

Sermon: September 18, 2022 "The power of THANK YOU"

Not sure exactly why, but lately I've been thinking of the absolute power of the words "thank you". We talk about giving a lot here, because that is who we are and that is what we are called to do. Jesus gave his life to inspire us to give unto others. Our calling as his followers and as a church ---- to do whatever we can, and to use the resources we have to make the world better for others.

I have often said that giving is its own reward. We don't give so we can be thanked. We give because this is what we are called to do. But now a personal question: has there been a time or two in your life when you have gone the extra mile to do something for someone else? ... you rose to the occasion and gave from the very depth of who you are ... and all you wanted was for that person to say "thank-you" ... and it never happened. Maybe it's a bit selfish ... but it hurts not hearing that magic word. Hearing the words "thank you" is one of the best feelings in the world. Doing something for someone else ... it builds us up and nourishes us. And then when we hear the words "thank you" ... it gives us a renewed sense of purpose, and gives us the energy to keep giving to others.

The Gospel today is about the ten lepers who came to Jesus and asked for healing. He healed them, they went on their way ... but only one came back to thank Jesus. Ironically ... the one who came back was a Samaritan – the outcast.

This morning, I saw the crazy sunrise across La Grange Road. It was so orange and so dramatic. I come back into the church and just sit for a few moments ... thinking about all the people who have done stuff for me. Have I said "thank you" enough? It's so easy to take what I've been given for granted.

It made me think of my brother Gary. He died at the age of 49 just three years after he started the Civil War Band. I remember vividly, when he was suffering from cancer, I watched my dad. I watched my dad take care of him – how he put his life on the back burner to make sure Gary, his wife and his kids were ok. Many of you know how harsh and painful a journey with cancer can be. And yet, in the middle of that journey, my dad exuded a sense of hope and a sense of purpose. He helped make the journey manageable. I saw God's spirit at work in him. I often think to myself ... did I thank my dad enough? My dad and my brother are now gone. But I still wonder if I took too much of what they shared for granted. When I see the sunrise and I think of people like my dad ... I know God is there ... and I know there is hope.

Speaking of thanks, over the past year or two we have helped a lady named Kim. She has a son who is getting married this weekend. His fiancé is in the middle of a long journey with cancer. When we had the love bucket not too long ago for them, one of you shared an extraordinary gift for the family. The other day you come by the church to share with me this incredible four-page letter you received from Kim. It's a tear-jerker!! So full of goodness and grace. Kim shares how their journey over the past few years has been tough. They have had times when they thought hope was gone. She says ---- thanks to you and your church, we know there are angels among us. You have raised us up, letting us know how much we have to be thankful for. Yes -- God is here, and He gives up the strength to walk this difficult path.

I always hope, that in some small measure, you and I can be that one leper who comes back to say thanks to Jesus ... the one leper who did not take what he was given for granted.

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So, in closing, I would like to take a moment to say thanks to you ... for all the goodness, generosity, and support you give to this humble temple. If it wasn't for you, we would not have been here for 60 years. I'd like to thank Jim Melka for all the beautiful mums he has brought to the church the past couple of days. When I go to Jewel to pick up the things I forgot to get this morning, and I see a veteran standing by the door, I am going to thank him for his service to our country ... because I know how much the words "thank you" mean to those who sacrificed so we can taste freedom today. I want to thank my dad for his legacy of humility and egg money that he has given to me and to so many others. I'd also like to say thank you to Queen Elizabeth, seventy years on the throne, tough times and good times ... yet somehow, she always exuded a spirit of grace. Thank you to the people of Ukraine for your courage and incredible fortitude. The longer this war goes on, we discover more about the atrocities inflicted upon innocent people. They are our brothers and sisters ... may their courage be a part of our walk everyday. Yes, we are the church. Please remember ---- the REAL CHURCH comes alive when we walk out the door and say the magic words "thank you." Amen.

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