

SERMON 28C 2025.

My friends last Sunday we celebrated our Harvest Sunday, our day of thanksgiving for all the good things God has given us, we marked this by offering food goods to our local foodbanks and pantries, and thankyou to all those who brought such gifts, a huge amount was donated which will help to sustain the local foodbanks through the coming winter months. We also has our collection for CAFOD, to help those in need in other countries, the poorest of peoples, thankyou for your wonderful generosity to that collection, not far off a £1000 was donated. Such generosity to those in need is a wonderful statement of faith, with charity and almsgiving being one of those great characteristic of a community of faith.

Now the readings we have just heard continue to make us thing about giving thanks, for it is such a big part of our faith, thanking God for his many gifts. We heard of the healing of lepers, in the first reading the pagan man from Syria - Naaman and then in the Gospel the 10 lepers. Naaman gives thanks for the healing he received through the prophet Elisha, but only one of the 10 lepers who Jesus healed returns and says thank you to Jesus.

Now anyone who was healed of leprosy certainly had a lot to give thanks for, it was and still is in many parts of this world a terrible illness, not just because of the physical symptoms and pain of bodily decay, but also because of the fear it evokes in others and of how the sufferer was and still is forced to leave homes and family. That was certainly the case in the ancient world, lepers along with their bodily suffering lived away from society in utter poverty and want. So anyone who was healed, wasn't just given back health, but their former lives as well, homes and family. No wonder Naaman gives thanks to Elisha and the Samaritan leper to Jesus. But special though these healings were, in the Gospel Our Lord worked a greater miracle, a greater healing, since he didn't just give that Samaritan leper back his bodily health, he also gave him spiritual health. Our Lord said to him after he had given thanks - Your faith has saved you, in other words, his sins had been forgiven, his soul had been healed and cleansed, not just his body. This is the greatest miracle, greater even than the healing from leprosy, because it is a miracle that washes away sins and offers us the chance of eternal life, not just a renewed earthly life. That leper showed his faith in Jesus by the simple act of giving thanks, the leper worships, praises and thanks God for the blessing he has received and is rewarded with the gift of spiritual salvation.

Our other reading today from St. Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy explains where this gift of salvation comes from, how Jesus was able to offer that gift of eternal salvation, Paul says,

"Remember the good news that I carry, Jesus Christ risen from the dead." It is from Our Lords suffering, death and resurrection that our salvation comes, this is the price that was paid for our salvation from sin and earth, Gods own son dieing for us on the cross. This is the ultimate thing we give thanks for, not just the food and drink we receive from Gods creation, but the gift of his son. It is what we are doing here in Church today, in this Eucharist, this act of thanksgiving, thanking God for our salvation , worked for us by Jesus in his death and resurrection. From this altar behind me we receive that wonderful gift of communion, the very body and blood of Jesus, which is the very food for eternal life, let us give thanks for this today.

My friends I think we all find it east, even 2nd nature to ask God for things, in the midst of the hardships and pains of life we turn to god for what we need, for what we want, but so often, like those lepers when we have what we want we fail to make the simple prayer of thanksgiving, to say thankyou as the Samaritan leper did, perhaps we could all endeavour in our daily prayers to say thankyou for all of the blessings we have, for all that we take for granted.

So finally let us be like Naaman and the Samaritan leper and St. Paul in giving thanks for all Gods blessings today, let us be a thankful people, most of all for the gift of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.