

Thanksgiving Day Homily

There is an old Hasidic tale about a woman whose name was Anna Kebbitch. She was a complainer. All day long she complained:

"I have so little money, my clothes are like old rags."

"My health is so bad, my back feels like the walls of Jericho."

"I must walk so far to draw water, my feet are like watermelons."

"My house is so small, I can barely move."

"My children visit me so little that they hardly know me."

One day, Anna Kebbitch woke up with an itch on her nose. She went to visit the rabbi and he asked her, "How are you, Anna?"

Anna replied with her list of problems and said: "And now I have this itch on my nose and it plagues me so. Tell me, Rabbi, what does it mean?"

The rabbi said, "Anna, your itch is the Kebbitch Itch the 'complainer's itch.' It means this: However you consider yourself, so shall you be."

The next morning, Anna woke up and her nose was still itching. Her back had turned to stone like the walls of Jericho. Her house had shrunk until she could not move in it. On the end of her legs, were two huge watermelons. Her clothes turned to old rags. When her son and daughter came walking by, they didn't know her.

In despair, Anna remembered the meaning of the Kebbitch Itch: However you consider yourself, so shall you be. What does this mean?

Anna began to think: I do have enough money to live on and a little more. Henceforth, I will give out of my abundance to those who are not so well off. My health is not so bad, for someone my age, I feel well. I'm glad I have such a nice house to live in. It's not large, but it's comfortable. I really don't mind my walk to draw water. And my children, I'm proud that they are independent and able to care for themselves.

Miraculously, while Anna was saying these things, her situation returned to normal and her outlook on life changed forever. When the rabbis tell Anna's story, they end with this statement: May your noses itch forever.

We may not get the Kebbitch itch, but we need to be reminded that our outlook affects outcomes. Our attitude makes a difference. Do you complain all the time? Do you expect the worst in others? Do you always resent it when other people have more than you or seem to be doing better than you? The result of that kind of thinking is this: your situation will probably get worse.

On the other hand, if you are a positive person who sees the good in others, rejoices with others who are doing better than you, and praises God for all that He has given to you, remember this: your situation will probably get better.

We may not get the Kebbitch itch, but we need to be reminded that our outlook affects outcomes. Our attitude makes a difference. Do we complain all the time? Or do we thank God for all that He has given us, especially for the gift of His Son.

Even if we lacked any material thing, we still would have reason to give Him great thanks. The very fact that we live and breathe is a gift of God.

On this Thanksgiving Day we thank God by pronouncing, Deo Gratias!