



November 2023: Gratitude  
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Hello Friends! We are together in Prayer! I am Bob Kolvik-Campbell, Upper New York Conference Superintendent, serving the Binghamton and Oneonta Districts, and for the month of November, we are together in prayer in Gratitude!

John Wesley on Gratitude: **“Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer; it is almost essentially connected with it. One who always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity. He blesses God for all things, looks on them as coming from Him, and receives them for His sake- not choosing nor refusing, liking or disliking, anything, but only as it is agreeable or disagreeable to His perfect will.”**

The word, Gratitude, appears only once in the Bible (RSV), in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Acts. However, the word, Thanksgiving, appears multiple times. The meaning of Gratitude is clear: It is about GIVING THANKS! Being thankful, giving thanks, gratitude, are vital parts of our prayer life. We are called to open each prayer, by reminding ourselves of the gratitude, with thanksgiving for what we have and who we are. Gratitude, then, is a way of life for those who follow Christ!

Gratitude is why we “give thanks” at each meal together, reminding each other that it is not by our efforts alone, but through God’s blessings and the work of others’ hands that we have food to eat. It is also what we do when Holy Communion is celebrated: The word “Eucharist” means “to give thanks”! We remember, we put back together the story of how God loves us and what Jesus does for us in giving himself for us. Our response is to Give Thanks with grateful hearts.

Scripture leads us to understand Gratitude as a way of life and a center of our prayer life. We read in Psalm 103 that “all that is within me is called to Bless God’s holy name”. Why? Because of all of those ways God sustains and loves us in so many ways. Blessing God is part of our Gratitude!

Psalm 95 calls us to sing to the Lord, to make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. (Imagine singing a prayer of gratitude to God)! Find a song to sing!

The apostle Paul reminds us to let our requests be known to God with prayer and thanksgiving, pray and let our requests be known to God (Philippians 4:6ff). In the letter to the Colossians, he reminds us to devote ourselves to prayer, keeping alert in prayer with thanksgiving.

An thanksgiving event that happens in the Gospel of Luke is when Jesus cleanses Ten Lepers:

### **Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy**

<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

What I believe is most evident in gratitude, in giving thanks, is that it is NOT our actions nor feelings nor mindset nor anything about us, that creates gratitude. As we see in this gospel account, gratitude comes as a **response** to what God in Christ Jesus does for me, for us, for others, for the world. Gratitude is, at best, a response to all that we are and all that we can be and all that we have been given. Gratitude takes the focus off me and the focus off us, and places it upon that for which we are grateful.

God in Christ Jesus calls us to be grateful in all things. The gospel song, ‘Count Your Blessings, Name Them One By One’ gives us a sense of taking the focus off of our need, our want, our desire, and instead seeing where God in Christ Jesus has already blessed us and is and

will meet that need. Do you often count your blessings? Have you seen where God's blessings have touched you? Have you taken any time to appreciate those?

It has been said that who and what we are is because of what God in Christ Jesus has given us. What we do with it is our gift of gratitude to God in Christ Jesus. All that we do involves us in living out gratitude each day.

So the challenge for all of us is how we live out our gratitude. Allow me to challenge you:

1. Write down, for this month, something you are grateful for each day.
2. Read scripture each day with gratitude in mind. What does this day's scripture call forth in you to be grateful?
3. How do you express gratitude to God and others in your life?
4. Pray this prayer of gratitude each day.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you have given us life of abundance. Sometimes, however, all we see is what we are lacking. Remind us to name our blessings and our thankfulness for them. Open us to see your presence in all the ways your blessings come to us. And in all our ways, may we lift grateful hearts and lives, engaged in increasing your blessings for all. In this, may we be blessed always. May our grateful hearts and lives be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord. Amen.

As we are together in prayer, let us live lives of gratitude.