

The Foundational Strength of Thanksgiving

Building Core Strength

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Bible Text: Luke 17:11-21

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One of our community's great successes this year has been the read to succeed program. Maybe you have heard of this. It is a collaborative between the United Way in greater Lafayette Commerce, a number of local school corporations and, of course, many faithful community volunteers. And the good news is it is working. Aren't you glad to hear some good news from time to time? It is working. They are seeing some very positive results. And thank God for that.

It is interesting when you go on their website and just try to understand what is driving them, what is motivating them to make this the emphasis they are. They say we know that early grade reading skills are a key factor for academic success and high school graduation rates and poor reading ability in the early grades is clearly linked to high school dropouts. Students who are not proficient readers in the early grades do not typically catch up. In later grades as course work gets harder, reading becomes more challenging. That is true, obviously. And students have difficulty keeping up. This can lead to course failure, disengagement from school and eventually dropping out.

They go on to say this program gives the opportunity for community members to become directly involved in student achievement. Read to succeed will support our children and our future work force in being prepared to succeed after high school by placing priority on early grade reading.

Now I think most of us would say that just makes sense. Reading is such a foundational skill to so many other academic endeavors. It is just a key building block for every person's entire success in education.

It might surprise you to know that that is why Sunday schools were started. And do you know that? Ninety years before compulsory public education began in our culture, children went to work with their parents till this man, Robert Rakes, began a school on Sundays to teach children how to read so they could, in turn, read the Bible along with learning to write in mathematics, because he knew that if that foundation wasn't in place that young person was not going to be able to advance and not going to be able to advance spiritually, not going to be able to advance vocationally. He saw it as an essential building block.

Now please think with me about this issue of making progress in the Christian life. I am not talking about reading, now. I am talking to you about foundational building blocks. In the Christian life growth are there certain building blocks beyond the decision to trust Christ as Savior and Lord. We understand it all starts there. But what are the attributes? What are the habits? What are the skills that have to be in place so you are going to be able to grow the way God desires? I am sure we could make an interesting list this morning, probably a long list of things that we would see as the essential building blocks. You just have to have that in place or you are not going to be able to grow the way the Lord would want you to.

Well, would you agree that before long we would have to start talking about the issue thankfulness? In other words, if a person isn't going to learn how to be thankful, his or her advancement is going to be stymied in a myriad of other ways. Are you on board with that this morning? That one of the essential building blocks for growth in the Christian life is the matter of learning how to grow in thankfulness. That is why it shouldn't surprise us that the opposite of that, ungratefulness is actually listed by the apostle Paul as one of the signs of the end times. It is that serious. He says it this way in 2 Timothy 3.

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.¹

And isn't it interesting that in a list of behaviors that we would all consider to be top drawer sins we find this matter of ungratefulness. And I wonder if we take this area as seriously as the apostle Paul did? Like it really is an essential building block for the Christian life.

With that in mind, let me invite you to open your Bible this morning to Luke chapter 17. And if you don't have a Bible with you, just pull out that one from under the chair in front of you and turn to the back section to the New Testament, to page 61 and that will bring you to Luke 17 this morning. I realize you may not have brought a Bible. You may not even have a Bible. We are all about studying the Word of God here. So this is not pleasant musings from pastor Viars this morning. I wouldn't have gotten up for that. How about you? We want to study the Word and so we are going to be in Luke chapter 17 this morning.

Now I realize right away why in the world on this sunny summer Sunday are you raising this topic? Are you just kind of fishing for thank you notes? What is your deal? Well, three reasons why I want to talk to you about this. One, it is just a marvelous way to kick off the fall. I have been saying for the last six weeks or so that this particular Sunday, in

¹ 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

a lot of ways, is like New Years. I am not trying to see how many holidays I can get all mixed up here this morning. Is it Thanksgiving? What is it? But in church life this is a lot like New Year's day because everybody is back in school if they ought to be and men and women are more likely to start attending church or to get back into a church than most other times of the year. And that is great. And we want to help anyone. Wherever you are on the spectrum of your relationship with the Lord, wherever you are in your knowledge of Scripture, we want to help all of us get to a better place this fall. And there is no question about this. You will not get very far in the spiritual life wherever you are right now. You are not going to get much further down that road without cultivating a heart of thankfulness. It is like reading is to academics. So many good things flow out of a grateful approach to life.

So I believe what we are talking about this morning very well could set you up for a very positive fall if you will allow the Word of God to do that.

Now the second reason we are talking about this is because thankfulness is so integral to the accomplishment of our annual theme this year, building core strength. The bottom line is thankful people are strong people. And ungrateful people are weak people. That is just the way it is. And we have been emphasizing this theme over and over this year, talking about this key verse, Psalm 138:3.

“On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.”²

Thankful people are going to get there. Ungrateful people never will. You have made me bold with strength in my thankful soul. We have been talking all through the year about how we are trying to emphasize this theme of getting stronger in three key ways as a church family. One is just shoring up foundational areas in our walk with Christ. We are doing a spiritual audit, all of us are. And our church ministries, we are doing the same thing from the perspective of our church that comprise the basis of godliness and effective community service. We want to be majoring on the majors. There is a lot of opportunities for ministry all around us and we don't want to leave any of them on the table, because we weren't focusing on the things that really matter. So that is part of what it means to develop, build core strength, is take a good hard look at what is going on personally and corporately and shore up the things that need help. And we will never get that done, never unless we are really serious as individuals and as a church family about the matter of thankfulness. It is wise for us if we are really serious about getting stronger, it is wise for us to think about this matter of thanksgiving.

Then there is the matter of planning and praying for the construction of Faith West and the successful launch of a cluster of new ministries in West Lafayette. Have you been by there recently? They are pouring concrete, my friends, at Faith West. Are you fired up about that? I hope you are. In fact, if you drive by tomorrow there will be a big drilling rig, because I am sure you have thought about the elevator. Haven't you thought about the elevator? What is going to push that elevator up and down? This big piston like thing that has to be drilled way down deep in the ground and they are going to be putting that

² Psalm 138:3.

baby in starting tomorrow. Aren't you glad that of all the churches could have allowed to be involved in a ministry like Faith West, he gave that privilege to us? And if we don't have like a big old I am way thankful look on our face, you better take your pulse, because there is something bad wrong, right? I mean call {?} we have got a problem. That is just the way it is. Right? You are giving me your exaggerating look. No, no, no, no, no. That is just the way it is. And, truly, truly, now. Shouldn't we be thankful because of what God is allowing us to do at Faith West? Absolutely. And so I want to be sure that we are.

And then, thirdly, preparing for the next round of ministry dreaming as we embark on a new strategic planning process in 2013. I had the privilege this week with one of our members of visiting a senior living community, because that is one of the things that we are at least talking about, making part of our next five year strategic ministry plan. Man, was that exciting. And we have to be thankful people. And if we are not, then we are not going to be nearly as aggressive and nearly as focused as God would want us to be as we plan how he might want us to serve him in the days ahead. Because I am going to tell you right now. Grumps suck up resources. We all got that? Tweet that. I mean, grumps suck up... because I am way off my notes now, which is generally good fodder for tweets. But I... that is just the way it is. Grumps suck of resources. Grumps waste time and grumps get very little done. Right? They are weak. They get very little done for God. No wonder it is in the list of end times characteristics and we don't want to be anything like that. And so if we are serious about this matter of building core strength in all the ways we are talking about, then thankfulness is an important emphasis that we need to consider.

Well, if those two answers don't move you, here is the third answer. Then why in the world is pastor Viars talking about this today? The answer is because it is the next issue in the text and we just work our way systematically through extended sections of Scripture around here. And in the sovereign plan of God he wanted our church family to talk about the topic of thankfulness today. And my guess is that some of us, in fact, my guess is that many of us really needed to hear about it. Do you agree with that? All right then. Let's look at Luke 17 beginning in verse 11.

While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine — where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to

God, except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."³

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

Don't you love the power of the Word of God? And aren't you glad he sovereignly chose for us to study this topic today? And don't you want the Holy Spirit to start working on your heart and life like right now? Good. We are talking about the foundational strength of thanksgiving. And I would like to suggest to you that in our passage we can find five lessons from nine ungrateful men.

Please tell me you don't want to be like those nine guys. Are you telling yourself that right now? I don't want to be like those guys. I don't even want to be like those guys. Are you telling yourself that right now? I want to figure out how not to be like those nine guys this fall. Is that where you are at? Good. That is where we are going. Five lessons from nine ungrateful men.

It starts right here. God gives us opportunities to choose to be thankful. The details of this story were arranged by a sovereign God to teach us a series of lessons. This isn't just a history lesson and one of those is to see that God gave each one of these men an opportunity to be thankful, but also to begin hopefully taking us down a parallel track of all the opportunities that God gives us to be thankful as well. We will get into that in a little bit. Let's just drill down into the text a bit. There is the importance of this location.

I tried to point out as we were reading this took place between where and where according to verse one? Between Samaria and Galilee. Now why is that important? Why is that in the Bible? If you study the Scripture for any period of time you probably know that there were major problems between the Jews and the Samaritans and that actually went back 700 years when the northern tribe and the southern tribe of Israel were divided and the northern tribe had established their capital in... does anybody want to guess? In Samaria. And they even set up a rival place of worship. And over time had these Jewish individuals from the northern tribes actually started intermarrying with the people of Samaria. And so the remaining orthodox Jews considered the Samaritans to be half breeds. And therefore inferior to them on ethnic grounds. There are huge ethnic overtones to this particular story. And that debate is still raging 700 years later during the time of Christ. That is why this topic comes up several different key places in the Scripture.

For example, do you remember this? The woman at the well? She was shocked because Jesus would even speak to her. She even says it. What was so surprising to her about the fact that Jesus would even speak to her, that he was a Jewish man and she was a Samaritan woman. You may remember if you know that story from the gospel of John

³ Luke 17:11-19.

that she even tried to engage him into an argument about what? About the correct place of worship. That issue was still going on between the Jews and the Samaritans. That is why it is also so significant that in another story in Scripture, do you remember when Jesus told about this when this man is beaten and robbed and a Jewish priest sees him lying right there on the side of the road and keeps right on walking. And then a Jewish Levite sees that man lying on the side of the road and keeps right on walking. And who was it that Jesus said in the story actually had enough compassion to stop and help the man who was hurting? He as the good Samaritan. And, see, we know that in our culture. We talk about good Samaritan laws. We talk about people being a good Samaritan. I don't know that we realize how scandalous those stories would have been in that particular culture when Jesus even put those two words together in the same sentence. Some individual could have absolutely sneered. You don't talk about Samaritans ever being good.

It is no accident that of these lepers the only one who came back and thanked Christ was the Samaritan. They all had the opportunity. Only one took it. We will say a whole lot more about that in just a moment.

Think also about the severity of the disease. If you are new to studying the Bible leprosy takes a lot of different forms in Bible times. Obviously in this case we are talking about the more serious form that was highly contagious and deadly. That explains, by the way, why these nine Jewish men would have even been hanging out with this one Samaritan man. Misery loves company. And this situation would have been miserable for sure and that is why they are crying out to Jesus for mercy and for healing. Apparently they had heard of Jesus' ability to heal and this disease was so heinous. They were happy to cry out to anybody who might be able to help them from any direction that was available. This is going to become obvious in the text that only one of them is willing to push that in his mind theologically to understand that the reason Jesus was able to heal was because he was the Son of God. He could not only heal a person physically, but who soon would die for the sins of mankind making it possible to be healed spiritually as well.

Right now we are just talking about how this was a terrible disease which sets us up to think about the significance of the healing. They are told to go and show themselves to their priest. And that is what people would do if they had been healed, because it was the responsibility of the priest to confirm their healing so then they could be mainstreamed back into society without fear of contamination and spread of the disease. And the Scripture says that they all went before they were healed. I pointed that out chronologically. They all went even before they were healed so they had some level of faith in Jesus' ability to do a miracle. And the passage tells us that as they were going they were cleansed.

And the point is God gave all 10 men a clear opportunity to be thankful. All 10 of them could have chosen to do that. Now push the pause button on that. Why does God want you to think about this story this morning? Not just to be thinking about leprosy or Samaritans. He wants you to be thinking about you. He wants you to be thinking about the fact that God gives you opportunities every day to be thankful as well. Would that be

fair? God gives you opportunities every day. He has given you opportunities all week long to choose. That is what it is. It is a choice. To choose to be a thankful person.

Many of us have wonderful families and friends who genuinely care for us. How thankful are we? Most of us have a job if we want one. Most of us have good health. We have an incredible amount of material possessions. We have plenty of food, a nice place to live. We have people around us who love us. We have a tremendous church family, an incredible number of ministries. We live in a great community, so many open doors of ministry. And even if we don't have every last thing on that list we have the cross, do we not? No one can take the cross from us, the place where Jesus died for our sins. We have the empty tomb, the fact that it is proven that what Christ did on the cross was accepted by the Father as a payment for our sin. We have the Word. You have a Bible on your lap. You have zillions of them at home which calls on us to repent and believe. And we have all the attendant blessings that come as a result of becoming a child of God. It is true. Just like these 10 men, God gives us opportunities to choose to be thankful and that can and that should be a significant part of our core strength as individuals and as a church.

Now a second principle from the story is this. Choosing to be thankful brings great glory to God. Did you see that emphasis in this text? We saw it in verse 15.

“Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice.”⁴

And Jesus said the exact same thing in verse 18.

“Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?”⁵

God is worthy of our worship and he is worthy of our praise and one of the wonderful ways that we do that is through choosing to be thankful to him and for others that he has brought into our life. In other words, thanksgiving is an action of worship. And so, for example, this week if you chose to express thanksgiving to your spouse, maybe it was just something simple, but maybe that is a part of your life. For one thing you are strong if that is true. And something else when you did that. That glorified God. Or this week if you took time to just say to your boss, “Hey, thank you for my job. Thank you that you have created a place for me to work. I appreciate the fact that you have given me a job.” If you did that, then you are glorifying God, because a young person, when your parents brought home your school supplies and your new clothes, you looked at your daddy or your momma and you hugged him around the neck and you said, “Thank you so much for buying me school supplies. Thank you so much for sacrificing so I could have some clothes to wear to school.” If you chose to do that, you were thanking, you were glorifying God.

And, by the way, if you are a goof and you complained about what your parents bought for you, you dishonored God and you are a goof in case you didn't get that in that

⁴ Luke 17:15.

⁵ Luke 17:18.

sentence. You can start complaining about that when you have a job and you buy your clothes with your own money.

But back to the whole issue of ... yes, I am off my notes. But I am just simply saying that the Word of God makes it clear that when we choose to be thankful we are bringing great glory to our God. Here is a parallel passage that brings that idea, that emphasis into clearer focus. It is this beautiful reminder and explanation of this scene in heaven in Revelation chapter four.

And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."⁶

If you have chosen this past week to be a thankful person, to seize the opportunities that the Lord has given you to be thankful, you have glorified him.

Now what observations can we make? Because please tell me right now you are saying, "I want to be like the one guy. I want to be like the one guy. I don't want to be like nine guys. I want to be like the one guy."

Well, what observations can we make about him? One, it was immediate. This text gives us the impression that the man immediately that he had been healed. He immediately made the mental connection that Jesus had done this. He immediately saw this as an opportunity glorify God and he immediately turned to give thanks. This wasn't one of those grudging I guess I write a thank you note if I have to about six weeks after the event. Or I will get around to that some day or I am so excited at the gift that I am going to forget to acknowledge the giver. No, he had thankful lips, because he had cultivated a thankful heart that was just quick to connect the dots. He was also enthusiastic. Don't go home today and thank your parents for the clothes they bought you for school with the, well, pastor Viars said I have to. Get happy about it, for crying out loud. Get as enthusiastic about that as you are enthusiastic when you are grumping about something. And that is what this passage is talking about, a man who was enthusiastic. And, by the way, he had been very loud when he was making his request. And nothing wrong with what whatsoever. There was no lack of enthusiasm when he was crying out for mercy, but the intensity of his thanksgiving matched the intensity of his request. And I don't know about you, but I find that a bit embarrassing. I can get really enthusiastic when I am complaining about something. I can get really enthusiastic and energetic when I am

⁶ Revelation 4:8-11.

upset about something. And I have had to ask myself this week: Are you as enthusiastic as this man? Are you as enthusiastic when it comes to the opportunity to be thankful as you are when you are grumping about it? That was a good question for me to have to ask myself. Perhaps you should ask yourself as well.

This man was also humble. And the text says that he fell down on his face. There was no pretension here. There is no pride here, no fear of man, glorifying God with thankful praise. That was the only thing on his mind.

Can I ask you to evaluate yourself in this area this morning? I hope you have already been allowing the Holy Spirit to do that in your heart and mind. But there is no question about the opportunities. Right? There is no question about the opportunities that God has given us this past week to be thankful. And there is no question that had the opportunities been taken, doing so would have glorified God. The sole question before the house is: Did you seize those opportunities or did you miss them?

Now here is where it really gets hard. Are you ready for that? Here is where it really gets hard and it is really the point of this text. There is no automatic relationship between a person's access to truth and his willingness to cultivate a thankful heart. See, what was the significance of the fact that the only man who was willing to express thanksgiving was a Samaritan? That is the point we are making. There is no automatic relationship between a person's access to truth and his willingness to cultivate a thankful heart?

See, think about it from this perspective. Let's say that we were able to line everybody up in this service from the perspective of those who have had the most access to truth for the longest period of time. Maybe you grew up in a Christian home. You have been around church. You have heard teaching. You have heard this sermon. You have heard this passage preached before, et cetera, et cetera. And so let's put the person who has the most access to truth for the longest period of time at the very head of the line and let's just line people up all the way to the person at the end who just showed up at church for the first time today and this was the first time they have ever had a Bible open. Then let's suggest that we were going to make adjustments in the line on the basis of the person who was most thankful and the person who was least thankful. If things were working the way they are supposed to be working, what would be different in those two lines? Nothing. In other words, those of us who have had the most access to biblical truth would automatically be the most thankful people on earth. And you and I know sometimes that is exactly the opposite. Sometimes biblical truth just makes us crusty. Sometimes biblical truth just makes us cantankerous. Sometimes biblical truth makes us anything but thankful.

Warren Wiersbe said it like this. "An unthankful heart is the fertile soil for all kinds of sins."

Now you might say, "Well, pastor Viars, let me tell you where I got you. In that particular area of my life there is nothing to be thankful for. There is no reason to be thankful for my spouse. There is no reason to be thankful for my job. There is no reason

to be thankful for this church. There is no reason to be thankful for this community, blah, blah, blah.”

If that is where you are at this morning where you are going to try to justify your ungratefulness, can I pastor you a little bit? That is kind of what I am supposed to do here, right? So while we are hanging here for a moment, can I just pastor you? Beware of the hardening of the heart that comes through self deception.

The writer of Hebrews said this.

“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”⁷

And for anyone who would be here this morning who would say, “I don’t really have anything to be thankful for, at least in that particular situation, so I can be ungrateful and it is not going to affect me,” Scripture tells us that sin can be very self deceiving. It is amazing how twisted things can become in our human minds. And please mark this down. Ungrateful hearts become hard hearts. And being around spiritual things like these nine guys is no guarantee that that won’t happen. In fact, I would suggest to you that the longer you have been a Christian, the more seriously you ought to pay attention to what we are talking about from this text this morning.

On the other hand a thankful heart that is both soft and focused on the truth can actually make accurate and balanced critiques when they need to be made. See, I understand there are times when we can’t only be thankful. We also have to talk about a problem. But when that critique or that criticism is made through the lens of overall thanksgiving, it is much more likely to be balanced and much more likely to be accurate and, therefore, much more likely to be helpful.

And here is another lesson we could learn from this text. There is no automatic relationship between the amount of blessings and the degree of thankfulness. See, I am trying to go after all of the arguments some might have this morning for why my ungratefulness is justified. You might say, “If God gave me better stuff I would be more thankful. That is the problem. God has jammed me.”

Wrong. And this text is the great example of how you cannot make that argument, because there were 10 of them. And they all had exactly the same illness and they all received exactly the same healing. It is not true that, well, if you treat people in a particular way they will all respond with thankfulness. The fact of the matter is there is no automatic relationship between the amount of blessings that a person receives and the degree of thankfulness in their heart.

Lastly, being genuinely thankful is an evidence of salvation. Jesus said to the Samaritan:

“Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.”⁸

⁷ Hebrew 3:13.

If you have a study Bible it reads, “Your faith has saved you.” And Warren Wiersbe explains that. The Samaritan’s nine friends were declared clean by the priest, but he was declared saved by the Son of God. Well, it is wonderful to experience the miracle of physical healing. It is even more wonderful to experience the miracle of eternal salvation.

For some who will hear this message today—and I want to love you right now, but this is really important—the reason you are struggling with ungratefulness is because you don’t have a personal relationship with God yet that can transform your heart and your life. Right now you are like a wrinkled shirt and trying to iron the wrinkles off, but the iron is not plugged into the wall. And you are not going to be able to get the wrinkles out without first establishing a personal relationship with Christ, because you don’t know that you know that you know that you are on your way to heaven. We would invite you, we would urge you to make that decision while you have the opportunity to do so.

What is the overall point this morning? It is not simply to find a bunch of people and tell them thank you. It is, first and foremost, to say, “Lord, I recognize that if I am going to be growing in strength this fall, I have to be cultivating that building block of thankfulness and so, Lord, help me to cultivate, to put a tension on cultivating a heart of thanksgiving this fall.”

But the fact of the matter is that if you are cultivating that in your heart, it is going to result in specific actions. Is that true? And I would encourage you to look for opportunities to work on that even today. For example, if you see someone who, just as a random example, somebody who serves in our military or somebody who has a family member in the military, I would encourage you to thank that person for their sacrifice.”

And one of the things that is bad about this election cycle, everybody wants to talk about how bad everything is. We have got a lot to be thankful for in this country. Do we get that? And that was secured, humanly speaking, by a lot of men and women who have sacrificed greatly. And we ought to have a heart of thanksgiving for what they did and, in some cases, what they continue to do. Here at church if you have nursery worker, if you have your child in a nursery, I would encourage you to thank that person. God bless him, huh? Absolutely. Your child’s Sunday school teacher. I would encourage you to thank... we need to be thankful for those kind of persons who will sacrifice and serve in this way.

And, by the way, one of the ways you show your thankfulness is they will hand you a paper today and you have an opportunity to review that lesson with your child throughout the week. That shows how thankful you are for the teaching they just received. It is your child, after all. Therefore it is your responsible to train them in the nurture and admonition of Christ.

If you are in an adult Bible fellowship, I would encourage you to thank you teacher. I would encourage you to thank Titus and the worship team. They do a fabulous job. I

⁸ Luke 17:19.

would encourage you to thank these sound workers, these tech people. I would encourage you to thank your deacon.

See, the bottom line is we have all sorts of reasons to be thankful people. We don't want to be like the nine. We don't want to be a bunch of grumps who are sucking up all the resources and not getting things done for God. We want to be a thankful army like the one.

By the way, if you are participating in Faith West capital campaign, Arvid Olson has a way to physically thank you today. Don't you love Arvid? Glad for all the work that he does. We ought to be thankful for him. He has put together a mug, a great coffee mug with the Faith West logo on it. And if you are participating in our capital campaign he would like to give you one of those just as an act of thanksgiving. And I hope as you drink your coffee out of that in the morning—and please tell me you drink coffee. You are a Christian, right? And I am not interested in hearing about your gluten free tea or whatever you have got going on, ok? But anyway, off my notes. When you lift that baby up every morning it gives you an opportunity to thank God for Faith West, huh? We ought to be thankful people. It gives you an opportunity to be thankful for your brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we are doing this together. None of us could do it on our own, huh? And aren't you glad for faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who are faithfully giving during a sour economy? And it also can give you an opportunity to thank God for working in your heart, because if you are participating in that in a way that you are committed, that is because Jesus has done something marvelous in your heart. A great opportunity to thank God and to thank one another.