

Gratitude as a way of life

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

- **Lent as a Time for Reflection**
 - Lent encourages introspection and evaluating our life's direction.
 - A key question: *How can I be a better person?*
 - Christians often look to Jesus as an example but may feel overwhelmed by the gap between his perfection and their own struggles.
- **The Role of Gratitude**
 - The reading from **Deuteronomy 26** focuses on Israel's Harvest Festival, a time of thanksgiving.
 - Gratitude is central to becoming a better person.
 - Thanksgiving should be a daily habit, not just an occasional event.
- **A Parable of Plum Jam**
 - A story about holidaymakers making jam illustrates how we can take blessings for granted.
 - God has provided us with everything we have—our world, abilities, and resources.
 - Yet, we often act as if we achieved everything ourselves, forgetting to thank Him.
- **Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness (Luke 4:1-13)**
 - Jesus was tested: Would he rely on power, problem-solving, or certainty?
 - Instead, he chose trust in God.
 - Similarly, our lives are a constant test of whether we will trust God or rely solely on ourselves.
- **Gratitude as a Path to Generosity**
 - Saying *thank you* shapes a life of grace and humility.
 - Recognizing God's generosity helps us become generous in return—with our time, resources, and relationships.
 - A thankful heart leads to a full and rich humanity.
- **Living 'Thank You' Every Day**
 - Gratitude isn't just for Harvest Festival—it should be a way of life.
 - How do we express thankfulness in our daily lives?
 - True thankfulness cultivates trust, generosity, and a deeper connection with God.

Questions:

1. **In Luke 4:1-13, Jesus resists temptation by trusting in God rather than seeking power, certainty, or self-sufficiency.** How does his example challenge our own ideas of what it means to be a better person?
2. **Why do you think gratitude is emphasized as a key to being a better person?** How does thankfulness shape our relationships with God and others?
3. **The Israelites were commanded to bring their first fruits as an act of thanksgiving.** What are the “first fruits” in our lives today, and how can we offer them to God?
4. **Jesus’ time in the wilderness was a test of trust in God rather than a pursuit of power or certainty.** In what ways are we tested in similar ways in our daily lives?
5. **The sermon suggests that learning to say ‘thank you’ can make us more generous.** Can you think of examples where gratitude has led to greater generosity in your own life or in others?
6. **What practical steps can we take during Lent to cultivate a deeper habit of gratitude?** How can we make ‘thank you’ a way of life rather than just a polite phrase?