

## The Case for Giving Thanks in Tough Times

Luke 17:7-19

Likely we would all agree that giving thanks is always good in principle. But can we give thanks in the tough times? Can we give thanks when life isn't going like we would like? This is the case for many of us in a year that has been full of disappointments and discouragements. We wish 2020 were different, right? But God tells us to give thanks in every circumstance. How can we become the type of people who actually do the will of God by giving thanks even in the tough times? Today we're looking at a passage of Scripture that begins to answer that question.

**Opening Discussion:** On a scale from 1 to 10, what is your gratitude quotient these days? (10 = giving thanks in all things; 0 = rarely giving thanks)

### Read Luke 17:7-19

1. What is the scenario that Jesus presents in verses 7-10?
2. What does this passage say about how we ought to think about ourselves when we've been obedient?

Steve said:

***"We are unworthy servants who are simply doing what our Lord commands."*** This is a statement about the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. The reason we acknowledge his Lordship is because he died on the cross for our sins and then rose again on the third day! I think you can see how this conviction about the Lordship of Jesus prepares us to give thanks in the tough times. By his death and resurrection, Jesus has already done more for us than we could ever repay. If Jesus never did another single thing for us, we would still be indebted to him. Our thankfulness and our obedience aren't dependent upon what he's done for us lately. He is our Lord, therefore he deserves our thanks no matter what.

3. How might having the conviction that, "We are unworthy servants who are simply doing what our Lord commands," prepare us to give thanks in tough times?
4. Are you currently living out this truth of giving Jesus thanks no matter what he has done for you lately? Explain.

5. In verses 11-19, how does the text indicate that the men understood that they did not deserve the thing that they asked for?
6. What does the encounter with the lepers reveal about giving thanks?

Steve said:

As Jesus established in his earlier scenario, thanks is appropriate only when someone has done something for you that **wasn't** required. Since God is a merciful master who gives to us in ways he isn't required to do, giving thanks is always appropriate – even when times are tough. If this is a difficult season for you, it's all the more important that you fix your eyes on Jesus and notice how merciful he is to you. Why? Because Jesus has shown you the greatest possible mercy by taking on flesh and blood and “humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” If he never did anything else, that would be enough to thank him throughout all eternity. But the fact of the matter is that he lavishes grace upon us day by day, especially in the tough times.

7. Even in our current situations with all the difficulties that we are facing, how has God still given you what you don't deserve? How has Jesus been merciful to you?
8. How might our lives impact those who don't know God if we as followers of Jesus develop and exhibit a life-style of giving thanks when times are tough?

### Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted this Week

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**Daily Devotion:** Spend time meditating on Luke 17:7-19; Psalm 106:1; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Thess. 5:18



**Prayer:** Over the next two weeks seek to cultivate the discipline of giving thanks to God. Ponder the question, “What has God given me that I don't deserve?” And give Him thanks for the things that come to mind.