



On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.” — Luke 17:11-19

Click, click, click, click. The sound was sharp with each pedal stroke while propelling my bike up a particularly difficult hill. Hearing it, but not being able to locate the source just made it all the more annoying. Click, click, click. I tried to ignore it, but now it was in my head, a lost cause. It’s enough to be physically suffering on a climb, heart rate accelerating, lungs begging for air, legs burning, in the saddle, out of the saddle, tap out a rhythm, get your breathing under control. The click, click, click only added an unwanted level of frustration.

Next stop, bike shop. Not the one I usually go to, but one closer to my house to save time. A mechanic I didn’t know listened to my fumbling explanation of the problem. “I think it’s the bottom bracket, but it could be the rear derailleur. It only does it when there’s a lot of torque on the crank, and always on a climb, never on the flat. I tried this, I tried that, but nothing worked.”

“Let me take a look,” this mechanic I didn’t know said calmly. In minutes he had torn apart and put back together one part of my bike that *could* be the source of the click, click, click. Telling me what he found, and what he did, he rolled the bike back to me and said, “I’m not sure this will take care of it, but try it.” Ah... not exactly the vote of confidence I was hoping for.

Two days later out I went to find a few hills to test out the work the mechanic I didn’t know had done for me. Up I went. Up another, and then another. No click, click, click. Just silence. There’s nothing sweeter to the ears of a road cyclist than the quiet rotation of pedal strokes moving you and the machine forward with power and precision.

That afternoon I returned to the bike shop I don't usually go to, and sought out the mechanic I didn't know, to say thank you. If I hadn't gone back he might never know if he had fixed my problem, nor would he have known how appreciative I was, or how he had made someone really happy for a few hours on a Monday morning. It felt good to say thank you, and I could tell it felt good to the mechanic I didn't know to hear those words. It was a simple thing, but an important thing.

Once, Jesus cleansed ten lepers of their disease. Every time I hear the story I'm surprised and saddened by the response. Only one came back to express his thanks. One. Ten percent. And he was a Samaritan, not well liked by the Jews, making it even more shocking. And get this: the healing was more than physical. These guys would have been welcomed back into their communities and families, no longer isolated for being unclean. They could become productive citizens again. It's not an exaggeration to say their whole lives had been given back to them by Jesus. Honestly, how hard is it to say thank you?

And so here's my challenge for you today. Say thank you to someone. It doesn't have to be a big deal, but you might be surprised how much it will mean. Seek out someone who has done a good thing for you, someone who has blessed you, someone who has taught you something about yourself. Perhaps a person who has forgiven you or showed you mercy. Maybe a mentor, a parent, a spouse, a sibling, a doctor, a teacher. It could be someone who doesn't receive much attention, someone quietly going about their business. Just make a point of saying thank you. It might mean more than you could ever know.

In Christ,

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Good and gracious God, we have so much to be thankful for. Your blessings are countless, and you place people in our lives who help us and love us more than we probably deserve. Help us to be more intentional about saying thank you. Amen.