

---

## Four Steps To Thanksgiving

Luke 17:11-19

“11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-- and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Luke 17:11-19 (NIV)



### Children's Message: "T-H-A-N-K-S"

Needed: Six posters, each with one letter from the word "Thanks."

How do you spell, "Thanks?" Today we're going to learn how to spell "Thanks" in a special way. Here we go (Hold up the poster with the letter "T"). What things are you thankful for that begin with the letter "T"? (Receive responses). Now let's go to the next letter. What things are you thankful for that begin with "H"? (Continue through all the letters, T through S).

Thanksgiving Day is a time to be thankful. God gives us so many things. Today, as everyday, we remember to give thanks to Him. Why do we thank Him? Simply because He gives us so much. And why does God give us so much? Simply because He loves us.

That's the greatest thing that we're thankful for, isn't it. We're thankful that Jesus loves us so much. He loves us so much that He made us His children. Every single day, He shows His love to us by forgiving us and giving us everything we need—house, home, parents, schools, teachers...all these things.

So what can we say for all the things that God gives us? Simply this: (Hold up each poster, one at a time)--- "T"- "H" -"A" -"N" -"K" -"S" !

### Sermon:

Over the years I've found that the toughest sermons to preach are the holiday sermons. Whether it's Easter or Christmas or Mothers Day, the hardest thing to do is to preach a sermon that isn't clichéd, canned or just plain boring.

Thanksgiving is also included in this short list. We all know we should be thankful. We all know we're not thankful enough. But, because the spirit and practice of gratitude are such an important part of our lives, sermons—even the more difficult ones such as this one—are a necessary reminder in our lives of the key values which make our lives fulfilling before God...even it it means we have to risk being clichéd, canned or boring.

## Four Steps To Thanksgiving—Luke 17:11-19

### Page 2

---

I think that Thanksgiving is best done as a four-step process. These steps are simple and familiar. The first three steps are “Stop,” “Look”, and “Listen.”

**“Stop”:** Stopping is the first step to thanksgiving. Notice in our text how Jesus healed the Ten Lepers. Leprosy, as we know, was the AIDS of the First Century. It was highly contagious and could be caught merely by touching another person. Since there was no antidote, leprosy would spread throughout ones body, slowly but surely progressing throughout one’s body until one died. Because of the horrific nature of this disease and the death it brought, it was seen as the absolute worst thing that God could do to someone. To have it meant, as they believed, that the victim was in the most horrifying judgment of God.

Here’s how Luke records the event.

“11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had **leprosy** met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.”

When Jesus healed these lepers, he wasn’t just offering them a Kleenex for a runny nose. He literally changed, saved and spared their lives! What was their response? They just walked on to show themselves to the priest.

But one leper was different. He came back to Jesus. Why? Because he went through the first step of thanksgiving. “Stop.”

“15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-- and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Why did he stop, because he experienced step two: **He Looked** at what happened. He saw he was healed! Did the others experience that? Of course! But they didn’t stop. They didn’t look, either. They just went along their merry way.

**The Third Step** is “Listen.” The best listeners are the ones who are most open to hearing what others have to say. When the Samaritan leper was healed, after he stopped and looked, believe me. He was ALL ears!!! He ran to Jesus. Why? To hear more from the one whose initial words to him were words of healing.

Having experienced physical healing, he was running back to Jesus to hear more...about grace, love and the new life that Jesus was offering to him.

Stop, look and listen. Those are the first three steps of thanksgiving. What is the last one? It’s simple. Thanks God! Remember Jesus’ words to the Samaritan Leper?

17 “Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Through Jesus' miracle, this Samaritan learned Four Easy Steps To Thanksgiving. And, through his experience, we learn the same four steps. Stop, look, listen, and Praise God!

Have you used this in your life? Perhaps it's the application of these steps that will keep this Thanksgiving Sermon from merely being another clichéd, canned nicety.

In fact, let's practice this right now!

*Step One:* Stop. That's right. Let's stop everything—the rat race, the swirl in your head that's planning and wondering what Thanksgiving Dinner's going to be like. Stop it!

*Step Two:* Look. Let's look to see what God has done in your life. As you look in your life, what things are you thankful for? (Perhaps take congregational responses).

*Step Three:* Listen. What is it that God wants you to hear about His plan, His goodness and His love for you? The Healed Samaritan knew the only way he could discover this was simply to come back to Jesus—and stop, look and listen to Him!

**And Now, Step Four:** Let's thank God for all He's done...and will do...in your life and mine!

Recently a friend sent me a Thanksgiving Prayer in my email. I'd like to end my sermon with this prayer. Let's pray it together.

Dear God,

I want to thank you for what you have already done.

I am not going to wait until I see results or receive rewards.

I am thanking you right now.

I am not going to wait until I feel better or things look better,

I am thanking you right now.

I am not going to wait until people say they are sorry or until they stop talking about me,

I am thanking you right now.

I am not going to wait until the pain in my body disappears, I am thanking you right now.

I am not going to wait until my financial situation improves.

I am going to thank you right now.

I am not going to wait until the children are asleep and the house is quiet, I am going to thank you right now.

I am not going to wait until I get promoted at work or until I get the job, I am going to thank you right now.

I am not going to wait until I understand every experience in my life that has caused me pain or grief, I am going to thank you right now.

I am not going to wait until the journey gets easier or the challenges are removed. I am thanking you right now.

I am thanking you because I am alive.

## Four Steps To Thanksgiving—Luke 17:11-19

Page 4

---

I am thanking you because I made it through the day's difficulties.

I am thanking you because I have walked around the obstacles.

I am thanking you because I have the ability and the opportunity to do more and do better.

I am thanking you because you have not given up on me.

God, thank you for being so good to me. Continue to enable me to stop, look, listen and thank You for your goodness! In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Thomas F. Fischer