MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · DEVOTIONAL #4

A Heart of Thanksgiving

Ten were healed. One came back. Be the one.

Mèt Joseph taught school in a small village above Jacmel for forty-one years. He taught children to read by lamplight. He paid for pencils out of his own thin salary. Some of his students became nurses, pastors, engineers, teachers.

When he retired, his granddaughter found an old shoebox under his bed. Inside were letters. She counted them. Nine.

Nine thank-you letters in forty-one years.

"Grandpa," she said softly, "doesn't that make you sad?"

He smiled and picked up the most worn one, the paper soft as cloth. "Sad? No, pitit. I have read this one a hundred times. On the days I wanted to quit, it is the reason I did not." Then he said something she never forgot: "Thank you is a small word. But it walks a long way."

Jesus once healed ten men in one afternoon. Only one of them came back. And what Jesus said next tells us something surprising about the heart of God.

Ten cried out. Ten were healed.

They were lepers. In those days that meant a slow disease and a lonely life. They had to live outside the village and keep their distance from everyone, even their own families. So when Jesus passed by, they stood far away and shouted:

> *"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."*
>
> **Luke 17:13 (KJV)**

Jesus did not touch them this time. He simply told them to go and show themselves to the priests, the people who could declare them clean. And the Bible says, *"as they went, they were cleansed"* (Luke 17:14). Somewhere on that dusty road, ten men looked down at their hands — and the skin was new.

Imagine the shouting. Imagine them running home.

One turned around

> *"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan."*
>
> **Luke 17:15-16 (KJV)**

Only one. And he was the outsider — a Samaritan, the one people least expected to know God. He did not go home first. He came back first.

Then Jesus asked three questions that still echo today:

> *"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."*
>
> **Luke 17:17-18 (KJV)**

Jesus noticed. He counted. He cared. Not because God needs our compliments — but because He wants *us*, not just our requests.

And listen to what Jesus told the one who came back: *"Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole"* (Luke 17:19). All ten got clean skin. The one who returned went home with something more — a face-to-face meeting with the Healer. The Greek word Jesus used can also mean *saved*. The nine received a gift. The one received the Giver.

A gentle word: this story is about gratitude, not a promise that every sickness will be healed today. God still hears every prayer. We pray, we trust Him, and we also get good medical care. His full healing of everything broken is promised when Jesus returns.

Why we forget

Honestly, most of us are the nine. We pray hard when we are desperate. Then the answer comes — the job, the visa, the test result, the child who came home safe — and we run on with our lives. We did not mean to forget. We just did.

King David knew this about himself. So he preached a little sermon to his own soul:

> *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."*
>
> **Psalm 103:2 (KJV)**

Forget not. Then David starts making a list: He forgives all your sins, He redeems your life from destruction, He crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies (Psalm 103:3-4). Gratitude often starts the same way — with remembering on purpose.

"In every thing" — not "pretend everything is fine"

Here is a verse many people misunderstand:

> *"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
>
> **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (KJV)**

Notice: **in** every thing. Not "pretend the bad thing is good." God does not ask you to thank Him for cancer, for injustice, or for the earthquake. Evil is not His gift. But even inside the hardest day, there is always something He is still doing, and Someone still with you.

The prophet Habakkuk wrote one of the bravest thank-you notes in the Bible. The crops had failed. The animals were gone. And still he said:

> *"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines... Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."*
>
> **Habakkuk 3:17-18 (KJV)**

That is what thanksgiving really is: **naming what God has already done while we still wait for what He has promised.** Paul even says we can give thanks *"always for all things"*

(Ephesians 5:20) — not because every event is good, but because God is good, and He is at work in every one of them for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

A thankful heart has a guard at the door

Worry is loud. It wakes you at 3 a.m. and repeats the same bad news over and over. God gives a different way to carry those fears:

> *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
>
> **Philippians 4:6-7 (KJV)**

Look at the recipe: bring the request — *with thanksgiving*. And God's peace *keeps* your heart. The old word means to guard, like a soldier at the gate. Paul says the same thing to the Colossians:

> *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."*
>
> **Colossians 3:15 (KJV)**

Peace and thankfulness walk together. God does not promise that every request will be answered the way we want. He promises something steadier: His peace, standing guard over a grateful heart.

Thanksgiving is the front door of worship

Psalm 100 is like an invitation card to God's house. And it tells you how to walk in:

> *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."*
>
> **Psalm 100:4-5 (KJV)**

We do not enter with a list of complaints. We enter saying *thank You*. Not because we are pretending, but because it is true: **the LORD is good.** His mercy did not run out yesterday,

and it will not run out tomorrow.

Paul makes it an everyday habit: *"whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"* (Colossians 3:17). Washing dishes. Driving to work. Sitting in the hospital. Every place can become a place of thanks.

The gift behind every gift

Why can a Christian always find a reason to be grateful? Because the biggest gift is already given, and nothing can take it back:

> *"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."*
>
> **2 Corinthians 9:15 (KJV)**

Jesus. God's gift too big for words. He came, He lived for us, He died for us, He rose, and He is coming again. On your best day, He is enough reason to say thank You. On your worst day, He is still enough.

Try this: be the one who comes back

Here is a simple practice for the next seven days:

- **Every night:** before you sleep, name three things God did today — out loud, or in a small notebook. Small things count: a meal, a phone call, a breath without pain.
- **Every morning:** start with Psalm 100:4 before you check your phone. Walk into the day through the gate of thanks.
- **Once this week:** "turn back" like the Samaritan. Call, text, or write a letter to someone God used to bless you. Thank them — and thank God for them.

Daniel did this in a crisis. When he knew prayer could cost him his life, he still knelt three times a day, *"and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime"* (Daniel 6:10). Gratitude was not a mood for him. It was a habit — and it held him steady.

The heart of it: the word that walks a long way

Mèt Joseph's shoebox held only nine letters. But one of them kept a tired teacher from quitting. "Thank you" walked a long way.

Jesus is still counting the ones who come back — not to shame the nine, but because He longs for a relationship, not just a transaction. You do not need to be good enough, religious enough, or the right kind of person. The one who returned was an outsider. All he did was turn around.

So turn around today. Fall at His feet, even just in your heart, and say it: *Thank You, Jesus*. It is a small word. But it walks all the way to the throne of God.

Before you close this — one question

When was the last time you turned back to say thank You to God? Or has life been so heavy that gratitude feels impossible right now?

You do not have to carry it alone. We would be honored to pray with you, study the Bible with you, or walk with you as you get to know the Jesus who noticed the one who came back — and who notices you.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉️ **jils19802012@gmail.com**
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What should we study next? This devotional completes the current series — and the next topic will come from what *you* ask. Comment, message, or write to us with the Bible question you most want answered, and watch for it in the free library at **pasteurclementsalomon.org**. Subscribe now so it reaches you the day it comes out — if you wait, you will have to go looking for it. 🔔

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Viewer Handout

A Heart of Thanksgiving — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Jesus noticed the one who came back — God cares whether we return to thank Him (Luke 17:15-18).
2. The nine received a gift; the one who returned received the Giver: "thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).
3. We give thanks *in* every thing — not pretending evil is good, but trusting God inside every situation (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Habakkuk 3:17-18).
4. Prayer with thanksgiving opens the door to God's peace, which guards our hearts (Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 3:15).
5. Jesus Himself is God's "unspeakable gift" — a reason for thanks on every day of our lives (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Memory verse

> *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
> **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- What prayer has God answered that I never went back to thank Him for?
- In the hardest thing I am facing now, what is one thing God is still doing or still giving?
- Who has God used to bless me — and when will I "turn back" to thank them this week?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (Mèt Joseph's shoebox: nine letters in forty-one years) — ask: "Who is someone you have never properly thanked?"
- **Point 1 — Ten cried out, ten were healed:** Luke 17:11-14. Describe the life of a leper; they were cleansed "as they went."
- **Point 2 — One turned back:** Luke 17:15-19. The outsider returned; Jesus noticed and asked "where are the nine?" The one received more than healing: "thy faith hath made thee whole." Stress: a story about gratitude, not a guarantee of healing today.
- **Point 3 — Why we forget:** Psalm 103:1-5. Gratitude begins with remembering on purpose.
- **Point 4 — "In every thing":** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Habakkuk 3:17-18; Ephesians 5:20; Romans 8:28. Thanks is not pretending; we thank God inside hard days, never for evil itself.
- **Point 5 — Thanks guards peace:** Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 3:15. God promises peace, not that every request is granted our way.
- **Point 6 — The front door of worship:** Psalm 100:1-5; Colossians 3:16-17.
- **Christ-centered close:** 2 Corinthians 9:15 — Jesus is the gift behind every gift.
- **Practice:** the 7-day challenge (three thanks each night, Psalm 100:4 each morning, one "turn back" thank-you this week); Daniel 6:10 as example.
- **Appeal:** invite each person to "turn back" to Jesus today — to thank Him and give Him their heart. Offer prayer and Bible study.
- **Close:** memory verse (1 Thessalonians 5:18) + invite the group to send in the Bible question they most want answered in the next study.

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Being thankful means pretending everything is fine.	Habakkuk rejoiced in God while the crops failed (Habakkuk 3:17-18), and Jesus Himself wept at a friend's grave (John 11:35).
2. We must thank God for the evil things that happen.	We give thanks "in every thing" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Every good gift comes from God (James 1:17); He works in all things for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28).
3. God does not notice whether we thank Him.	Jesus asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17).
4. You can only be grateful when you have plenty.	Paul wrote, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11-12).
5. Thanksgiving is for one holiday a year.	"Giving thanks always for all things" (Ephesians 5:20); Daniel gave thanks three times a day (Daniel 6:10).
6. You have to wait until you feel thankful.	"Be ye thankful" is an invitation to choose (Colossians 3:15); David told his own soul, "forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).
7. Thanking God earns His blessings or salvation.	Salvation is a gift "by grace... through faith... not of works" (Ephesians 2:8-9); we thank Him because He already gave (2 Corinthians 9:15).
8. Complaining is harmless.	"Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14); see Israel's murmuring in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:10).
9. Praying with thanks guarantees I get exactly what I ask.	The promise is God's peace guarding our hearts (Philippians 4:6-7); even Jesus prayed, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).
10. Only "good religious people" are welcome to come back to Jesus.	The one who returned was a Samaritan, a "stranger" (Luke 17:16-18); "whosoever believeth in him" is welcome (John

	3:16).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This devotional is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on thanksgiving: Psalm 100:1-5; Psalm 103:1-5; Daniel 6:10; Habakkuk 3:17-18; Luke 17:11-19; Luke 22:42; John 3:16; John 11:35; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 10:10; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 2:8-9; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 2:14; Philippians 4:6-7, 11-12; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; James 1:17 (King James Version, public domain). Psalm verse numbers are the same in the KJV, Louis Segond, Reina-Valera and Kreyòl editions for the verses quoted here.
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #11, "Growing in Christ" (daily communion with God in prayer, His Word and praise) — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (ch. 13, "Rejoicing in the Lord"), public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Related in this library: *"Prayer That Changes Everything"* and *"Hope After Loss"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html

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