

## The Interpretation of Luke 17:15 – 16 on the Concept of Gratitude in the Light of Ika Diocesan Anglican Communion

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**Abstract.** The Concept of Gratitude is compelling and facilitates the acknowledgement of human connection to the rest of humanity. It recognizes other people's roles in life. Gratitude results to an active recognition of interdependence of one another. It is one of the most powerful feelings God has given to mankind the capacity to experience. It is essentially about not taking things for granted. The attitude of expressing Gratitude to people for kind gestures, contributions or roles enjoyed from a benefactor is an attribute highly prized by Jesus Christ as exemplified when he met and healed ten lepers who approached him to have mercy on them. Jesus commanded them to go and show themselves for the priests to examine them. On their way, they were cleansed of their leprosy. While others went their way, only one returned and he was a Samaritan. He came back praising and thanking God showing gratitude for the gesture. In total disappointment at the act of the nine other lepers, Jesus asked about them. He expected them to express Gratitude to God. By this act, Jesus frowned at the ingratitude and emphasized the importance of expressing Gratitude as displayed by the Samaritan leper who was blessed with complete wholeness of body and soul. He was described as a man of faith. This Paper is mainly aimed to examine the Concept of Gratitude and its Interpretation as expressed in Luke 17:15 – 16 and constructing a model for expression of Gratitude in Ika Diocesan Anglican Communion. Exegetical, hermeneutical, historical and phenomenological methods were employed to achieve the objective. The study therefore concludes that Gratitude is a moral cardinal virtue in the teaching of Jesus.

**Keywords:** Interpretation, Concept, Gratitude, Anglican, Communion, Luke,

### 1. Introduction

Gratitude which is the disposition of feeling grateful and expression of thankfulness or appreciation for favours, assistance, support and gesture received is a highly prized virtue, both in Christendom. It is needed for peaceful progressive co-existence in society. Gratitude is one of the most potent feelings God has given mankind the capacity to experience. It is principally about not taking things for granted. Gratitude as a moral virtue enables people to autonomously accept the duty to repay. This helps to establish and strengthen relationship between the benefactor and the receiver. To drive home the prime importance of gratitude, Jesus commended the thankful Samaritan lepers as recorded in Luke 17:11 – 19. The lifestyle of gratitude which fosters positive perspective about life, promotes physical well-being reduces conflicts, quarrels and gives room for more acts of favour and goodwill. If the church must be a catalyst to act as salt and light in the society, it has to take the lead in the display of gratitude in its true perspective.

One of the qualities of a civilized person is gratitude. It is one of the characteristic labels of a civilized and enlightened mind. This was buttressed by Anele (2016) who asserts that most parents have lost their sense of values; they no longer bother to inculcate in their children or wards acceptable social etiquette such as respect for elders, good conduct and speech, as well as showing gratitude for favours received. There is no gainsaying that appreciating good deeds done is a critical attribute of a civilized person. It boosts the morale of people to do more good to others, and as a result, it promotes the culture of harmony and goodwill. Fulfillment of life and destiny come from a deep sense of gratitude not from achievement. In fact, the biggest achievement in life is nothing if there is no expression of gratitude to God and fellow human beings. More often than not,

lack as against how much we have. There is a play down on the good things received in life thereby concentrating on what have not been received.

Gratitude seems to be one of the most neglected emotions and also one of the most undervalued of the virtues. Emmons & McCullough (2004), argue that even in broader survey of the attitude, it is often ignored. And yet gratitude is one of those responses that seem critical civilized human beings. Generally, people in the society do not like to think of themselves as debtors to others, hence the neglect of gratitude. If there is a failure to appreciate the things being taken for granted and carry on the search for “stuff” that lead to excitement in the future, will that search ever really come? (Elaine, 2021).

According to Allen (2018), throughout history and around the world, religious leaders and philosophers have esteemed the virtue of gratitude and that over the years, scientists have made great progress toward understanding the biological basis of gratitude, the various benefits that accrue gratitude, and the ways that people can develop feelings of gratitude in their day to day lives. The expression of gratitude enables us to appreciate what is good in our lives and motivates us to pay this goodness forward.

Jesus did not only teach gratitude to his followers, he lived a life of gratitude to God. Gaultiere (2022) opines that Jesus publicly expressed his gratitude to God for the benefit of other people, in order for them to also be grateful to God (Matt. 6:26 – 30; Luke 24:30 & John 11:41-42). He began and ended his prayers to God with words of gratitude. The many people Jesus performed miracles of healing the gospels record only few cases of people appreciating him. Even his disciples did not show any gratitude to him until his resurrection. Though the disciples were slow to cultivate attitude of gratitude, they however did become grateful. The Acts of the Apostles and the gospel letters written by Luke, Paul, Peter, James and John overflow with generous expression of gratitude to God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and extended to the people they preached to (Goultiere, 2022).

Jones (2014), remarks that in all the four gospels Jesus expresses classic elements of gratitude to the woman who anointed him with costly ointment. Also, in the parable of the talents, the good master, Jesus had the fullness of all virtues with no exception of the virtue of gratitude and argues that Jesus taught the Christians about gratitude to God in teaching his followers how to pray, known as the ‘Lord’s prayer’.

The failure of the church in its practice of gratitude as expected despite Jesus Christ’s injunction is a serious cause for concern, particularly the Anglican Churches

in Ika. Sparks of ingratitude in churches have continued to result in breakup of churches, conflicts, hatred, misunderstanding, poor social relationship, health related issues and even death in some cases. There seems not to be correct insight and contextual interpretation of Luke 17:15 – 16, resulting in misappropriation of gratitude, it is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to x-ray the concept of gratitude in Luke 17:15 – 16 and construct a model for expression of gratitude among members of Anglican Churches in Ika with the aim of stemming the increasing trend of ingratitude.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to interpret the concept of gratitude in Luke 17:15 – 16 in order to present it as a model for the Anglican Churches in Diocese of Ika. The specific objectives include to:

- identify the biblical meaning of gratitude in Luke 17:15 – 16
- examine the essence of gratitude in Christian living
- identify a model for gratitude among the members of Anglican Church in Diocese of Ika
- articulate gratitude as a moral virtue for national orientation.

### 1.2 Research Methods

The study employed the exegetical hermeneutical, historical and phenomenological methods to achieve the objectives.

## 2. Definition of Gratitude and its Essence

The word gratitude is derived from the Greek word *ευχαριστέω* (Eucharistēō) meaning to be grateful. It is a feminine noun. The Latin word for it, is *gratia*, which means grace, favour, and *gratus* means pleasing. Gratitude means thankfulness, counting blessings, noticing simple pleasures and acknowledging everything was a miracle. It is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible gifts. According to the *Merriam – Webster Dictionary (2021)*, gratitude is simply “the state of being grateful”. Gratitude is the simple act of showing that you are thankful for something, even when you are busy and have other things to aspire. Even in the darkest of situations, there is always a silver lining or a lesson learned to be grateful for (Lipp & Perry, 2019). It is not just an action but also a positive emotion.

### 2.1 Empirical Studies on Effects of Gratitude

A number of studies have reported physical health benefits of gratitude, and these relations have been greatly independent of negative traits (Wood et al., 2009). Experimental research suggests that individuals' experience of gratitude may result in increase of parasympathetic myocardial control (McCraty & Childer, 2004). This line of research conducted by McCraty shows a connection between positive emotions and increased physiological efficiency, which may sparingly explain the growing number of correlations reported between positive emotions, improved health and increased longevity.

Being thankful positively impacts mental health. This was supported by Shaw (2021) who argues that being grateful is a natural antidepressant and that most people who have depression are put on medication to relieve the symptoms. But do you know that being grateful can have similar effects in relieving symptoms of depression as the medication? Studies have revealed that grateful people are happier and less depressed. Gratitude can really be powerful and exuberant experience. However, research on the relationship between gratitude and physical well-being is still developing.

## 2.2 Essence of Gratitude

Gratitude is a potent positive force. With positivity comes hope and happiness, a desire to be bigger and better than you ever imagine at all levels, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. One constant and simple method of tapping into this positive optimism is to be gracious, to make a habit of showing gratitude. Gratitude tends to focus on what you have and replaces a sense of what you might be lacking (Browser, 2021). This is further buttressed by Lanees (2015) who opines that gratitude helps to boost immunity, thereby giving room to live healthier and more energetic. On a psychological level, expression of gratitude leads to joy and pleasure. Winch (2021) remarks that when gratitude is expressed brain releases great dopamine and serotonin – two hormones that promote lighter and happier mood. Gratitude also has social advantages in that it facilitates benevolence in relationships.

Apart from the above, gratitude leads to development of an expectant and positive mindset about life, with all its ups and downs. A life of gratitude reveals that taking the rough with the smooth with calmness is the key to contentment and peace. The more grateful people are for the good things that come, the less the tendency to dwell on aspects of life that is below standard. In addition, gratitude promotes empathy that makes provision to appreciate the

accomplishments of others without being envious. It is like the sunshine that breaks through the window into a room and brightens it when the curtains are opened in the morning. Everybody has a need for this vital adjuvant can bring about wonders in people's lives (Lamees, 2015).

Guerra (2019) asserts that gratitude makes the brain to produce an increase in dopamine a neurotransmitter that is connected to feeling of pleasure and reward inspired behaviour and serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is believed to assist in regulating mood and social behaviour. The implication of this is that a grateful mind leads to more positive emotions. Emmons (2004), opines that people who are always grateful are healthier, happier and have better relationships. Gratitude promotes selflessness. It is deeply based in taking the focus off yourself and redirecting the attention to the people and world around. An added benefit of gratitude is that, it boosts career. It facilitates networking, increases decision – making capabilities, increases productivity, and helps find mentors and postages. As a result, gratitude blesses, achieves career goals as well as making workplace more friendly and excited place to be (Happer, 2020). According to Neil-Sherwood (2022), gratitude keeps us concentrated on what is already good in life, and opens up the doorway to more goodness to flow. With gratitude and thankfulness at the vanguard of mindset, it is hard to act impetuously and be self destructive. Cultivating the attitude of gratitude is a crucial tool for enhanced life.

## 3. Background Studies of Luke's Gospel

In order to understand the concept of gratitude in Luke 17:15 – 16, the good Samaritan and the ten lepers form the background to this study. Luke's gospel is the third of the four New Testament gospels. The gospel according to Luke is traditionally credited to Luke, the beloved Physician. He was a close associate of Paul, the Apostle. The gospel is obviously written for Gentile converts. It traces Christ's genealogy back to Adam rather than Abraham the father of Jewish people. The date and place of composition are uncertain but many dare it to 63 – 70 A.D, others somewhat later. According to Alexander (1983), Luke gives the fullest Jesus' story that we now possess. The gospel according to Luke is part one of two parts history of Christian beginning – Luke / Acts. The two books are dedicated to the same person – the Roman Theophilus, written for the same purpose. According to Henry (2014), he was present at many of the events he related. He was the only non – Jewish contributor to the New Testament.

New Testament Muratorian Canon further attributed both books to Luke, a Physician and an associate of Paul. Cadbury (2017) however objected to this tradition. He argues that Muratorian Canon's approach to the matter is not scriptural. His argument itself is not strong enough to disprove the internal and external evidence. It then follows that Luke's authorship stands. Cadbury could not identify another author for the gospel of Luke. The external evidence provided a strong case for Lukan authorship. The title clearly brought this out. Titles are usually indexes of early church tradition, even though titles were probably not part of the original autographs.

The oldest extant Greek manuscript for the gospel of Luke contains the title "Gospel according to Luke". In fact, there is no other textual tradition for the author being someone other than Luke for this gospel. There are also several early references which give credence to Lukan authorship. For example, Irenaeus, the Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen are consistent in their support of Lukan authorship. The Muratorian Canon (AD 170) states "The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well known Physician after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, compiled it in his own name, according to the general belief. Yet he himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to determine events, so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John" (Savelle, 2022).

### 3.1 Purpose of Writing

The gospel of Luke was written for the purpose of delivering to Theophilus an original account of the early history of the church. At the beginning of the gospel Luke (1:1-4) made us to understand that a lot of things have been written concerning Jesus and his ministry, but he did not find the narratives acceptable enough. Hence, he set himself the task of critically examining the events and writing a new account that will be put in place for all concerned groups, the reliability of the things that the Christians were commanded. Swindoll (2022) supported this by stating that Luke's own prologue to his gospel reveals that Luke composed the letter with the purpose of providing a careful rendering of the events of Christ's life in successive order.

### 3.2 Date

According to Berzon (2022), Luke's gospel was written during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, in its earliest form from extensive papyri

fragments dating to the early or middle of the third century. For Mellowes (2014), the gospel of Luke was written fifteen years after Mark wrote, between 85 and 95 C.E. Concerning the date of Luke's gospel, Stewart (2022) adduces that evidence abound that the four gospels were written in a relatively short time after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Luke derives much of his gospel from that of St. Mark, generally following Mark's sequence and incorporating about 50 percent of Mark's material into his work. Luke the Physician's narrative contains much that is unique. It gives details of Jesus' infancy, found nowhere in the other gospels. Also unique in this perspective according to Petruzzello (2021) is that Luke emphasizes in his gospel the universality of Jesus for the whole world. For him, Jesus was the supreme example of what the power of God can do in human life. This point of view evidently made a deep impression on Luke and this is obvious throughout the various parts of the gospel.

### 3.3 Gratitude in Luke 17:15 – 16 and the Grateful Samaritan

The story of the ten lepers being cured is only found in the gospel of Luke. And it was an event that took place when Jesus and his Apostles were travelling towards Jerusalem. The ten lepers compose a group of people excluded from community life because of their medical condition, and one of them was considered to have been doubly ostracised because of his ethnicity, for he was a Samaritan (Martens, 2016). The Samaritans are a unique people whose history can be traced to biblical times. When the Jews were captured by the Assyrians in 721 BC as part of the infamous Babylonian captivity, the Assyrians then repopulated Israel with people from the land of Samaria to the east. Following the death of Solomon, during the reign of Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided – the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Rehoboam did not handle issues well and Israel slipped from his grasp. Jeroboam was made king over Israel and led the Israelites into baal worship.

From the fall of the rebellious northern kingdom of Israel to a mixed idolatrous religion to a people hated by the Jewish people, the Samaritans had a rocky history. At the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the land of Samaria was situated between the regions of Galilee in the north and Judea in the south. Some believing Jews travelling between Galilee and Judea would have taken the longer, six – day journey along the Jordan River valley rather than taking a shorter, more direct route through Samaria because of the bitter history between the Jews people and the Samaritans (Kaprov, 2006). Nevertheless, the gospel brought hope to them and against this background,

there is one of the recipients of the healing power of Jesus.

### 3.4 Exegesis of Luke 17:15 – 16

The term exegesis is from the Greek word ἐξήγησις, from ἐξηγεῖσθαι (*exegeomai*) which means “to lead out” but when used to refer to biblical text, it connotes “reading out” of the meaning (Hayes and Holladay, 1987). It is the critical examination and interpretation of a text, particularly the Bible. It is used to discover the original or intended meaning of a passage in the scripture. In a normal way, exegesis deals with the investigation of biblical text in the language of its initial form. In other words, in exegesis, one is bringing out the meaning from text and not interposing meaning into the text. It is concerned with the intentionality of the author. For Palmer (2013), the essence of exegesis is to discover the meaning of a text, which is true in both the world of the Bible and our contemporary world. Here, it will be used to deal with the investigation of the biblical texts of Luke 17:15 – 16 in the language of its initial form, which will invariably challenge the Anglican Churches in Ika on the need for gratitude.

### 3.5 Interpretation of Luke 17:15 – 16

Greek Text (Luke 17:15 – 16)

δὲ εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἰδὼν ὅτι ἰάθη ὑπέστρεψεν μετὰ μεγάλης φωνῆς δοξάζων θεόν καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον παρὰ αὐτοῦ πόδας εὐχαριστῶν αὐτῷ εὐχαριστῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Σαμαρεΐτης

English Translation (Luke 17:15 – 16)

Then one of them, who he saw that he was healed turned back, praising God with a loud voice and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

Jesus was met by ten lepers who were suffering from a dreaded skin disease – leprosy. δέκα λεπροὶ (*deka leproi*) from the Greek word *lepros* (*lepros*), a noun meaning scaly or rough skin. It is a disease caused by bacteria that is called *mycobacterium leprae*. It tends to attack nerves in the hands, feet and face, which results in weakness and numbness. Lowe (2017) adds that Luke seems to be the only gospel writer who reported on the healing of the ten lepers by Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. According to him, leprosy was a disease which the Jewish people thought to have been brought about by God as a result of punishment for some peculiar sins. Leprosy stood as a perfect hallmark of sinfulness. It was regarded as a mark of God's resentment. For instance, when Miriam rebelled against the authority of Moses God brought leprosy on her. When Gehazi, the servant of Elisha

lied to Naaman in order to take money from him, Elisha pronounced leprosy on him and his generation. Brink (2017) corroborates this, that leprosy is an geriatric disease, a biblical curse and even in the 21st century, a cultural stigma so serious that in some countries, victims of it are sent to live in isolated camps or taken out of their own homes.

Leprosy in the Bible time was a very contagious disease. The term seemed to be a generic one for any skin disease in the Bible time. It rendered the victims unclean. The Greek word for "leprosy" is *λεπται*; *lepra* which means 'scaly' that can be used to depict skin diseases. Spurlock (2020) opines that leprosy was one of the worst and most disastrous diseases of all time. Anyone that had contacted most virtually had received a death sentence. He or she would be evicted from his or her people and the society at large. He added that the Old Testament contain some records of people that suffered leprosy. This included as earlier mentioned, Miriam, the sister of Moses (Num. 12:12), Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the prophet (2 Kings 5), Naaman, the mighty man of valour from Syria who commanded respect from people (2 Kings 5:1). As a Syrian, he was a foreigner. Foster (2014) supported this by stating that Naaman was an Aramean and that meant that as far as the Israelites were concerned, he was an alien, not one of God's people.

The ten lepers stood at a distance. *πορρω* (*porro*) meaning at a distance, afar off. It is an adverb. Luke 17:12: οἱ ἔστησαν πόρρωθεν, 'they stood at a distance' also rendered as "those in the distance". It is also possible to say *πόρρωθεν* in Heb. 11:13 means "from afar" or "from a great distance" (Strong, 2006). *Πόρρωθεν* (*porrothen*) is derived from - The ten lepers kept their distance. The reason they stood at a distance was that they were obeying the law of Moses by avoiding physical contacts with other individuals. Collins (2023), remarks lepers "stood afar off" because leprosy was seen as a dreaded, loathsome disease for which God gave Moses comprehensive instructions to handle it. The disease was not curable, which can disfigure and rot away the body eventually. The victim could only be healed by God.

Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the Priests who would determine according to the law of Moses, specifically Leviticus 14, whether they have been healed of leprosy. This was further buttressed by Cook (2014) who says that the local Priest had duties other than conducting worship on each Sabbath. He also performed the role of a health officer. If the person was divinely healed of leprosy, it was up to the Priest to inspect the body, to test for a

complete removal of the disease and to proclaim the person healed. With that, the person could be reunited to his family and community. On their way to see the Priests, they were healed. Their bodies were restored, walking in faith. Their skins changed from being full of sores and diseases to being clean and healthy. For Lowe (2017), the presence of the word “cleansed” means they were cleansed of more than leprosy. They were restored to full social and religious fellowship with the rest of the people. There is nothing in the entire range of human phenomena which illustrates so impressively the divine power of the Redeemer, and the nature and extent of his work of mercy on man’s behalf, as this leprosy (Lewis, 1987).

As soon as one of the lepers realized that he was perfectly sound and has been restored to his health and saw with his eyes that the dreaded illness, leprosy was gone from his body, he came to Jesus to thank him. The Greek word ἰδὼν (idon) is derived from Greek word εἶδω (eido) meaning “having seen”. It is a primary verb that is used in particular past tenses. It is translated as “be aware”, “behold”, “perceive” in KJV. As second aorist participle; it means “to have seen” seeing to, perceive with the eyes, to pay attention, to inspect or examine (Thayer, 2006). This verb occurs in the New Testament three hundred and eighteen (318) times, most especially in the gospel of John (eighty – four times) and in Pauline letters (one hundred and three appearances), not common in synoptic (twenty – four appearances in Matthew, twenty-one in Mark, twenty – five in Luke) and nineteen occurrences, in Acts). It is totally absent in 2 John (Balz and Schnider, 1990). One of the lepers having seen soundness in his body concluded that something has happened to him.

The Greek word ἰαομαί (iaomai) meaning healed, to cure. It is a middle voice, a primary verb. It is rendered as “heal”, “make” in KJV (Strong, 2006). It is a deponent verb whose present, imperfect, future and aorist middle have active significance. It further means to be literally free from disease. It occurs twenty – six times in the New Testament, mostly in Luke (II appearances) and four times in Matthew, three times in John, four times in Acts and once each in Mark, Hebrews, 1 Peter and James. ἰαομαί (iaomai) is used as an option to the normal. *qerapeuw* in the sense of make well with the same meaning. While both ἰαομαί (iaomai) and *qerapeuw* can be used of healing either by a medical practitioner or by supernatural intervention. In the New Testament, iaomai occurs only in relationship with miracles of healing. It therefore means that *iaomai* is used of extraordinary actions performed by persons with

power. It is peculiar of Luke that he speaks of the power of the Lord to heal.

Most cases, the healing appears to be dependent on the faith of the sick person or an intercessor. This does not imply healing through faith. It is worthy of note that healing the sick played very prominent role in the ministry of Jesus. In the healings, Jesus manifested his compassion, but in particular, he displays his divine authority. In Luke 17:15, healed ἰαομαί (iaomai), means to cure, to restore and is used literally of deliverance from physical diseases and afflictions and so to make whole as occurred to these ten lepers. Figuratively the verb ἰαομαί (iaomai) has much the same meaning as *sozo* to save, make whole, restore to spiritual health. The Greek word ἰαομαί was used always by Luke, probably because of the fact that he was a Doctor (Macarthur, 2022).

The leper that noticed he was healed did not just go but turned back. ὑπέστρεψεν (hypestrapho): he turned back (Strong, 2006). It is translated in KJV as “come again”, “back again”, “return”. The verb occurs only intransitive in the New Testament thirty-five times, thirty – two of these in Luke and Acts. In the gospel of Luke, the term acts as “doxology indicator”, particularly in episodic narratives meaning a story that is told through a series of episodes (Balz and Schneider, 1990). One of the ten lepers that got healed by Jesus realized that he was so affected by the power of God that he turned back to meet him. At the beginning of the story, he kept a distance, but now he could freely come near to Jesus because he was sensible that he was totally cleansed. Wilson (2022) buttresses this by stating that all the ten lepers discovered that they were cured but only one returned back to Jesus, the Author of their healing. He saw what the other lepers failed to see, that he was healed and that he needed to come back to Jesus. Reiling & Swellengrebel (1971) argue that the subordinate clause when he saw that he was healed, dividing subject and verb of the real sentence, may better be reversed. For instance, one of them came back when he saw that he was healed. He made an active choice to come back.

The word translated ‘Praising’ is Greek doxazon. Δοξάζων (doxazon) is derived from δοξάζω, meaning to render or esteem glorious. Is rendered in KJV as “glorify” “full of glory”, “magnify”. Δοξάζων means glorified. Outside the Bible, the term means “to have an opinion”, “to believe”, “to suspect”, “to Praise”, “to value”, “to honour”. It is a verb and has the peculiar biblical sense “to give or have a share in the divine glory (Strong, 2006). A total of sixty cases of the word in the New Testament, twenty-two in John’s

gospel alone, twelve in Paul's letters, nine in Luke, five in Acts, 4 each in Matthew and 1 Peter, two in Revelation and one each in Mark and Hebrews. In the New Testament, the idea of "to honour", "to extol" is very common, either in connection to man or God. The significance of the word in the text is that it revealed how one of the healed lepers came to honour and celebrate the author of his healing. He came to glorify Jesus (doxazo) from doxa (glory). He was praising God with a loud voice, *μεγάλης φωνῆς* (megales phones). The "loud voice" is noted in this verse. The ten lepers cried aloud for mercy but only one gave voice of praise and glory, no longer a voice of request.

The Samaritan had a deep sense of the healing, he had received from Jesus, prostrated before him to appreciate the gesture. *ἔπεσεν* (epesen) is derived from the Greek word *πτῖπῶ* (pipto), it is a verb, which means "to fall", "fall prostrate", "to render homage or worship to someone" (Thayer, 2006). The term *πτῖπῶ* (pipto) appears ninety times in the New Testament, especially in Revelation (twenty – three times), forty – seven times in the Gospels (nineteen times in Matthew, eight in Mark, seventeen in Luke, three in John). It appears nine times in Acts, three in Romans, four in 1 Corinthians, three in Hebrews. It occurs only once in James. *Pipto* occurs over four hundred times in LXX. In most cases, the term speaks of unintentional falling. For example, the stars fall down from heaven (Mark 13:25). The meaning of fall down (intentional falling) appears twelve times in the context of "worship". In six of these cases, God is worshipped. The three wise men fell down to worship the child Jesus (Matt. 2:11). Cornelius fell down before Peter (Acts 10:25). In Luke 17:16, the grateful Samaritan expressed his gratitude by falling on his face at Jesus' feet (Balz and Scheider, 1990).

The Greek word *εὐχαριστῶν* (Euchariston) is derived from the word *εὐχαριστεῶ* (Eucharisteo) meaning "to be thankful. In other words, to express gratitude. It is a verb, being used by Paul at the beginning of all his epistles, apart from 2 Corinthians. In the LXX, the word occurs first in the Apocrypha and is then seen in the Hellenistic Jewish literature. It appears thirty-eight times in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels Paul's letters. In this verse, it is rendered as thanks to God who is explicitly named as a dat.obj. Eucharisteo refers to the liturgical language of the Lord's supper and was in the post – Pauline period for the Eucharistic prayer. Thanksgiving is an insightful obligation as in 2 Cor. 1:11, Eph. 5:20. The doxology of the elders before God in Rev. 11:1 shows the Jewish

background of the New Testament formulation (Balz and Schneider, 1990).

The statement in Luke 17:16 *Καὶ αὐτὸς Σαμαρίτης* – "And he was a Samaritan" was used to describe the grateful leper by a way of differentiating him from the rest. Donovan (2015) argues that Luke kept this astonishment until late in the story. Luke's aim in the choice of the incident falls in with what may be termed the universality of his gospel, the breaking down of every middle wall of partition that separated the Jews from the other nation of the earth. The narrative is peculiar to his record. It is significant to note that the barrier had been broken down by the common tension of misery (Ellicott, 2023).

### 3.6 Hermeneutics of Luke (Luke 17:15 – 16)

This is another method in biblical studies that is adopted in this study. According to Ferguson, et.al, (1988), Hermeneutics is the art and science of biblical interpretation of rules or principles of interpretation and understanding of biblical texts. It is the art of interpreting the Bible without critical apparatus. Under this approach, text analysis is being done for correct interpretation.

#### 4. The Grateful Samaritan: Prototype of Expression of Gratitude

The healed Samaritan appreciable of God's power and thankful for his mercies, came back to express his gratitude to God. Gratitude is a celebration of extreme kindness. This is supported by Steindi-Rast (2004) who says that gratitude is principally a celebration and that by concentrating on the way we experience gratitude, we become conscious that it is more than a feeling. In addition to its emotional component, we find gratitude as an ingredient of approval, in both its, cognitive and voluntary senses. I am grateful – I recognize. (Intellectually I recognize "willingly") I appreciate (emotionally). When all these come in place we can say correctly that gratitude is total. These aspects are also fundamental to the occurrence of celebration. All the lepers were willing to do a religious ceremony – that is, to go to the priests as the law demanded. Only one was filled with gratitude.

The model of faith turned out to be the person that was an outsider, not a Jew. Luke himself was a Gentile, a foreigner. He delights in recounting stories of foreigners whom God has blessed and he makes foreigners, even Samaritans the heroes of his stories. Luke 17:16 *Σαμαρείτης* exhibited the comment of Jesus which was the point of interest for Luke.

The Jews did not like the Samaritans, they regarded them as half breeds and unspiritual. Luke reveals with accentuation on the personality of the leper who came to show gratitude to Jesus that he was a Samaritan. Jesus was a Jew who healed the Samaritan leper. The other nine lepers probably were Jews, who were so used to Jesus. The Samaritan acknowledged that Jesus was the instrument and the architect of his healing. Why was he, alone that came back to show gratitude, instead of the nine Jews? Perhaps, he had more deep sense of the healing. If the Jews were the only people that Jesus healed, that would have been a normal happening.

### **5. A Brief History of Ika Diocesan Anglican Communion**

The Diocese of Ika is a conglomerate of the churches proffering the Christian faith in the Anglican Communion Church of Nigeria in the two Ika Local Government Area of Delta State and Ogbanke in Orhionmwon Local Government Area of Edo State. The Diocese of Ika is one of the thirteen Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical province of Bendel. It was carved out from the then Asaba Diocese and inaugurated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001 at the then Pro-cathedral Church of St. John Agbor (Onekpe, 2009). The Pioneer Bishop was Rt. Revd. Peter Onekpe. The present Bishop is Rt. Revd. Godfrey Ekpenisi. The Anglican Communion is a world-wide fellowship of self-governing churches holding the doctrine and ministry of the one, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. It initially grew from the historic faith of the English speaking people but is now present in many different cultures and languages (Ekpenisi, 2020).

#### **5.1 Interpretation of Gratitude in Ika Diocesan Anglican Communion**

Ngbeken (interview, 2023) defines gratitude as the ability to show thanks for the things you have. He remarks that gratitude is a cardinal moral virtue in the teaching of Jesus Christ, because he lived in thankfulness to God while on earth. He publicly expressed thanks to God for the benefit of others, that they too might learn to be grateful to God (John 11:41 - 42). For him, Jesus appreciated God as the father who watches over all his creation (Matthew 6:26 – 30). Jesus began and ended his prayer with words of thanks and praise. Ejedimu (interview, 2023) corroborates this assertion and observes that gratitude is a cardinal moral value in the teaching of Jesus Christ as exemplified in the incident of the ten lepers he healed, only one came to express gratitude. Jesus asked “where are the remaining nine lepers”? He expected them to show gratitude. She noted that

gratitude can be expressed through offering of services or verbally thanking the donor for the kind gesture. She further remarked that gratitude in Anglican Communion will foster and promote love, unity, progress and revival. She therefore, urged the Ministers or Clergymen to show good examples by expressing gratitude received from gestures, donations and services received from churches members as individuals or grouped. Gratitude serves as a guide for right moral attitude for Anglican members,

Ekome (interview, 2023) supports this and avows that expression of gratitude promotes good human relationships among members of the church and makes them feel that their efforts are being recognized. She added that God blesses those that have the mindset of gratitude. Obuh (interview, 2023) remarks that the attitude of being grateful starts with appreciating every good thing in life and recognizing that there is nothing too small for you to be thankful for. He buttresses that gratitude is not only about being thankful for positive experiences. In fact, thinking about difficult situations can greatly help to nail down what you have to be thankful for. He outlines some strategies that can help promote expression of gratitude in Anglican Communion. They include sitting down daily and thinking through five to ten things to be grateful for, learning prayers of gratitude from the Bible. Prayers of gratitude are considered to be the most powerful form of prayer, because through these prayers, people recognize the ultimate source of all they are and what they will ever be.

He gave an illustration of how gratitude can help in establishing relationship in Luke 17:17 – 19. According to him, Jesus healed ten lepers who cried out for healing. He commanded them saying “go show yourselves to the priest”. As they went, they were healed. Only one came back to Jesus, fell at his feet and thanked him. The ten were happy but only one was thankful. Jesus said to him “Rise and go, your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:17 – 19). This means that gratitude has deepens faith and facilitates good human interactions.

Eboigbe (interview, 2023) corroborates the above statement by noting that Jesus commended the Samaritan leper that came back to express gratitude. He sees gratitude as an act of noticing or showing appreciation for things we have. It is being thankful for someone’s act of benevolence. He reveals ways Christians can develop attitude of gratitude, which involves being intentional about expressing gratitude to God and other fellow human beings, developing an



attitude of contentment, keeping records of good deeds and having a mindset an attitude of honour and service to God and others for what is being done.

According to Egboigbe (interview, 2023), gratitude can enhance evangelical mission in Anglican Church in the sense that thanksgiving is a form of worship. It enables Christians to see God and his work, and opens ways for positive relationships with God and man. He therefore encourages Clergymen in Anglican churches to teach their congregation the essence of gratitude to God and others, also to provide rooms like Harvest, Family Thanksgivings for members to express their gratitude. Elue (interview, 2023) supports this by noting that Ministers should keep the congregation informed about gratitude, they should practise gratitude as a springboard for others to follow.

Nmeri (interview, 2023) buttresses the above that the Ministers should endeavour to appreciate the efforts of members whether big or small as a way of promoting gratitude in Anglican Church. According to her, when gratitude is expressed, it helps to strengthen the relationship between the people involved. Gratitude can enhance the evangelistic mission of the Anglican Communion in Ika by making the members feel more connected to one another and realizing that life is happening for them. It makes them not to be discouraged when faced with challenges. She added that gratitude serves as a guide for moral rectitude in the sense that no believer thinks correctly or behaves positively without first and foremost appreciate God for the finished work of Jesus.

The Evangelistic mission of the Anglican Communion in Ika will grow tremendously when it shows consistent gratitude to God for his blessings and to its members for their support to advance the gospel into the heathen lands. The church leaders should show gratitude to God and her members (interview Okon, 2023). Annual harvest thanksgivings services are held in Anglican Communion in Ika as a way of expressing gratitude to God for his goodness and mercy. This is to enable the people have the awareness that God is the source of their lives, income and other blessings. Awards and gifts are presented to members God has used in the Anglican Communion in Ika. Jesus counts thanksgiving as essential in a faith that saves. It therefore follows that gratitude is deepen-rooted in a true salvation experience needed to live the well, whole fullest life.

According to Reverend Ifeakom (interview, 2023), gratitude helps to put faith and trust in relationship and ensures that those involve seek the well-being of one another. Expression of gratitude enables members to do good the more for people, wins souls to God's kingdom and gives room for commitment to kingdom service. Okoh (interview, 2023) remarks that the evangelistic mission of the church is the mandate Christ has committed to the believers which gratitude helps to accomplish. For him, the essence of gratitude within the church shows a heart of meekness among believers because it takes a heart of humility to be thankful. Honour, for one another helps to promote gratitude. Chukwuka, a Clergyman (interview, 2023) corroborated this by stating that obedience to the teachings of Christ, love, contentment, sincerity of mind and good human relationships are factors that can facilitate gratitude. He remarked that ministers of God can promote gratitude. He remarks that Ministers of God can promote gratitude by practising it, teaching it to the congregation and appreciating members who have done well. He avers that essence of gratitude in the church is to promote mission and Christ's teaching. He affirms that it can enhance evangelistic mission of the Anglican Church. For instance, when people are thankful for what Jesus has done for them, by telling it to others, people will hear and be encouraged to come and express the same like the Samaritan woman.

## 6. Conclusion

There is a strong point that Luke emphasized in the story of the grateful leper. It has to do with the identity of the one leper that returned to give Jesus thanks. Luke indicates that he was a Samaritan, a foreigner. This goes on to reveal that people are not expected to show gratitude do it more than the ones expected. The other nine lepers did not return to thank Jesus. This shows that human beings struggle mightily with gratitude. If there was a single virtue could be increased in society today, it would be gratitude. There is of course abundant evidence showing the value of gratitude. It makes people happier, lively, successful and better leaders. In spite of the merits of gratitude, it is something that is not easily embraced.

The Samaritan leper came to thank Jesus, not only was he healed, he was made whole spirit, soul and body. The power of gratitude restored him whole. The phrase "made you well" is Greek *Sozo*, the word commonly translated "to save". *Sozo* in this context means "to preserve or rescue from dangers or afflictions" The study thus subscribes to the

significance of gratitude. Bertocci and Millard (1963), note that the virtue of gratitude is the readiness to acknowledge that one has been the beneficiary of someone's kindness. Members of Ika Diocesan Anglican Communion remark that gratitude is a virtue for every Christian to imbibe.

### 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- The study demonstrates that gratitude is a moral cardinal virtue in the teaching of Jesus Christ.
- The study shows that gratitude serves as a guide for moral rectitude.
- Gratitude is a good therapy for people who struggle with depression. It is therefore recommended for them.
- Humans should develop the attitude of thanking God for his commitment to our well being.

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**Interviews**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>
Pharm, Bright Ngbeke	Civil Servant	M	34	6/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Pharm Precious Eboigbe	Business / Church Warden	M	33	8/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Dr. (Mrs.) Loveth Ejedimu	Teaching / Clergy Wife	F	59	7/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Mrs. Bright Ekome	Teaching / Lay reader	F	52	7/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Barr. Ben Obuh	Solicitor / Advocate/ Church Secretary	M	41	7/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Mrs. Joy Nmeri	Civil Servant/ Women Provost	F	49	7/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Mr. Moses Okon	Missionary	M	32	8/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Mr. Friday Elue	Civil Servant (Youth)	M	37	7/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Revd, Kingsley Ifeakom	Clergy	M	44	9/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Dr, Enenezer Okoh	Civil Servant (Youth)	M	29	9/5/23	Agbor, Ika
Ven. Monday Chukwuka	Clergy	M	49	14/5/23	Agbor, Ika