

## A THANKSGIVING MESSAGE (TITHING)

**Luke 17:11-19**

**(Preached many years ago)**

**Introduction:** Several years ago, there was a popular song about "...doing what comes naturally..." Now, under this heading, one could think of a hundred things that are "natural," but GIVING THANKS IS NOT ONE." It is natural to hope, to pray, BUT it is not natural to give thanks, remember, we have to teach our children to say "thank you."

We are indebted to Luke for this story of the 10 lepers. It was required that the priests should give a clean bill of health to cured lepers before they could rejoin society again. As the scripture reveals, the 10 were not cured as before they started on their journey to the priests, but because of their faith, they were healed sometime during their journey. ONLY ONE returned to thank Jesus. ONLY ONE was grateful enough to return and say "thank you" while the other nine hurried off to show their friends.

Jesus asked, "where are the other nine?" It is commonly accepted that the one who returned to give thanks to Jesus was doing the natural thing, but think for a moment.....what this man did was the UNATURAL thing. The other nine did the natural thing, they forgot the very one who had cured them.

### **I. PEOPLE TOO QUICKLY FORGET THEIR BENEFACTOR**

1. The founder of the American Red Cross was forgotten by the world and he died in poverty.
2. Do you send "thank you" cards to those who send or give you Christmas presents? If you don't it seems as if you think that Christmas is a season of just "receiving."

### **II. OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE GRATEFUL, IT SHOULD BE CHRISTIANS**

1. If anyone should be thankful, it should be us and all others who are Christians. There is a considerable bit of difference between us and those who are not Christians.
2. A Christian is a "new creature" and should no longer act like the other nine lepers. Christians should be like the one who returned to give thanks to Jesus.
3. Christians should be grateful and thankful to Jesus because they have been given new lives. They have God's Word that they will spend eternity in Heaven with Him. They have God's protective hand about them even as they are breathing at this very moment. They receive countless blessings daily, much, many that go unnoticed and forgotten.
4. To give thanks is indeed the UNATURAL thing to do, even for Christians.

### **III. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS SHOW THEIR GRATITUDE?**

1. There are many ways one can thank God for the blessings received and one of these is to give back to God a part of that which one has received from Him.
2. I'm talking about the TITHE - MONEY.
  - God's kingdom is financed by His people - Christians. God said that a tithe would be enough to support spreading the Gospel.
3. Christians should be willing to give God whatever He wants. Just how much does God ask US to give financially?
  - God asks for the tenth - 10 cents out of the dollar.

- Tithing is not something new that the preachers have thought up. Tithing has been with us as long as there have been people on this earth.
  - One used to tithe by bringing a tenth of whatever he raised - sheep, goats, chickens, wheat, rice, cotton, etc. That was the Old Testament way of tithing.
  - Today tithing is still with us but the thing that is tithed is our MONEY. We don't have chickens, goats, sheep, etc. today as then. Just about everybody has a job, working for money, therefore, God asks for His tenth out of what a person earns/makes.
4. When you tithe, you are only being honest with God. You don't pay your light bill whenever you feel like it do you? You don't pay for your groceries whenever you feel sorry for the clerk. You don't make your car payments whenever you feel like it do you?
    - Well, let me tell you, God is far more important than any car payment, light bill or house payment. God only asks for a tenth, 10 cents of the dollar. You are not paying the preacher, you are paying God. You are helping support this Church pay its bills, the air conditioning you enjoy, the heat you enjoy in the winter. You help pay for the literature which is left on the pew or in the classroom or stuck under the couch cushions. You help pay for this beautiful building. Every dime given to this Church goes into God's pocket, so to speak.
  5. So many times we hear people boast that they know the Bible or that they haven't missed a Sunday in years, but have you ever heard of anybody who boasted that they tithed faithfully?
    - How can a person who says that he/she believes the Bible ignore the scripture on tithing?
    - People are willing to loan the preacher their car, fill up his own car with gas, give him a little Christmas bonus, help him out in a difficult financial situation, yet these very same people will not tithe. They will not give to God the tenth He asks for. Does it ease their conscience when they "help the preacher?"
  6. The government allows us to give a percentage to God, usually more than the tenth God asks. How many people make a claim on their income tax forms that they have given a tenth to their Church when they have never actually tithed in their entire lives?
  7. *"...Be not deceived, God is not mocked..."*

#### **IV. IT'S HARD TO GET STARTED TITHING**

1. You say, "preacher, I'm already living outside my budget now, I'm overdrawn at the bank every month, it's impossible for me to give any more. Well, let me tell you, you give to God His tenth, regardless of how you come out and you will see that you will be better off financially. You will not be any worse off financially.
2. If you refuse to give God His tenth, you will lose more than the tenth. God will see to it.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Are you thankful to God? There are three basic kinds of thanksgiving: from the lips, from the hand, and thanksgiving from the heart.
2. When one is thankful from the heart, the other two forms of being thankful will take place.
3. Christian, if you are truly thankful to God, **YOU WILL TITHE!**