

The Thankful Christian

A Bible Study Series of The Mt. Zion Church

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Priority # 3: We Will Praise God for His Victory
in Our Lives!

Check In Question: What is your favorite Thanksgiving dish and why?

Introduction: This time of the year often reminds those who live in America of Thanksgiving. (Other countries who celebrate Thanksgiving do so at different times). The celebration of the 1621 Fall harvest between the Wampanoag Indians and Pilgrims represents the first New World “Thanksgiving”. However, this is not the first instance of “thanksgiving”. The idea of thanksgiving can be seen in Biblical literature. The English term is derived from two words, thanks= grateful thought, giving=to give. Thus, the term thanksgiving in English technically means “to give grateful thought”. For Christians, it means we give grateful thought to the acts of God. The next two lessons will help us to consider how and why to express our thanks to God.



The Book of Mark was written to people who did not necessarily understand Jewish religion. He writes, primarily, to a Roman audience. His mother Mary (not Jesus’ mother) was a believer and opened her home to the disciples (See Acts 12: 12). He utilizes language that describes the immediacy of Jesus’ work. Words such as immediately, all at once, and suddenly are often found in the Gospel of Mark. The overall theme of Mark is for readers to understand and acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah.

Scripture: Mark 7: 31-37 Common English Bible Version

³¹ After leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus went through Sidon toward the Galilee Sea through the region of the Ten Cities. ³² Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to place his hand on the man for healing. ³³ Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself and put his fingers in the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. ³⁴ Looking into heaven, Jesus sighed deeply and said, “*Ephphatha*,” which means, “Open up.” ³⁵ At once, his ears opened, his twisted tongue was released, and he began to speak clearly.

³⁶ Jesus gave the people strict orders not to tell anyone. But the more he tried to silence them, the more eagerly they shared the news. ³⁷ People were overcome with wonder, saying, “He does everything well! He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who can’t speak.”

I. The Man's Condition

Notice how the man is in a position where he cannot hear and can barely speak. Mark does not mince words. He plainly states, there is a significant problem the man has. His inability to communicate effectively would have impacted his life.



In what ways would the man's condition hinder him? Create a list...

THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE RARELY LIKE TO FACE OUR CONDITIONS!



SELF-REFLECTION TIME!!!!

What challenges have you had that could have or do impact your ability to live life fully?

II. Jesus' Response Part 1.

In verse 33, what is the first action that Jesus does with the man? (Before the healing)_____

Notice, the man started in the crowd. He was part of the group, but Jesus individualizes him by getting 1 on 1 with him. What do you think this tells us about the ministry of Jesus? How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus is willing to engage with you individually? Did you know that Jesus always sees you as an individual?



III. Jesus' Response Part 2

The second part of verse 33 indicates that Jesus touches the man's ears and puts spit on his fingers then touches the man's tongue. This behavior would have been shocking to them as well as to us. However, in their day, the usage of different balms and ointments (many of which were smelly and at times dangerous) was common. The important action is that Jesus intimately engages with the man and heals him through a personal interaction.

SELF REFLECTION TIME!!!! (AGAIN)

1. What have you done lately to deserve Jesus interacting with you? See Psalms 8: 1-4.
2. When have you ignored people because of their issues? How does this behavior impact your thanks to Jesus?



IV. The Whole Point! Thanksgiving.

The end of the passage indicates a response the man had once he was healed. In verse 36, Mark indicates they proclaimed what Jesus had done for them. This response is the right response when Jesus has done anything for us. We should "give grateful thought" to what The Lord has done.

1. How should our grateful thought cause us to act?
 - a. Proclaim
 - b. Tweet it
 - c. Publish it
 - d. Text it
 - e. Say it

2. How regularly do you engage in conversations where you share with people what Jesus is currently doing in your life?

3. What is the first thing you think of when you say Jesus is doing _____ in my life? Can you share this with others? (You just shared it with the group!)

V. Next Level Thanksgiving (vs. 36)

Verse 36 presents an interesting problem. Jesus commands the people to keep their silence in about what he had done and they are disobedient to his command. Why?

This relates to Jesus' mission and People's perception.

Jesus' Purpose	The People's Perception
1. Be the spokesman for God	1. Overthrow the Roman government
2. Explain scripture	2. Set up his kingdom on Earth...David or Solomon part 2
3. Fulfill prophecy about the Messiah	3. Perform miracles
4. Sacrifice His life for all mankind and save us from the penalty of sin.	4. Elevate the Jews to power

Next level thanksgiving is when we give thanks to Jesus for fulfilling his mission. This moves our focus of the work of Jesus away from singular, one-off actions, to viewing His acts as part of something greater. His miraculous works are to fulfill the “thy kingdom come; thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:10).

1. Have you ever considered that Jesus is working in your life, so that people will see him as Savior? If we never share that part with people, then we are reducing the emphasis on who He really is in the big picture. He is not just miracle worker. He is Lord and Savior.
2. How can you share with people the full story of Jesus, which goes beyond the miracles he performs?

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus. Help me to be thankful for your goodness in my life. Let me share with others that you are not Santa Claus, but you are Savior of the world and your might acts are the proof. In Jesus name, Amen.