Cheshire South Methodist Circuit Worship at Home – Sunday 12th October 2025 An Attitude of Gratitude

Call to worship:

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to him with all my heart, for the wondrous things he has done.

StF no. 81 Now thank we all our God

1 Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things has done, in whom the world rejoices; who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us, with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us; and keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all ills in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given, the Son, and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven, the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore, for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

CCL821965 Martin Rinkart

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession

Living God, we have come into your holy presence today, to worship and adore you in praise and prayer. Your word cannot be contained in any formalities, but pours generously into our world, full of the promise of healing and forgiveness, however little we deserve you love and grace. Help us to respond with thankful hearts, full of gratitude for all you have done, and enable us to live godly lives to your greater glory.

Living Christ, we come to give our thanks to you, for moving among us with eyes peeled to spot our difficulties and ears tuned to hear our deepest needs, when we reach out and cry out to you. We are equally grateful for your hands stretched out to help and heal us. We marvel at all you do for us. Enable us to respond to the challenge to follow you and, in so doing, to draw others to bless your holy name.

Living Spirit, we come to thank you, for breathing God's presence into our world, with all its strength and beauty. You uphold and guide us, and fill us with everlasting radiance, deepening our relationship with the Almighty. You empower us to lead more righteous lives, reflecting your majesty, which will encourage others to enter into a relationship with you. **Amen**.

Lord, like nine of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus, we have often forgotten to thank you for all you have given us. We have hurried away, in order to go about our daily business, waiting until it was more convenient for us to praise you. Forgive us, above all, when we forget to show gratitude towards you, forgetting that you are the very fabric from which are lives are woven.

And so, we long to hear the good news, that God's love is unfailing, and his mercy unshakable. When we turn to Him and ask for mercy, we are met with grace and kindness. We know that we are forgiven and held in the love of our Lord. Thanks be to God. **Amen**

Readings: 2 Kings 5,1-15 **Naaman Healed of Leprosy**

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

- ² Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."
- ⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents^[b] of silver, six thousand shekels^[c] of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."
- ⁷ As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"
- ⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."
- ¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.
- ¹³ Naaman' s servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.
- ¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."

Luke 17, 11-19 Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy

- ¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"
- ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Sermon

Text: Jesus asked, 'Why was this person the only one who came back to give thanks to God?' (Luke 17: verse 18)

A recent letter to the Methodist Recorder began by saying, 'I am writing purely to say thank you, something I don't do often enough.' The letter writer wanted to particularly thank the artists who draw cartoons for the paper each week and make him smile, but his confession is a reminder to us that we can never say thank you often enough, even for the less important things in life. Today's

Gospel passage, which only appears in Luke, is above all a reminder that, as Christians, we need to maintain an 'attitude of gratitude' for all the blessings we enjoy, in age of rights and entitlements when good things are simply taken for granted. We should be setting a good example, so that Christ does not have to repeat his comment concerning the single grateful leper in this story: 'Why was this person the only one who came back to give thanks to God?'

It reminded me of a letter I once received from a local councillor who thanked me after I expressed my gratitude for what she had done to resolve a problem in the neighbourhood. 'Sadly', she said 'my work is all too often a thankless task, with little credit being given for the service I have provided.' I'm constantly reminding my grandchildren of the importance of saying those two little words, 'thank you', or indeed doubling them to say 'thank you very much'.

I wonder why nine of the lepers in Luke's story failed to thank Jesus? Was it because they were preoccupied with showing the priest that they were now clean, a vital part of being allowed back into the community, or was it because they were so excited about the miraculous cure that Jesus had provided that they forgot all about his wonderful kindness. Or, given their separation from the community, and the fear that they caused to its healthy members, had they lost all sense of social graces and gratitude in their struggle to survive?

By contrast, when Naaman was healed of the same disease by the prophet Elisha, in our Old Testament reading from the second book of Kings – after he had got over his horror of bathing in the River Jordan, which was as polluted in those days as it is now - he begged Elisha to accept a gift as a token of his gratitude (which is a special way of saying thank you). When this was refused, Naaman promised to worship the Lord God of Israel, who had made him well, and Elisha was more than satisfied with that, blessing the Syrian general as he set out to return to his home country. There were nine ungrateful men in Luke's story of healing from leprosy, but at least one of them did remember to thank Jesus, praising God (like Naaman), and even throwing himself to the ground at Jesus's feet. Yet Luke is keen to point out that this grateful man was a Samaritan, and Jesus describes him as a 'foreigner', though I'm not sure about the translation. Because Samaria was an area located between Galilee and Jerusalem, in the Holy Land, and the opening verse of our reading (Luke 11, verse 1), tells us that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, passing along the border of Samaria. What really distinguished Samaritans from Jews was their religious outlook, which the Jews considered heretical. Samaritans accepted some, but not all Jewish scripture, and did not recognise Jerusalem as the centre of their faith. So, what I think Luke is emphasising is that this leper was a double outcast, in so far as he held different religious views from Jesus and his followers, as well as being separated from his own community.

Now, you will be familiar with the story of the Good Samaritan, that greatest of parables, which is also only to be found in Luke's Gospel. This story of the ten lepers is also raising an awkward question, as Jesus liked to do, by suggesting – as in the parable of the Good Samaritan – that outsiders have something to teach us about righteous behaviour, rather than those who are considered to be virtuous pillars of the community. We all need to be careful about our own shortcomings and ask ourselves if we can confidently respond to Jesus' question in our text: 'Why was this person the only one who came back to give thanks to God?' Do we always show an attitude of gratitude? Fortunately, and this is the final and third point that I draw from this Gospel story, no matter how much we are in need of healing, we can always call on Jesus for help. The ten lepers shouted, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us! (Luke 11, verse 13). A simple, if desperate request, yet Jesus responded by healing them. He imposed no conditions, and was obviously upset when only one of them came back to thank him, but he acted with that Amazing Grace, to which all of us can surely testify. Our conditions of unease may be spiritual, as opposed to the consequence of physical disease (in those days incurable), but we cannot earn his salvation through actions on our own part. Martin Luther, one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, worked really hard at satisfying God, to the point of renouncing the world and becoming a monk. Yet he could find no peace until, in reading the words of Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans, he realised that salvation was to be gained by grace, in calling on God to save him through his almighty mercy, like

those lepers who despaired of any cure. As Jesus says in the final words of this Gospel passage, speaking to the thankful leper, now made whole: 'Get up and go; your faith has made you well.' Praise be to God. **Amen**.

Prayers of Intercession

Healer and Saviour, we are the ones who cry out to you. We are the unclean, who desperately need your cure.

We pray too, that you will touch all those who are sick in body mind or spirit, especially those who are known to us. And we bring before you the sorrowful and anxious, the guilt-ridden and depressed, asking you to soothe their pain and return them to full health. We pray too for all who treat the sick and minister to those who find life difficult. We pray particularly for the work of organisations like the Leprosy Mission or the Mercy Ships who attend to those who otherwise have no hope of medical assistance.

Healer and Saviour, help us to be the ones who turn back to you, to be a thankful people. We ask that our own healing and forgiveness might show itself in faithfulness and love. We pray that you will touch the leaders and people of your churches, as well as those who govern our nations, especially in countries torn by war and violence. Unite us in praise and the service of peace and justice. Fill us with enthusiasm and joy, increasing our confidence that through us the world may come to Christ to be cleansed and restored to wholeness.

Thanks be to you, our God, for your gracious love, known in Jesus Christ, that puts us right, lifts us up and sends us on our way. In the words our Saviour taught us, we say ...

The Lord's Prayer...

StF no. 653 O Christ the Healer

- **1** O Christ, the Healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends. How can we fail to be restored, when reached by love that never ends?
- **2** From every ailment flesh endures our bodies clamour to be freed; yet in our hearts we would confess that wholeness is our deepest need.
- **3** How strong, O Lord, are our desires, how weak our knowledge of ourselves! Release in us those healing truths unconscious pride resists or shelves.
- 4 In conflicts that destroy our health we diagnose the world's disease; our common life declares our ills: is there no cure, O Christ, for these?
- 5 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your community may find the wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach the whole of humankind.

CCL 821965 Fred Pratt Green

Closing Prayer: Filled with gratitude for God's good grace, we shall seek to sing his praises and share his love, because we are blessed indeed! **Amen**.

Benediction

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and remain with us, always. **Amen.**

This worship service has been prepared by Dr. Malcolm Crook