

Surprising Examples

Read Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 17:11-19

Jesus was a wise teacher. He didn't just pour out information. His disciples didn't spend endless hours furiously taking notes and studying for exams.

He taught in a real-life setting. He told stories pulled straight out of common, everyday situations. He gave object lessons. He taught by example.

But He didn't just teach by His own example. He took opportunities to point out examples they encountered in their travels. Sometimes these examples were totally unexpected.

One example was a Roman centurion who came to Jesus and asked Him to heal a valued servant. Jesus offered to come and heal the man. Surprisingly, the centurion refused:

"Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." (Matthew 8:8-9, NASB)

This Gentile soldier may have had little or no knowledge about the Scriptures, but he clearly grasped two truths:

- He himself was unworthy of Jesus.
- Jesus had divine authority. He didn't have to come to his home to heal the centurion's servant. All He had to do was speak the word right where He was, and the servant would be healed.

This non-Jew was a living example of praying humbly, in simple faith.

Another foreigner supplied a lesson in thanksgiving. Jesus was passing through a Samaritan village when ten lepers shouted to Him, begging for healing. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priest. In the Old Testament, if a leper thought his leprosy was gone, he was to show himself to a priest, who could declare him "clean." That's why Jesus told the ten to show themselves to a priest, even though their disease was not yet gone. They were to take a step of faith, in obedience to the law of God and the word of Jesus.

When they showed themselves to the priest, all ten were indeed healed. Nine apparently cared only about their newfound freedom from the disease. They went about their lives, never bothering to thank or acknowledge Jesus.

But one did return and fell on his face before Jesus and humbly thanked Him.

Jesus used the incident to emphasize the importance of thanksgiving. It is more than just the polite thing to do.

- When we give thanks, we put ourselves in a right relationship with God. We acknowledge that He is good, the Source of all blessing, and we are needy, completely dependent on Him.
- When we give thanks, we bring joy to ourselves and to those around us.
- When we give thanks, we please the loving heart of our Father God. We show Him that we His children are growing out of our childish self-centeredness and are beginning to see the world and ourselves in the light of all He is.

Hymn: [We Thank You, O Lord!](#)

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