

Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Sermon: A Word of Appreciation

Nice Party – John Wittman got it all on video:

Put video between Lords of Doo-Wop and Dr. Dwayne Dyer –

Interesting that one time I heard Dwyer plagiarize a story I read in an old Youth Hymnal – about a man who sat at a gate and was asked what kind of people lived in the city.

We had a similar experience when we went to proctor – we visited with their pastor in the parsonage. – Eileen was almost in tears – what have we gotten ourselves into.

One of the perennial questions I am asked by young people in our confirmation class is about the story of creation in the bible – and it always leads me to talk about how we approach the Bible. This year for some help I bought some material and in the intro it spoke about empirical reality –

Empirical vs. existential – Robert Frost – Birches

When I see birches bend to left and right

Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain.

But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows--...

So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open...

One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Sgt. Joe Friday: just the facts, nothing but the facts.

I'm not sure I'm using the word in the pure philosophical sense, but what I mean is how two people can be faced with the same empirical reality but have totally different experiences of it – and the meaning of

it, the significance of it, the experience of it is shaped as much by their own existential truth as it is by the empirical truth

In this morning's lesson ten were healed but only one showed appreciation – who do you think had the richest experience of grace?

Expressing daily appreciation to God for our blessings is not only appropriate but actually shapes our experience. Appreciation is an aspect of faith – it's the feed back loop – that sustains the flow of positive energy and feeds our hope and nourishes our love. Appreciation is an attitude that transforms our experience.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7, NRSV)