

¹¹ While traveling to Jerusalem, he passed between^[e] Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten men with leprosy^[f] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

¹⁴ When he saw them, he told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And while they were going, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God. ¹⁶ He fell facedown at his feet, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Didn’t any return to give glory to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he told him, “Get up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.”

I’m not so certain that this lesson of the lepers is about being thankful. Jesus tells them to, “Go and show yourselves to the priests,” but one doesn’t listen and instead returns to give thanks to Jesus. I’m not so certain this lesson is about being thankful. I doubt the other nine were so ungrateful that they couldn’t be bothered to return and give thanks. I’m certain they were thankful. Leprosy was a dreaded disease in which a man died by inches. The duration of leprosy was 20 to 30 years.. They were known as the walking dead. It was only a matter of time. So to be given your life, your family, your friends, your standing in society. I’m certain they were thankful.

But there is a difference between the Samaritan and the other nine and it’s not just that this Samaritan didn’t listen. The Samaritan knew who to thank. He realized that in order to thank God he should fall at the feet of Jesus. Because Jesus is God, the word made flesh. More important than giving thanks is knowing who to thank.

These lepers have heard about Jesus. They cry out with a loud voice to one who can help, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

Interesting to note that not many people call Jesus, “Master.” In fact it’s only in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 5:5 after the disciples have fished all night, haven’t caught a thing, have already cleaned their nets, Peter says, **“Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so…”** Again in Luke 8:24 the disciples cry out when they are caught in a storm on the sea of Galilee, **“Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”** Later in Luke on the Mountain of Transfiguration Peter again cries out, **“Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters.”** **“Master,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him.”** The only time Jesus is called master is when the disciples just don’t get it. They know something about Jesus, but they’re still missing the point. These lepers cry out to Jesus knowing he can help but not sure how.

Jesus doesn’t go hands on with these lepers like he did the last one. Instead he tells them to, **“Go and show yourself to the priest.”** He didn’t heal them on the spot, he sent them and they were healed in their journey to the priest. They go. They were probably so excited by the prospect of having their life back they did exactly as they were told. But there is a problem for this Samaritan. He’s a Samaritan and what priest will see him? The Jews and Samaritans didn’t exactly get along, but this disease brought them together. Maybe he realized, “I’m a foreigner.” And there are signs at the temple warning, “No foreigner is to enter within the temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught will be responsible or his ensuing death.”

So the Samaritan returns to Jesus, falls at his feet, and worships God. He gives thanks to Jesus. He worships Jesus. And Jesus doesn’t say, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, you’re taking this too far.” Instead he blesses him with an even greater healing. **“Rise and go your way; your faith has saved you.”** This isn’t referring back to the healing. He’s already well and so were the other nine. They had all been healed by the word of God but only one was cleansed from sin and saved.

Luke 17:11-19

Thanksgiving

November 25, 2019

I have no doubt that people are thankful today. We have so much. We are blessed to live in America. **But not everyone knows what or who to thank.** For so many they thank their parents for the genes they inherited. They thank themselves for their hard work and education. They thank the doctors who healed them but they fail to thank the God who gave us parents, the ability to work and learn, and even the gifts to heal. Still more give thanks to a generic god but specifically this God: who came in flesh and blood; Jesus. That's the terminal nature of this disease, it wants to thank everyone but the one true God.

But God gives himself to save us from the leprous nature of our sin. God loved us so much that he went to the cross to suffer and die for us so we could be set free from this disease that slowly kills us. God gives us himself in addition to providing us with all that we need to support this body and life. That's what we pray for in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." We are asking God to open our eyes to see so that we can thank him. **God surely give daily bread without our asking, even to all the wicked, but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.**

So that we might thank, praise, serve, and obey him not just once a year but every day of our live. And so we serve him. We go and do everything for everyone everywhere. We may burn ourselves out with bible studies and service to God and one another. And the Holidays can be a very busy time. Often we are more like the other 9 running around trying to do everything when what we really need is to return to Jesus, hear his word. Where were the other 9? Weren't they thankful? I'm sure they were. But it's also a lot of work to come back from the dead. They have to show themselves to the priests, get cleaned up, eat, visit family.

Sometimes we too get so caught up doing what Jesus has told us to do – that we forget who we were 10 minutes ago. We were lepers. We were dead but now we're alive. He doesn't want us to serve him as much as he wants us to be served by him. His word for us is the same as it is for this Samaritan. Your faith has saved you. **And who is my faith?** It's not by my strength or my power. It's not me. My faith is in Jesus and his work for me. Thank him for making you whole.

Repent of our lack of thanksgiving. Rejoice he has forgiven us. Return giving thanks. Realize that every good and perfect gift is from above and ask God to open our eyes to see who to thank. Fall at Jesus feet – receive his words. Rise and go your way; your faith has saved you.