



Daily Reflections

October 9, 2016

Scripture

Luke 17:11-19

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem,
he traveled through Samaria and Galilee.

As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him.

They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying,
"Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!"

And when he saw them, he said,
"Go show yourselves to the priests."

As they were going they were cleansed.

And one of them, realizing he had been healed,
returned, glorifying God in a loud voice;
and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.

He was a Samaritan.

Jesus said in reply,

"Ten were cleansed, were they not?"

Where are the other nine?

Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"
Then he said to him, "Stand up and go;
your faith has saved you."

Our Scripture Reflection

Luke's Gospel is known as "The Gospel of the Outcast". Why? Because in his Gospel we so often see the ones who were despised by society at large as the very ones who demonstrate incredible faith. Such is the case in today's text on the ten lepers. After being cleansed, only one returns to say thank you, the outcast Samaritan. He was actually a double outcast: a leper and a bitterly despised Samaritan. Perhaps one must be way down low before one can reach up. Someone once said that when we stop looking upon the gifts we have as "winnings", then and only then do we become truly grateful.

Food for your Journey

Death, illness, pain — these are the extreme human conditions that really dare us to count our blessings. Death in the family. A prognosis of a dreaded disease. Pain from rejection, misfortune or some irreparable damage. With such intolerable distress, how can you even start to count your blessings?

Let me share my little secret. When I feel that the world is caving in and my tears of hopelessness are just about to fall, I look down at my hands. I stretch my fingers and I start to count ... my blessings. I say to myself, "I have 10 fingers ... 1-2-3-4-5 ... I can move all of them. My skin is clear. I can see. I can hear. I can talk. I can walk. I have a family. I have a home. I have friends. I have a job. Not everyone has these. I am a very lucky person. I am whole and I can cope with this minor setback."

Try it. In your darkest hour, at the height of a most unfortunate situation, count your blessings by starting with your fingers.

—Ruby Bayan-Gagelonia, "Count your blessings," October 15, 1999, Suite101.com.

Once upon a time, there were two men, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Thompson, both seriously ill in the same room of a great hospital. Both had to be kept unusually quiet and still - no reading, no radio, certainly no television and no visitors. Their only entertainment was to talk to each other.

Mr. Thompson had to spend all his time flat on his back. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, as part of his treatment, was allowed to sit up in bed for an hour each day. His bed was next to the window, and every afternoon, when he was propped up for his hour, he would pass the time by describing to Mr. Thompson what he could see outside. And Mr. Thompson began to live for those hours. Mr. Wilson would look out the window and describe ...

- a beautiful park with a lake, where there were ducks and swans and children throwing them bread and sailing model boats;

- softball games and football games and kites flying;

- flowers and trees and stretches of grass and young lovers walking hand-in-hand;

- the skyline of the city off in the distance and the cars and horse-drawn carriages making their way through the park.

One day, there was a parade, and Mr. Wilson described every float, every band and all the participants in the procession. Mr. Thompson listened intently, enjoying every minute. He could visualize everything Mr. Wilson described.

Then one afternoon, Mr. Thompson thought to himself: "Just wait a minute! Why should Wilson have all the fun? Why does he have all the pleasure? Why does he get to be by the window?" In a few days, Mr. Thompson turned sour. He was bitter, angry, resentful. He brooded and seethed. He became obsessed with wanting to be by the window! And each passing hour, he became more and more resentful of Mr. Wilson.

Then one night, quite suddenly, Mr. Wilson died. His body was taken away the next morning. As soon as it seemed decent, Mr. Thompson asked if he could be moved to the bed next to the window. So they moved him, tucked him in, made him quite comfortable and left him alone. The minute they'd

gone, Mr. Thompson struggled to prop himself up on one elbow so he could look out the window. Imagine his surprise. It faced a blank brick wall!

Sometimes compassion is most powerful when it surprises. Will you try something during the next few days? In the spirit of Jesus, will you surprise somebody with your love and compassion? Jesus surprised people with his compassion, and so can we.

--James Moore, *Some Things Are Too Good Not to Be True* (Nashville: Dimensions For Living, 1994), 97-99.

"That man is perfect in faith who can come to God in the utter dearth of his feelings and desires, without a glow or an aspiration, with the weight of low thoughts, failures, neglects and wandering forgetfulness, and say to him: 'Thou art my refuge.'"

--*George MacDonald: An Anthology*, ed. C.S. Lewis, (New York: Macmillan, 1974), no. 1.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Every precious and simple gift that I have comes as the result of Your love for me. Make me humble and grateful, Lord. May I always, through a life lived faithfully, show my gratefulness to You. Amen.