

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c

Psalms 111

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Luke 17:11-19

## **Sermon October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

### *God Gives Us New Life*

When we experience someone or something new we invest a lot of time and energy into this someone or something. For example, do you remember what it was like when you became a parent for the very first time? You wanted to spend every waking moment with your new bundle of joy. Unless they were crying uncontrollably or you smelt something funky in their diaper. Then you were okay with handing them off to your partner or to Grandma and Grandpa. The camera/I-phone never left your hand, as you took about a trillion pictures. You had to make sure you were there to see every milestone your child reached. And if you didn't someone would have taken out the video camera so you could watch it over and over again later.

Then you had another baby and started to notice that your energy wasn't quite the same. You were more willing to hand the baby off to get some breathing room. You didn't take the camera out quite as often. The Daycare worker or Grandma and Grandpa told you when your child started to walk. And surprisingly you were okay with that.

Not to say that you love your second child less than your first child. You just start to lose some of that energy that comes with becoming a parent for the first time, as this someone new becomes someone integrated into your every day life. Being a parent is part of who you are now. It has become routine. At least until you become grandparents and then the cycle starts all over again.

Or what about that new friend or person you are dating who you want to spend all this time with, because everything you talk about or do is really exciting. Every encounter is an opportunity to learn something new about this person. Then a few years go by and this new relationship becomes just another relationship in your life. You try to nurture it, but you find it harder to get excited about the relationship. You may even start to get a little bored, or start to take the relationship for granted.

How many marriages do we see fall apart, because when that excitement, that passion starts to fade a little. One is left with a relationship that at times seems routine and maybe even a little boring. And so, needs to be nurtured a lot more to keep going, which at times can feel draining.

Or what about that new job you start. Or that new club or community you join. You are motivated to prove you belong. You have lots of energy and passion as you get to do

something you enjoy. You may even spend extra hours and weekends dedicated to this work or club. Then after a while you settle in. It becomes harder to find that energy you had before to motivate you for the tasks at hand. You still do what you have to do, but now other things take priority in your life. Your job, your club, your community has become part of your daily routine, and so, you are finding it harder to get excited.

Or what about your faith. You join a new church, and you get excited about the mission this church is about. You love the people. Everything is new with lots of potential. You get involved in lots of activities. You read your bible every day. You pray. You are here every Sunday. You are going to change the world.

Then a few years go by and you have to dig down a little deeper to find that energy you had when you joined. You find it harder to get up Sunday morning. You start to see your priorities shift as you would rather catch up on the sports highlights than grab out the bible and read. You are feeling a little burned out. A little bored of the same old, and so, step away from some of the things you had volunteered for in the past.

When we experience someone or something new we get excited. When we have lived this experience for a long period of time we start to struggle with feeling uninterested or complacent, which can lead us to taking people or things for granted or even giving up on people or things. Whether it is our children, our friends, our spouse, our job, our communities, our faith. Or in other words, we find ourselves having a harder time seeing the life-giving love God breathes into our lives when this love gets enmeshed into the day to day routines.

This weekend is thanksgiving weekend. Sometimes we wonder why we have all these holidays throughout the year. Are they just a chance for hallmark to rake in a lot of money? I used to believe that. But more recently I have come to believe that we need these holidays to help us see all that God has done in our lives. All that others have done in our lives. Even in the everyday routines. Or more candidly, especially in the everyday routines.

Thanksgiving gives us that opportunity to stop in the midst of our daily routines and give thanks to God and to all our loved ones for what they mean to our lives. Just like Valentines Day is meant to be a day where couples can give thanks to one another for the love they share. Or Mothers or Fathers day helps us give thanks for our often under appreciated parents. Or Remembrance Day helps us give thanks to all those who have sacrificed their lives so we can live in a free country.

In our gospel, Jesus heals ten people who have suffered from leprosy. Only one returns to give thanks for what Jesus has done. The other nine have showed themselves to the priests and have integrated themselves back into society.

Now it is easy to see the nine as ungrateful since they don't return to Jesus to give thanks. But, we don't know if they gave thanks in prayer at a later time or if they were just so excited to be able to reconnect with family and friends that they just forgot to return to Jesus to give thanks. Or maybe experiencing God's healing love is something they believed God just does, and so, it didn't seem to be such a new thing for them to experience this. Making it possible that they took Jesus' healing for granted a little. They were people who grew up in the faith.

We can sit here and dwell on why the nine didn't give thanks or we can turn our focus to the person Jesus wants us to focus on. The Samaritan who came back to give thanks. The Samaritan who was seen as an outcast or worse a heretic/traitor. Welcomed by a prophet from the Jewish faith. Healed by the one who has come for Israel. The Samaritan who has experienced God's gracious love through Jesus and now sees God's saving action working in his life. Now wonder the Samaritan came back rejoicing and giving thanks.

I think of the nine, I think of what it is like for us who grew up in the church. Our faith teaches us to look for God's saving action in our lives daily. After a while our faith becomes routine. And even though some routine is comforting, we start to lose sight of these life-giving actions that seem to blend in with all the other parts of our daily routines. We find ourselves having to work harder to see them. Or we take them for granted when we experience them chalking them up to luck or coincidence.

Sometimes it takes us facing a major crisis in our lives to start seeing these life-giving actions again. Why days like thanksgiving are good for us to help us see these life-giving actions when our lives are not flipped upside down.

The Samaritan reminds me of new believers who come into our community. They are enthusiastic and ready to volunteer. They seem to see the acts of God a little easier. Maybe, because they just had a profound experience that brought them into the community. Do you remember what you were like when you first joined the church?

So, in everything in life sometimes we find ourselves in the shoes of the nine and sometimes we find ourselves in the shoes of the one. What we see in our gospel this morning is that Jesus reflects God's healing love to the nine and the one. It isn't in what we do or how much we give thanks that leads to God's life-giving love. It is in God's grace that we experience this love.

What this does for us when we see this love acting in our lives is that it moves us to give thanks. Like thanksgiving weekend, it opens our eyes to see all the good God does in our lives.

Let us pray, loving God we give thanks for everything you give us and everything you do for us in our lives. When we get caught up in our routines and start to feel disengaged, ignite our hearts. Open our eyes. Giving us passion and energy to always be thankful. Investing in the things and relationships you have given us. Loving one another. Seeing all the life-giving actions that touch our lives. **Amen.**

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