Don't Forget To Give Thanks

"And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:16).

One of the common features of a Thanksgiving dinner in America is a turkey. Whether it's baked, broiled, or deep fried, it seems that it is a must in most households. Consequently, the words often heard in the Thanksgiving season are, "Don't Forget The Turkey!" In the hurry and scurry of it all, some forget to thaw the frozen turkey. Others drive hours to meet with their family members only to discover they left the turkey at home in the refrigerator.

Since Thanksgiving Day has lost its original significance to many and is only a time for a big meal, a football game, and is even called by some "Turkey Day," the number one item that has been forgotten is "thanksgiving" itself. So, unveiling my sentiments in this little devotional, let me encourage all, "Don't Forget To Give Thanks!" In all the frenzy of the season, may the Lord enable us to be thankful.

The memorable account of Jesus healing the ten lepers sounds out this message. All ten men came to Him to be healed, and all ten of them left having been healed. Nine of them, however, forgot to give thanks. Only one of them "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks" (17:15, 16). Jesus' questions are heart-searching even today, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (17:17).

Giving thanks involves looking back to Christ's mercy! The one grateful soul "turned back" toward the Lord Jesus. He had cried to Him for mercy (see 17:13) and now realized that he had received mercy. He not only had been prey to a hated disease, but he was a hated Samaritan, a reject in the Jewish culture. Yet the mercy of God was greater than his disease and his background and he gave thanks. What a reminder for us to look back at all Jesus has done for us!

Giving thanks involves falling down at Christ's feet! The divine record reveals that the healed man "fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks." While he literally fell down on his face before Jesus (something that would not hurt us, either!), the basic idea is one of humility and lowly appreciation. Giving thanks doesn't come from proud hearts. We must humble ourselves before the Lord in genuine gratitude.

Giving thanks involves speaking up for Christ's glory! Was this healed man's thanksgiving genuine? When he shouted "with a loud voice," did he truly "glorify God?" (17:15). According to Jesus, he did. His commentary was, "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (17:18). During this Thanksgiving season, like the appreciative Samaritan may we be found among those who "Don't Forget To Give Thanks!"

A young man named John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to "clean up" the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said, "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, the bird continued, "May I ask what the turkey did?"