

The obvious lesson here is one of gratitude. The gratitude especially that we owe to God.

To dig into this a little deeper, let's talk about ingratitude. When a person is not thankful in their life, what happens?

First, I think the ungrateful person grows in a deservedness attitude.

“I deserve more.”

“I deserve better treatment.”

“I deserve better from you.”

Even, “I deserve better from God.”

Obviously, this kind of bitterness is a horrible existence and ironically the person who lives this kind of existence doesn't even usually fully realize it. There are people who live their whole lives this way, but the scary thing for us is that all of us can have moments of this. moments of self-pity, resentment, anger because we believe we deserve better or more.

Sometimes, some do deserve better treatment. No one should be in a position where they feel like they have to allow themselves to be abused. But much of the time our moments of pettiness and self-pity comes from something which can be cured by gratitude.

Thankfulness – especially to God – draws us to see the big picture of all the many blessings and even to see the blessings in individual difficult situations instead of focusing on ourselves and “poor me.” We see this so much in the lives of the Saints who, by God's grace, even thank God for their sufferings because they see them as moments in which God can bless them and they can grow in virtue.

The final point I want to make about gratitude is that it is more than a feeling; it is a choice. Sometimes, we do have great feelings of gratitude, but much of the time, truly to be grateful, we have to choose to be. And when we choose to become grateful, our burdens become light and we give the proper honor to Almighty God.

**Given by Father Mark Gurtner at Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, 2016.**