

28th Sunday OT year C Homily:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today's readings invite us to see how God heals, saves and transforms. We are reminded that true Faith responds not just by receiving God's gifts, but by returning to Him in thanksgiving.

The first reading tells a nice story of healing and transformation. It is a story of Naaman, a powerful Syrian army commander afflicted by leprosy.

In those days, leprosy was seen not only a skin illness, but also a social isolation. It was a condition that rendered a person unclean and definitely separated from society. Fortunately, Naaman had heard about the prophet Elisha through a young Israelite servant girl, and after much hesitation, he finally went to Israel seeking healing.

After his first initial refusal, Naaman humbles himself and obeys Elisha's simple instructions to bathe seven times in the Jordan river. The number SEVEN, symbolizing God's completeness, shows that this healing is more than medical. It is a sign of God's perfect work. Naaman's flesh is restored "like that of a young child", symbolizing not just physical healing, but deep renewal.

Naaman then returns to the prophet of God, overwhelmed with gratitude. He confesses Faith in the God of Israel, and asks for soil from the land. Why? He wanted to worship Yahweh back home, a radical step for a foreigner. In this reading we heard that Elisha refuses all payment, showing that God's grace and healing are gifts, not things that people can go and buy with their money.

Brothers and sisters,

Naaman's journey shows how God often works through humility. At first, his pride nearly blocked his healing, he wanted a dramatic miracle to match his status. But God's way was simple and humbling: wash in an ordinary river. He was healed only when he obeyed.

Brothers and sisters,

Healing comes only when we obey. This challenges us to look at our own lives. Very often we expect God to act in spectacular ways, while we overlook the small and simple steps of faith He asks of us. Sometimes, the path to healing or change is not impressive, but ordinary: daily prayer, small acts of forgiveness, and consistent trust.

Naaman's story reminds us that God's grace is not limited by borders or status. It's offered freely to those willing to humble themselves, those who trust and follow.

In the second reading Paul reminds Timothy of the core of the Gospel: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descendent of David."

By linking Jesus to David, Paul emphasizes that Jesus fulfils the promises made to Israel. By proclaiming the Resurrection, he stresses the heart of Christian Faith: “Victory over death”. We profess live, victorious over death.

Saint Paul is suffering in chains for proclaiming this message, yet he boldly declares, “but the Word of God is not chained”.

Human authorities can imprison Paul, but they cannot stop the spread of the Gospel. Paul sees his suffering as part of his mission: he endures so that others may hear the Good News and receive salvation in Christ.

The passage closes with a short hymn that contrasts human response and God’s promises. It teaches that sharing in Christ’s death brings life, persevering brings glory, denying him brings loss, yet even when we fail, Christ remains faithful, because His nature never changes. This shows both seriousness of discipleship and the steadfast mercy of Christ.

This passage speaks directly to Christians facing struggles. Paul, in chains, does not complain, but focuses on the unchained Word of God. That reminds us that our situations, however difficult, cannot limit or prevent God’s power to work.

The short hymn in this reading reminds us that being a Christian is both a call and a promise. There is the challenge: enduring hardship, being faithful, not denying Christ. But there is also a promise: life, resurrection and even sharing in Christ’s Reign.

We may falter in faith at times, but Christ remains faithful. His love is stronger than our weakness. Like Paul, we are invited to remember Jesus, to hold fast to Him in trials, and to trust that the Word of God cannot be silenced.

Do we have some teachers here? I want to bring a story about them. A teacher once asked her students to write down the names of people they were most thankful for. Many quickly filled their papers. But when she asked, “have you told them?” almost every hand went down. Gratitude felt, but not expressed is easily forgotten. End of the story.

In today’s Gospel. Jesus meets ten lepers, longing for Mercy. At a distance, they beg Jesus for healing. He instructs them to go to show themselves to the priests, as the Law requires. As they go, they were healed. Imagine their joy, hope, and the shock of being clean again! Yet, only one returns to praise Jesus and give thanks, and he is a Samaritan, doubly marginalized by his illness and his background.

Let me ask you: why did the nine others not come back? Perhaps they were so eager to be declared clean by the priests that they rushed on and gratitude slipped out their minds; perhaps they assumed that giving thanks could wait, or that obedience to the Law was enough; or maybe, like many of us, they simply moved on quickly once their problem was solved.

For the nine, rituals became routine; blessing received, box ticked, but relationship neglected. The Samaritan however, saw more than just the gift. He saw the Giver. His gratitude was not just politeness, but a fact of faith. Jesus tells him, “your faith has made you well”,

pointing to a deeper healing that goes beyond skin to soul. The nine were cleansed, but the Samaritan was made the whole, and this is where the Gospel challenges us.

Do we only turn to God when we are in need forgetting Him once life improves? Do we treat Prayer as a list of requests, but neglect to return in thanksgiving? Gratitude is more than words: it is a way of life, a way of the heart.

Like the Samaritan, we are invited to go beyond the rituals, beyond the routine faith, to a living relationship with God that springs from gratitude.

Every Eucharist that we celebrate is our chance to return to Jesus like that Samaritan. The very word Eucharist means itself thanksgiving. This week, let us take one moment each day to return to God in thanksgiving, like the Samaritan, not just asking, but praising.

May God bless us all.