

XIV TRINITY 2016
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
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GALATIANS 5.16 ST. LUKE 17.11

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Please and *thank you* are simple...but perhaps the most powerful words in any language.

We spend a lot of time asking God for things. We should never feel guilty about asking God for our basic needs or for good health. It's important we preface our asking God with *please* and not forget to follow up with *thank you*.

Jesus spent a lot of his time healing people. Last week we heard a Story of the Good Samaritan and what it means to be a good neighbor. It was a story about kindness and compassion.

In this morning's Gospel Jesus puts into practice what he preaches. He does so at a distance...not by direct contact. The hero in the Gospel is once again the despised Samaritan.

We are told the ten men who come to Jesus for help are suffering from a skin condition that forced them to live outside the city and away from other people. Any sort of visible skin condition was cause for alarm...people thought it might be contagious.

Whether the ten men had Hansen's disease or something else doesn't matter. They were cut off from the life of the community and from their families and friends. From a distance they ask Jesus to help them...to make them well again.

Jesus told the men to do exactly what the Book of Leviticus instructed them to do...go see a priest in the Temple. Only a priest could certify a person's skin condition had cleared up and they could rejoin the community and Temple life. While they were on their way to the Temple all ten men were healed.

Only one man came back to say *thank you* to Jesus for healing him. That one man is our hero, the Samaritan. He was so overcome with emotion he fell down at Jesus' feet and cried and thanked God for healing him. Jesus tells the man to go home to his family...assured his Faith has made him well

again. We don't know what happened to the other nine men; but Jesus tells us they too were made well again.

It's reasonable for us to assume the other nine were Jews...who held the Samaritans in contempt. Their greatest failure was in not coming back to Jesus to thank him for healing them. The surprise element in the Gospel is the Samaritan...and his unexpected response to being healed.

Both the Story of the Good Samaritan and Jesus' healing of the ten men in today's Gospel teach us an important lesson. We are to look beyond a person's outward appearance. In Jesus, racial and social barriers have been broken down. God heals regardless of a person's background or condition...everyone may be made well again by their faith.

Jesus wants us to show the same kind of faith the Samaritan showed when he asked for help. Jesus wants us to believe that he can and will help us every day of our lives. He wants us to put our trust in him and to know God loves us and wants what is best for us.

Jesus shows us just how much God loves us through his own acts of love and compassion. He reached out to the marginalized and disenfranchised and shows physical and spiritual health work together to make us well.

We are most likely to take God for granted when we feel well and things are going great. It's important we thank God for those times...so we don't forget he is the source of our health and life and our good times. And he is our strength when things aren't going so well. We shouldn't wait until we have a crisis to reach out to God...because he is always reaching out to us.

Please and *thank you* are powerful words. When we ask God for the things we need to live comfortable lives and for good health...saying *please* is easy. Let's not forget to say *thank you*...especially for the many blessings we already have.

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