

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
09-10-2022  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7 God tells the Israelites to accept life in Exile

Psalms 66:1-11 Make a joyful noise to God

2 Timothy 2: 8-15 Christ is central, present your self to God in this faith

Luke 17: 11-19 Jesus heals 10 lepers, Only one comes back to give thanks

### Introduction

The theme I would like to explore from the Bible readings today is:-

“Giving Thanks to God” and “Living Thankful Lives”.

To do this I would like to look at:-

- What the scriptures tell us about living thankfully.
- What challenges we might face in living thankful lives, and
- Ask the question, “Do we live our lives like we are thankful people?”

### Scripture Readings

In the reading from the prophet Jeremiah, we have the beginning of a letter that Jeremiah wrote to those who were taken into exile in Babylon. Through Jeremiah, God was telling the people, not to be disheartened in the very difficult situation they found themselves in, but rather to continue on with their lives, and pray for their captors and the wellbeing of the city they had been exiled to. They were instructed to continue to live thankful lives.

In Psalm 66 today, we hear the Psalmist singing God's praises with all his might. Although the psalm acknowledges challenges and difficulties, it is full of praise to God.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy today we hear Paul describe how he is willing to endure all the difficulties, and challenges, and hardships for the sake of sharing the Good News of Jesus. And we hear Paul encourage Timothy to do the same. Paul first experienced the power of Jesus in his life, on the road to Damascus, and from then on, he did not look back. Paul continued to give thanks to God. Paul continued to encourage others to be thankful to God, for all that God has done for us in Jesus.

In the reading today from Luke's Gospel we hear the story of the Samaritan healed of leprosy. The only one of the ten who were healed, to come back and thank Jesus. And when this healed leper did come back, he was "praising God with a loud voice". He prostrated himself at Jesus feet and thanked Him. It's not clear why the others didn't return to thank Jesus, but the one who did come back to thank Jesus was certainly acknowledged for it.

The healed Samaritan gave thanks to God, and we should too.

In terms of being thankful to God I'd like to quote one more portion of Scripture from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians:-

Rejoice Always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

God does not call us to be thankful "for" all circumstances because we shouldn't give thanks for evil, but we give thanks to God through the difficult times, as God is always with us in them.

God calls us to live thankful lives, and the reality is the more thankful we seek to be, the better our lives become.

### Challenges to living thankful lives

Of course though, we will face challenges to living thankful lives.

Being thankful is a decision we have to make. Being thankful is an attitude we have to adopt as we live our lives. Everyone will have problems and challenges in life, but the more we are able to live thankfully the closer we become to God.

Whinging though, is part of our Human Nature. I recall my father not seeming to be particularly thankful. Although he lived what most would call a good life, he faced some big challenges in his life. Firstly, as a young man he wasn't able to achieve his dream of going to teacher's college because of the White Australia Policy still being in place, and later on when he was established in a great career as a "National Fitness Officer", he was transferred for political reasons, which ultimately brought an end to that career. Although he managed to do many other wonderful things, he seemed to hang onto the resentment, and I think it stopped him being as thankful as he could have been for the good things in his life.

Is there something holding you back from being truly thankful to God in your life? Maybe there isn't, but if there is, it is important to work on resolving it, so that you can be truly thankful, and your life will be all the better for it.

If we are seeking to live thankful lives, then the fruit of the Spirit is more likely to be evident in our lives. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Conversely some of the behaviours which seem opposed to living thankfully are, being ungrateful, being intolerant, seeking only self interest, seeking to intimidate others, being demanding, angry and argumentative.

Depending on the circumstances we face in life, some people may be more easily able to achieve living thankfully than others, but if we as Christians chose to live in negativity, we deny what Jesus has done for us.

Some questions to ponder about our own thankfulness.  
Are we thankful to God? Does it show in our lives?

### Conclusion

Despite the challenges we may face in life, we all have much to be thankful for.

John Newton the priest who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace put it like this,

“I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great Saviour.”

How often do we, like the leper did, prostrate ourselves at Jesus feet and thank him? I mean really thank him.

God loves us so much that he was willing to send his son Jesus, to die on a cross for us. Jesus did that for me and he did it for you. For this alone we need to be thankful and to show our thanks to God in meaningful ways.

How are you and I going to show our thanks to God this week? Amen.