but through the faith that God gives. This sets us free from concocting worship of our own so that we may worship in spirit and truth, gathering to the means of grace that God Himself has ordained for our salvation and preservation in His Holy Communion. Truly our Over-stander has heard our pleas and has had mercy upon us. Truly as we come to Him and fall on our faces He says to us: **“Having risen, go, the faith of you has saved you!”**

CONCLUSION

On this national day of Thanksgiving, you know the one to whom you give thanks. He has come to you and has made Himself known to you both as your Over-stander and as your Brother Redeemer. He stands over us as our flesh and blood Brother to keep us safe in the communion of His body. He has joined us into His body through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. He has proclaimed to us again His Word of mercy and cleansing. He has called us to stand and receive His body and blood for our strengthening in the faith that He has given to us so that the unity of His body and the forgiveness of His blood may fill us with Thanksgiving and everlasting peace and joy. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.