

Location: First Baptist Church, October 8, 2023 (Thanksgiving)

Title: Accustomed to Goodness

(Theme: Giving thanks to God is always important)

Text: Luke 17:11-19

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten men with a skin disease approached him. Keeping their distance, 13 they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 He prostrated himself at Jesus's feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? So where are the other nine? 18 Did none of them return to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

I don't think we would have too much difficulty if we were to ask people here to cite an instance of God's goodness in their lives. So many of us live lives that most people have difficulty imagining. For the two-thirds world, our lifestyles, medical care, and availability of goods and services are the things of their dreams. By comparison, our lives are riches with blessings beyond counting. A quick look around, however, will convince anyone that most of us take it all for granted, like somehow we deserve what we have. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean to begrudge anything they have worked hard and long for. However, even that opportunity is primarily due to the good fortune we had to find ourselves in this country, whether by birth or immigration. We are very fortunate and blessed to be where we are and to have what we have. Even our families, friends, church, homes, workplaces and everything else we care to mention are due to the goodness of God and his grace toward us. Let's not forget the spiritual blessings

we know in Christ as Lord and Savior. How much we have to be thankful for today!

As we hear in today's passage, Jesus carries out his mission as he journeys toward Jerusalem. Part of that mission is blessing those he encounters on the way. It reminds me of how, even today, God continues to bless lives all around, not because of something he owes people but because of his goodness and grace. These lepers sense the hope that Jesus offered to everyone around him, so they approach him to ask for his healing. They are not shy; they freely let Jesus know their need openly and honestly. Their obedient faith results in their healing as they turn to show themselves to the priest as Jesus commanded them.

One of the ten, however, deeply understands the miracle of what Christ has done, so he turns around and returns to Jesus to give him thanks. Jesus is surprised at such a small response to so great a miracle. A mere one out of ten takes the time to thank Jesus for this blessing. Jesus accepts his thanks and sends him on his way with a further blessing.

Unfortunately, the human race is shown here in its worst light. This is Standard fare today. For all we experience in this blessed land, the thanks are few and far between. Worse yet, this spirit of unthankfulness can, and often does, creep into the church. Many of us are so busy complaining about what we do not

have that we forget to take stock of what God has done and how he has blessed us. We have no difficulty asking for more, but where are the thanks? While this attitude may be understandable from the world's perspective, where are the witnesses who declare God's goodness in the assembly of God's people?

Of all people in the world, believers experience the goodness of God in ways beyond measure. As we gather here today, let's pause and thank God for the many blessings we know. God is good, and God is always good, that's for sure. As his people, let us show everyone who sees us that we acknowledge God's grace and goodness and are genuinely thankful. Let us return and offer our thanks and praise to God, who loves us.