

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

The Revd Heather McIntyre
Friday 15th May 2020



Opening Psalm 138:1-3

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;

I bow down towards your holy temple and give
thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your
faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and
your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me, you increased
my strength of soul.

Prayer:

We thank you Lord for God for this new day. May
we know again the reality of your provision for each
one of us, according to our needs and your call in
our lives. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by the
pressures of life – as we spend time with you may we
receive a sense of your perspective about the issues
which trouble us. Creator and healer, you know who
we have been, who we are and who we can become

in your love. Give us a deep sense of confidence so that we come to you as trusting children, knowing that in your arms we shall receive understanding, acceptance, challenges, and the power to grow more like you. Amen

Reading: Luke 17:15-19

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."

Reflection:

Over the last weeks, none of us can fail to have noticed the stories of gratitude that have crept into the daily news reports that surround this pandemic; stories of thankfulness towards key workers that have kept the nation going at this time of crisis, as well as the weekly clap to thank all those working on the frontlines to help keep us safe and well.

It strikes me that only a few months ago these sorts of stories would not have been considered particularly newsworthy. Back then, all we heard or read about in the news were the bad news stories, stories about tragedies and about the failings of people, especially our politicians. It is not that this aspect of reporting has gone away, after all we still hear it, it is just that I think there has been a recognition of the need for some more positive news to help our wellbeing.

Luke's recounting of Jesus' encounter with ten lepers on his way to Jerusalem is probably a familiar story to most of us, yet at the moment it resonates with me more than previously. These lepers have been socially isolating from their families and friends – we don't know for how long, but I'm pretty sure it would have been longer than the time we have been in lockdown! As soon as they were healed and they got the all clear from the priest, they were once again able to play with their children, be with their families and work with their relatives in the fields near their homes. No wonder they rushed off to get on with their lives. Except for one...

This one – the one who came back and thanked Jesus – had something even more special happen to him. He was not only cured from leprosy, he was made well or whole. It seems that Jesus was saying that there is something special about giving

thanks. I think it is all to do with a way of living – a way of living that has thankfulness to God at the heart of all we are and do. Thankfulness changes the way we live, the way we perceive things and I think changes us into the people God meant us to be. At this time we have the opportunity to be still, to reflect and to be thankful. Will we remember to be thankful as lockdown lifts and our lives gradually fill up again?

Samuel Johnson wrote that “gratitude is the heart’s memory” but also that it is “the fruit of great cultivation”. Gratitude is not just an emotion, rather it is a disciplined way of life that can be cultivated. May we continue to cultivate a daily act of recognising all that God has given us and expressing to God our thankfulness and praise that lasts into the future, so that like the leper we may be made well and whole.

Prayer:

In my living and in my loving
You have blessed me
In my tears and in my laughter
You have blessed me
In my sisters and in my brothers
You have blessed me
With everything that is in me

I give you thanks.
Amen

Blessing:

May you be strengthened in your inner being with power through God's Spirit and may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith as you are rooted and grounded in love.

Amen