

Year C – 18th Sunday after Pentecost; Lectionary 28 – October 12, 2025

Pastor Megan Floyd

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

Psalm 111

Luke 17:11-19

Grace and peace to you from God and the Holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ, to whom we give thanks and praise for all our Creator has done for us. Amen.

Some days ago, while going through the motions of the morning... I felt overcome by such a profound sense of sadness.

Sadness for the world... for our country... for our siblings in Chicago who are under attack... for our transgender siblings who are being vilified... and for our children who don't know that this isn't normal.

I felt sadness... mixed with pain and anger, and maybe even dipping a toe into despair. That's not an emotional place I generally go... but... it's been hard.

I have shaped my life around Christ... my values... my dreams... they are shaped around how Jesus Christ calls us to be and live... how Jesus calls us to love...

and what I see in this world right now... the hate and fear of immigrants... driving people to carry out violence against their neighbors... whom they are called to love... hate and fear carried out in the name of Jesus...

I know... that this is not what Christ wants for us.

God has shown us that we are made for community... that we *need* community... and we know that we are better and stronger when we... not just include, but fully embrace... the full diversity of God's people.

We know we are stronger and closer to God's vision for our world when we do as Christ did... and go to our neighbors who have been pushed to the margins, and witness to their worth and value.

We know we are following God's will when we go to our neighbors on the edges of our community and witness to their belovedness... when we call them our siblings, and mean it...

...and when we help them find their place back in the center of our communal life together.

We know this is God's will for us because Jesus demonstrated this action... over and over again... Jesus showed us how to welcome those who have been rejected... and Jesus showed us how to love.

And yet... so much in our country today is pushing us all away from each other. It is costing lives... so you can understand my sadness... and my anger.

So, on that morning... I was deep in my own thoughts... until at some point, I wasn't thinking so much as I was *listening*... and I had a moment of clarity.

One of those moments where the Spirit reaches out and drapes you in peace... the kind of peace that we long for... the kind of peace that we pray for.

I had a moment of clarity when I remembered... that gratitude is medicine.

Gratitude is medicine... and thankfulness to Jesus Christ is resistance... and praise to our Creator for all that God continues to do for us... and through us... in these crazy times we are living in...

That praise... is joy!

And in that moment of gratitude and joy, blanketed by God's peace... I found myself again... I remembered who I was... and whose I was... and I felt whole again.

I felt my joy return... the joy that comes from feeling true gratitude to my God!

And... I wonder... I wonder if that was a little bit how Naaman felt... after being made clean and returning to Elisha to give praise to God.

I wonder... if this was how the psalmist felt... the pure joy of giving praise and thanksgiving to the Lord with their whole heart...

Declaring... that the works of the Lord's hands are *faithfulness* and *justice*; and that all the Lord's precepts stand forever and ever because they are done in *truth*... and *equity*.

I wonder... if this was... just a little bit... how the Samaritan felt... when he turned back to give praise and thanksgiving to God, because through Jesus... he was restored.

Through Jesus, he was healed of the disease that forced him to the edges... healed of the disease that prevented him from taking part in communal life.

Jesus healed him of the disease that made him untouchable... Jesus healed all ten of the men... of the disease that made them untouchable.

And I am sure... that the other nine who were also healed... I'm sure they were glad for their healing... I am sure they were thrilled to rejoin their community. Of course they would be... it was a miracle.

But it was only... the outcast among outcasts... who turned back to offer praise and thanksgiving... it was only the foreigner... who turned back to give praise... only the Samaritan... connected his miraculous healing to *God's* doing, through Jesus.

Only the one who would still be an outcast in that society, even when healed of this disease... only him... gave praise and thanksgiving for all to hear.

Now... recall that the Samaritans and Jews shared the same ancestry, but when Assyria invaded the northern kingdom, they exiled many of the Jews.

Those who remained intermarried with the Assyrians and built new lives. But when those who were exiled were allowed to return, they considered the Samaritans to be religiously and ethnically impure.

They were considered permanently unclean and were rejected... banned from Jerusalem... and from worshipping at the Temple... So, the Samaritans built their own Temple on Mount Gerizim.

And the larger religious question of... Where is God? ...hung as a backdrop behind all their interactions.

Is God only in the Temple in Jerusalem... or is God on a mountain... or is God found wherever God's people are found?

So, I wonder... when it was only the Samaritan who came back to give praise and offer thanksgiving... I wonder... if it was because he was better situated to recognizing God out in the wild, than his pure-Jewish brothers.

I wonder... as I consider his openness to God's presence... I wonder how the disciples felt about learning about faith in Jesus... from this foreigner...

and I wonder... how do we feel about it... at this time, when foreigners are being so violently persecuted.

Jesus told this Samaritan man... after he was healed of his disease... he told him his faith had made him well... his faith... his trust that God was there with him... had made him whole.

His response to what God did for him... brought him back to his Creator... and it made him remember *who* he was... and *whose* he was.

His response of praise and thanksgiving gave him the opportunity to dwell in the presence of God, even just for a moment...

and when we dwell in the presence of God, we are slowly transformed... and re-formed by God's love.

That was God's promise to that Samaritan man... God's promise through Jesus... and it's God's promise to us, as well.

God's promise... that when we turn back to God with grateful hearts, we are turning back to dwell in God's presence... and be comforted by God's peace.

So... we may be walking through some dark valleys these days... but God's faithful and enduring promise to us is that God is with us...

And God is continuing to move and act in this world... continuing the holy work of creation... through us and through our neighbors who are fighting for justice and peace... and love.

And so, our gratitude... our thankful response to God's *faithfulness* and God's *justice*... reconnects our spirit to God's Spirit...

Our response of praise brings us back to the source of life... and makes us whole.

Reconnecting with God through gratitude... renews us... and it strengthens us.

Therefore, it is with true joy in my heart... that I give thanks and praise to my God for this life... and this calling... for my family... and for you.

I give thanks and praise for your witness and your courage... for the ways that you show up for your neighbors... and the ways that you stand with those who struggle on the margins.

I give thanks and praise to God for the wider community of faith to which we belong... a great cloud of witnesses, committed to shaping their lives and communities around the gospel...

And I give thanks and praise to God for the transformation in my own heart that other morning, when the world just felt too heavy.

God's Holy Spirit scooped me back up and set me on my feet... and turned my attention back to all the good things God was still doing through so many incredible people.

So I give thanks to my Lord and my God... for meeting me in my storm... allowing me to dwell in my Creator's presence, and for making me whole again.

And I give thanks to God for the invitation to all of us, to revisit the source of life, every day... to receive healing and renewal...

So, what more can I say, but Hallelujah!! ...and Amen.