

Ordinary 28C - 2025

Have You Forgotten Something?

I can recall three rhetorical questions that accompanied me throughout my childhood. The first was, "Were you born in a barn?" That usually came when I left a door open, or didn't clean up my room.

The second was, "When will you ever grow up?" which was a question my sisters asked me as a carefully planned, relentless program of persecution.

The third one was, "Have you forgotten something?" That was the parental admonition, usually for not saying thank you after receiving some gift.

This last question is what I thought of when I read the New Testament lesson for this morning from Luke's gospel, the seventeenth chapter, the story of Jesus healing ten lepers. Only one comes back to give thanks. Ten were healed, but only the Samaritan came back. If my mother had been there, she would have said to the nine, "Have you forgotten something?" (by Mark Trotter from *How about Something Different?*)

Humor: Does Everyone Do That?

The story is told of a farmer who went into town for a little breakfast. As his meal was set before him, he bowed his head and offered a silent prayer. The man at the next table derided him, "Hey, does everybody do that where you come from?" "No," said the farmer. "The pigs don't." (by Frank Lyman from *Collected Sermons*, www.Sermons.com)

A Letter of Appreciation

In the book *A Window on the Mountain*, Winston Pierce tells of his high school class reunion. A group of the old classmates were reminiscing about things and persons they were grateful for. One man mentioned that he was particularly thankful for Mrs. Wendt, for she more than anyone had introduced him to Tennyson and the beauty of poetry. Acting on a suggestion, the man wrote a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Wendt and addressed it to the high school. The note was forwarded and eventually found the old teacher. About a month later the man received a response. It was written in a feeble longhand and read as follows: "My dear Willie, I can't tell you how much your letter meant to me. I am now in my nineties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and like the last leaf of fall lingering behind. You will be interested to know that I taught school for forty years and yours is the first

letter of appreciation I ever received. It came on a blue, cold morning and it cheered me as nothing has for years. Willie, you have made my day."
(from the Staff at www.eSermons.com)

Only prayer you ever say:

It seems to me that the point of the parable of the ten lepers is at least twofold. One, see and act - Jesus "sees" the lepers and their need, and the Samaritan leper "saw that he was healed." Jesus, who had heard, but finally seen the lepers, acts by healing the lepers, and the Samaritan acts by recognizing how beautiful the world has become, and his/her action is to praise God and be grateful.

Two, the sense of entitlement and the complete absence of any form of gratitude shows their lack of understanding the amazing grace and kindness of Jesus. It seems to me that a grateful person is one who recognizes how profound the gift of health and of life really is and therefore is humble enough to be grateful. I think that gratitude is an expression of deep faith. As Meister Eckart wrote:
"If the only prayer you ever say is thank you that is enough."

The Seeds of Discouragement

An old legend tells how a man once stumbled upon a great red barn after wandering for days in a forest in the dark. He was seeking refuge from the howling winds of a storm. He entered the barn and his eyes grew accustomed to the dark. To his astonishment, he discovered that this was the barn where the devil kept his storehouse of seeds. They were the seeds that were sown in the hearts of humans. The man became curious and lit a match. He began exploring the piles of bins of seeds round him. He couldn't help but notice that the greatest majority of them said, "Seeds of Discouragement."

About that time one of the devil's helpers arrived to pick up a load of seeds. The man asked him, "Why the abundance of discouragement seeds?" The helper laughed and replied, "Because they are so effective and they take root so quickly." "Do they grow everywhere?" the man asked. At that moment the devil's helper became very sullen. He glared at the man and in disgust he said, "No. They never seem to grow in the heart of a grateful person." (by Keith Wagner from *But Are We Grateful?*)