

Minister's Message – May 2007

Pray for Rain

A few weeks ago our Prime Minister declared that all irrigation would have to cease in the inland areas of Australia if it did not rain in the next few weeks. There were dire predictions of crops dying as water was cut off. People would only be allowed water for domestic use. There would be no more irrigation. The Government would give money to help families survive and get counselling. But money could not make it rain. We were all asked to pray for rain.

After a week of rain farmers are now rejoicing. Their dams are full and the land is soaked after heavy rains. Wilted crops are beginning to grow again. 'The worst drought in a hundred years' has suddenly become 'the best rain we have had in years'. Farmers always say 'we need more rain', but there was no hiding the relief and joy on their faces as they looked out across their soaked paddocks.

But where did the rain come from? What about the prayers we were all supposed to pray? Not a word on the news bulletin. Not a word in the newspaper that a week ago had headline 'Pray for Rain'. Not a word from the man who asked us all to pray. Some no doubt have stopped to give thanks to our Creator God, to the God who sends the rain and withholds the rain according to his word. But what about the many who take God's blessing without a word of thanks – not even a simple 'thank you God' at the breakfast table?

How does God feel about such ingratitude? If we look into the Bible we will find out. Jesus was going through a village when ten lepers cried out to him *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us* (Luke 17:13). Jesus had mercy on them and they were all healed as they went off to the priest. How many returned to give thanks to Jesus? Just one! He went back to Jesus and fell on his face giving him thanks. *Were there not ten healed?* said Jesus. *Where are the nine?* Clearly Jesus expected them all to give thanks after they cried out to him for healing and he healed them.

Jesus said to the man who thanked him *Arise, go on your way. Your faith has made you well*. This man received more than physical healing – he was blessed by Jesus, the Son of God. He was a man who came to faith in Jesus, a man who went on to enjoy life and glorify God who healed him and saved him.

To pray and then not give thanks when your prayers are answered is not just ingratitude, but actually to deny yourself the wonderful blessings of God. Sure you got the rain you wanted, you got the healing you wanted, you maybe got the new house or car you wanted. But why be a beggar when you can know God as your heavenly Father and enjoy all the blessings he wants to shower upon you as his beloved child. *Your faith has made you well* said Jesus to leper he healed. Do you know that faith Jesus was talking about?