

Steeple News

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A Lesson in Service

One day Jesus walked into a village, and he was approached by ten lepers. They were all seeking to be made well. Jesus instructed them to pass in front of a priest, and when they did, they were made well. Nine of the healed lepers rushed away, rejoicing over their good fortune, proud and jubilant. Only one returned to Jesus and expressed gratitude for being made whole. Jesus asked the one with gratitude, "Were there not ten healed, where are the other nine?" It was a melancholy question, typical of a lifetime of being used and then forgotten. Even though Jesus was affected by the nine lepers lack of appreciation, he did not take back the gift. How many others had been healed and hurried off, without an expression of appreciation? How many beneficiaries of His kindness watched mutely while He was tried and crucified?

"As I have loved you, love one another", Jesus was quick to say. His unceasing service, without proper appreciation, teaches us something about the kind of love he means.

Whenever we begin to lessen our acts of kindness and service to others because we do not feel we have been properly appreciated, perhaps it is time to question our motives. We must ask ourselves if we do acts of kindness in order to be noticed and praised by others? Do we serve for self-aggrandizement? Even though getting praised for our gifts to others feels sweet, we still need to understand that this should not be the motive for our giving. It is then that we have lost the Spirit of Jesus.

There is always danger that our service may become calculated, and our kindness tainted with self-righteousness. Or worse than that, if we feel that we haven't been adequately thanked and rewarded, we may cease our service altogether. Hanging our concern for others on their recognition of it makes our love almost a fraudulent thing. It is the same folly that affects those who stop obeying God's commandments because they failed to see some reward in it.

In fact, we may not always be appreciated or thanked for the good things we think we do. That is the reality of life. But let us not cease to love and to serve. Those who can look into a universe that almost seems devoid of the Lord and still pray are those who have faith in Him. Those who can serve even one who turns away without a backward glance have really learned how to love.

"Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?", Jesus asked. And then Jesus continued to serve not in little ways, waiting for each "thank you", but in great ways to those who took and never thanked or appreciated anything at all.

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