

THANKSGIVING 2019
Living A Life Of Thanksgiving
Luke 17:11-19

Miraculous *healings* were a *constant reality* in Jesus' ministry. **Matthew 4:23** notes that "*Jesus was going throughout all Galilee...healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.*" As "*news about Him spread...they brought to Him all who were ill...and He healed them*" (**vs. 24**).

Here in **Luke 17**, we read a story of Jesus' interaction with *ten lepers*. In this passage, we have the opportunity to watch as *one* of the *lepers* fully realizes what Jesus had done for him, and we witness the *enthusiastic thanksgiving* that resulted.

Leprosy is not unlike a condition that is *afflicting us*...though ours is much graver. While the *lepers* were *separated from Temple worship and the presence of God* by their *fleshly disease*...we are *eternally separated from God* by our *sinfulness*. The commonality does not stop there. For both the *lepers* and *us*, our *separation* finds healing *exclusively* through the *person* and *power* of Jesus.

I. A THANKFUL LIFE KNOWS THAT GOD IS THE SOURCE OF MERCY:

When Jesus came to the *lepers' village*, they kept their distance (unlike the leper in **Luke 5:12-13**, who came close enough to Jesus that He could touch him) and *shouted* to Jesus at the *top of their voices*, **Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!** (**vs. 13**). When Jesus saw them, He instantly knew of their *plight, misery, and isolation*.

Master...a unique term only used in **Luke's** gospel...and always *in reference to* Jesus. It *denotes someone who possesses notable authority or power*. This is the *only time* that this *term* is *used* by someone *other than His disciples*.

Have mercy on us...a *common expression* used by people who asked Jesus in *pity* and *compassion* to *heal them*. Their *disease* was *incurable*...their *situation hopeless*...their *lives miserable*. Jesus offered their *only chance* for *deliverance*.

Leprosy...Leprosy was a dreaded *skin affliction* in ancient times. A *leper* according to **Leviticus 13:45-46**...

- Was considered *ceremonially unclean*.
- They were *isolated from others*.
- They had to *live outside of the towns*.
- They had to wear *clothes that were torn* exhibiting a *sign of mourning*...and...
- They had to cry "*unclean*" when other people came near.

The miraculous *healing* of *lepers* was a clear sign of Jesus' *Messiahship*, since *leprosy* was only considered *curable* by *divine intervention* (**Leviticus 14**).

"For He says... 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

~Romans 9:15-16

II. A THANKFUL LIFE HEARS GOD AND OBEYS GOD:

Jesus knew that the only way they could return to their homes and families, according to the Law, was to be *declared clean* by the *priests*. Jesus *didn't immediately heal* them, but told them to, **Go and show yourselves to the priest**, (**vs. 14**). Immediately they headed for the priest.

They *weren't going* to the priest *to be healed*. They *were going* to the priest to show that they *had been healed*.

They went so they *could be examined* and *be declared clean*.

Notice, they *weren't healed* yet...but they *heard God speak*. Now *what they do next* shows what they *truly believe* about God. This is where they had to take a *step of faith*. They *headed to the priest* so they *could be examined* and *be declared clean...before* they were *healed* and *cleaned*. You have to *hear* God...then *obey* God...before you will *experience* God.

III. A THANKFUL LIFE EXPERIENCES GOD:

As the *lepers* traveled to the *priests*, they noticed that they *were healed...As they were going, they were cleansed* (vs. 14). The *wonder* that *came over them* in the midst of their *deliverance* must have been *tremendous*.

Leviticus 14:1-32...Cleansing from leprosy...this was a *very elaborate process* lasting for *eight days* and involving various *examinations, sacrifices, and rituals* to determine whether a person was *free of leprosy*.

Ironically, the very *priests* who *vehemently rejected* Jesus would now *have to validate* the *undeniable fact* that the lepers *had been healed*. They would be forced to *confirm* His *supernatural power* and *strict adherence* to the *Law*. In other words...they had to become *reluctant witnesses* to His *deity*.

IV. A THANKFUL LIFE GIVES GLORY TO GOD:

While the *ten lepers celebrated*, *one* was so *overcome* by the *completeness* of his *healing*, he *turned* and *immediately rushed back* to Jesus, *before* he even *reached the priests*.

Turned back (vs. 15)...A picture of *repentance*.

This *one leper* did *three things* that *revealed his heart*.

- First, while returning to Jesus, the *leper began praising and glorifying God with a loud voice* (vs. 15)...*without inhibition or restraint*. Spontaneous praise!
- Secondly, when he finally reached Jesus, the leper **fell on his face at His feet**...in worship.
- Finally, he began **giving thanks to Him** (vs. 16) ...the voice used here shows that he *continued* to offer *praise* and *thanksgiving* to Him.

He was a Samaritan...When this **Samaritan leper** returned, Jesus was struck by the fact that none of the **Jewish lepers** did likewise.

Samaritans...They were a *mixed race*...a combination of **Jewish** and **Assyrian heritage**. In other words, they were a combination of **Jew** and **Gentile**...and as a result, they were *rejected by both*. They were especially *despised* by the **Jews** because of their *mixed blood* and their *different form/style of worship* (**John 4:20-22**)...and their *different theology*. Samaritans only *accepted* the **Pentateuch**...the *first five books* of the Bible.

Jesus inquired...He asked *three rhetorical questions* (vs. 17-18)...

- **Were there not ten cleansed?**
- **But the nine...where are they?**
- **Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?**

Only *one* out of the *ten lepers* showed Jesus the *thankfulness* or *gratitude* He deserved. How often do we, too, *fail to give* Jesus *heartfelt praise* for our *blessings*?

Presumption...most people feel like the *nine lepers*...we are *entitled*. *We think more of ourselves* than even Jesus. Just like the *nine lepers*...we have a *horizontal view* of things.

V. A THANKFUL LIFE LIVES BY FAITH:

Your faith has made you well (vs. 19)...

The *woman* who had been *hemorrhaging* for *12 years*... she *expressed her faith* by just *touching the fringe* of His cloak and it *had made her well* (**Matthew 9:20-22**).

The same was said of the *blind man* in **Luke 18:42**.

James 5:13-16...verse 15...and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick...

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

~Hebrews 11:6

There are *many types of faith*...and we are called on *to live by faith* in *every situation*. *Healing* faith...*traveling* faith...*financial* faith...*every day sustaining* faith...but especially...*saving* faith...*trusting* in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ *alone* for our *forgiveness of sin* and *salvation*.

The voice used in this passage shows *two very different outcomes*. The **Samaritan** was *healed* both *physically* and *spiritually*. The *other nine lepers* were *only healed physically*.

How can we live...and show...a life that is truly thankful?

- **First, we must consider the depth of our GREATEST BLESSING.** The leper's story of miraculous healing is remarkable. To see such a disease immediately eradicated in someone's life is nothing short of awe-inspiring. Yet when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are healed even more completely! We were eternally separated from God by our sins, but Jesus has made forgiveness possible through His obedient sacrifice on the Cross.

- **Second, thanksgiving should be INTENTIONAL.** The more intentional we are about offering thanks to God, the easier it becomes to see His blessings in our lives. That is why we are repeatedly commanded in the Bible to be thankful in all things. No one can bless us like our Heavenly Father. Let us be diligent in thanking Him for His grace and goodness.

The one leper didn't wait to return to Jesus until it was convenient or until after he visited the priests. He went immediately to Jesus. The priests didn't heal the leper, and he knew it. He returned to the only One worthy of his worship and thanksgiving.

- **Third, thanksgiving should be an OFFERING from the overflow and outpouring of our hearts.** There was intensity and passion in the leper's worship because he was aware of his inefficacy to provide the healing he needed.

How much more wonderful is the eternal healing for those who follow Christ? We must let our thanksgiving be an enthusiastic celebration of Christ, who healed our direst need when we could not.

*“...Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **always giving thanks** for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”*

~Ephesians 5:18-20

*“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything **give thanks**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.”*

~I Thessalonians 5:16-19