

1: An Attitude of Gratitude

In this series, we're looking at Jesus's responses to people he met in Luke 17-18. In particular, we're looking at what we can learn about our attitudes to things that we have.

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Share: Who are the people who you think of as particularly thankful?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Each think of two things you are thankful for. Read Psalm 136:1-9 taking it in turns to read the first part of each verse, then all join in the response 'His love endures for ever'. Now continue, replacing the first part with 'Give thanks to the Lord for [one thing]' and all continue the responses.

WORD

Read Luke 17:11-19

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to do the 'What Next?' section*)

Re-read the story and imagine yourself as one of the lepers who was healed.

- What would you be thinking and feeling at different points in the story?
- Would you have gone to the priest when Jesus said?
- How many different reasons can you think of for not returning to say thank you to Jesus?
 - What might stop us from giving thanks to God in our lives today?
- In what different ways could the lepers have expressed their thanks to Jesus?
 - How many different ways can you think of in which we can express our thanks and love to God?
 - Which do you find easier or more difficult? Why?

Paul urges us to always be thankful (eg Ephesians 5:20). J John describes it as having an 'Attitude of Gratitude'

- If we were more thankful, what differences could it make to our lives?
- What difference should it make if we remembered God's mercy, grace and love towards us? (see Romans 12:1-2)
- What could you practically do to have more of an 'attitude of gratitude' in your life?
- Jesus point out that the person who gave thanks was someone who his listeners would find the most surprising. If you had to re-write this story in today's context, which types of people would you put in the role of the Samaritan?

WHAT NEXT?

- As a nation, we have lots to be thankful for. Pray for leaders, politicians and others who make decisions in the UK about how we use what we have.
- Maybe in 2s/3s: Share both stories from your lives of good news and situations that are not so good. Then pray for one another.

2: An Attitude of Asking

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...
Each share: What do you think makes a good story?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

In silence, each imagine a situation that you spend your time in. Imagine how it would be if you & the others in it were (even more) committed to serving God and serving others. Pray that this would happen. Afterwards, those who want to might like to share what you prayed for & you could all join in praying for it.

WORD

Read Luke 18:1-14

You could read it by people taking different parts:

The narrator (Luke), Jesus, the widow, the judge, the Pharisee, the tax collector

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to do the 'What Next?' section*)

In the first parable (verses 1-8):

- Jesus tells the story to show his disciples that they 'should always pray and not give up'
 - * When do you think people are most likely to give up praying?
 - * Are there things that you have given up praying for? Why?
 - * Share any times when God has answered a prayer of yours after a long time of praying.
- In what ways do you think God is like the unjust judge – and in what ways is he not?
- The widow is pleading for justice.
 - * What things are you most committed to asking God for?
 - * Are there things that you think you should be more committed to asking God for?

In the second parable (verses 9-14):

- Jesus portrays the Pharisee as doing virtuous things – fasting twice a week and gave a tenth of all he got (v12).
 - * What was good or bad about what the Pharisee was doing?
 - * How would you describe the attitudes of the Pharisee and the tax collector?
 - * In what ways might we come to God with wrong attitudes?

WHAT NEXT?

- What do you want to ask God for in relation to our town of Glossop? Pray for our town – and its particular needs.
- What part could you play in meeting those needs?
- Pray for one another – including anything raised by today's session.

3: An Attitude of Giving

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Each tell the group about one really good purchase you've made.

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Play some quiet instrumental music or a song which worships God. Each close your eyes and picture your financial statements (bank, credit cards etc). Imagine looking at them with Jesus. How do you feel? What would you say to him? What would he say? Talk to him about them in silence and ask him for help with managing your finances.

WORD

Read Luke 18:18-30

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to do the 'What Next?' section*)

- In the previous parable (v12), Jesus uses the Pharisee giving a tenth of his income as an example of someone being virtuous. Here he expects the man to give away all his possessions (although not his source of income).
 - * If you were the man, how would you feel?

- * Is Jesus being unfair on this man? Is he being realistic?
- The man is described as rich and having a lot of possessions. Why does Jesus say he lacks one thing? (v22)
- In response to another question, Jesus commends a summary of the law as 'Love God with all your... and love your neighbour as yourself' (see Luke 10:27). How does loving God and loving others apply to money and possessions?
- Jesus talks quite a lot about money (and so do people in conversation – especially shopping!), but we don't often in church.
 - * How do you feel about talking about money at church?
 - * As a church we rely on people giving money (and time) to enable us to meet and to serve our local community and elsewhere. What do you know about how the church receives and uses its money? How do you feel about it?
 - * How do other people within/outside the church get impacted by us giving more or less?
- For a humorous look at the subject, you could watch the Skit Guys Video at <https://skitguys.com/videos/item/the-skinny-on-tithing> and discuss how you feel about it.

WHAT NEXT?

- Pray for our church – that our attitude to money would be healthy and that we would use the money we have wisely.
- If you haven't reviewed your giving to the church recently, please do... and pray about the right way to respond
- Pray for one another and for those in our church or community who are worried about money issues.
- Pray for one another – any hopes/worries for the summer.

**Try and devote one of your meetings to Prayer during the term.
There's a sheet with ideas on the Growth Groups page of the website.**