

THE UNNATURAL THING TO DO

Luke 17:11-19

Introduction: Many years ago there was a popular song that had the words "doing what comes naturally..." in it. Thinking of those words, one could think of a hundred and one things to do, but giving Thanks" would probably not be one of those many things.

It is natural to hope, it is natural to pray, especially when in trouble, but it is just not natural to give thanks, just as it is not natural to hate. We have to be patiently taught to give thanks. It comes naturally for children to ask for things, to want them, to even take them, but they have to be taught to say "Thank You.."

Paul says to "*...give thanks for everything...*" even for the things which we might not like.

I. NINE TO ONE

1. Luke records the account of Jesus and 10 men with leprosy.
 - It was required that the priests give clearance for a person cured of leprosy to be able to return to society.
 - Ten lepers had approached Jesus and asked for healing, Jesus sent them to the priest to be declared healed but on the way they must have faith in order to be cured. On the way they were healed.
 - Only one of the ten turned around and ran back to Jesus to say "thank you." Why the other 9 did not go back with him, only they knew, at any rate, they made no attempt to find and thank Jesus that He had cured them.
 - So, where are the nine?
2. It is commonly accepted that the one who returned to give thanks was the "normal" person and the other nine who did not return were the abnormal or unnatural kind of people.
 - Take another look and think! Isn't it the other way around?
 - The nine did what everybody else would do, they did the normal thing, they took life for granted, however the one who returned, did the unnatural thing, he took life for gratitude.

II. NO THANKS FOR SANTA CLAUS

1. The story is told of a postal employee who studied the mail which came into the "dead letter" office in Washington, addressed to Santa Claus. For three months before Christmas there were thousands of letters asking Santa for things for Christmas. In the following months after Christmas there was only ONE card addressed to Santa Claus thanking him for what he brought to this little person for Christmas.
2. People so often, quickly forget their greatest benefactors. After times of emergencies and agencies respond to bring assistance, help, goods, food, clothing, etc., very few times are they ever thanked.

III. GRATITUDE IS A CHRISTIAN GRACE

1. If anyone should be thankful, it should be Christians. There should be a considerable difference between the person who knows Jesus Christ and the person who does not.
 - Paul said, "*..If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new...*"
2. A Christian should no longer be like the other nine lepers who were cured, taking life for granted, but Christians should be like the one who took his life for gratitude and returned to give thanks.
3. Why should a Christian be grateful? Because he/she has been brought face to face with what he/she once was, face to face with what Jesus Christ has done for him/her and face to face with what it cost Jesus Christ to do what He did.
 - To give thanks is an unnatural thing to do, but to give thanks is a thoughtful thing to do. To give thanks is a wholesome thing to do and to give thanks is a Christian thing to do.

IV. THREE KINDS OF THANKSGIVING

1. There is the thanksgiving that comes from our lips such as "thank you." This kind passes between neighbors, friends, it is taught to children but it becomes meaningless at times, just a polite utterance.
2. There is thanksgiving that reaches the level of the hand. Such as deeds of kindness done for our friends, gifts, given to loved ones.
3. Then there is the level of thanksgiving of the heart. There can be nothing mechanical about this. This is the thanksgiving which is shown toward each other and God.
 - This is the true kind of thankfulness.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have so much to be thankful for.
 - For being chosen of God to be in His kingdom.
 - For the health that we have.
 - That we can come and offer our hymns and praises as we see fit.
2. Let us take a look around us.
 - Look at our lives.
 - Look at what God has done for us.
3. Now let us be grateful.