

Where are the Nine? (Luke 17:11-19)

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An elderly man who was about to repair the roof of his house was seen climbing a ladder. He had nails stuffed in his mouth and a hammer in his hand. Later a neighbor heard him praising the Lord. Curious, he asked, "What's all the shouting about?" "I swallowed a nail and dropped my hammer," came the reply. "Well, I can't see why you're so happy about that." "O but I am!" the old gentleman said. "I'm thankful I didn't drop the nail and swallow the hammer!"

Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary: "Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, and not someone else."

Like Matthew Henry, we must remember to be thankful to the Lord for the blessings we do have instead of reflecting on the things that we don't have. We also need to learn to be thankful in the midst of difficult times and the

specific changes we pass through in life. There are many things we can be thankful for today even when we are passing through trying and difficult times in life. Yes, we can be thankful for the difficult tests that God allows to come into our lives, knowing that they are building Christian character and Christlikeness in our lives (Romans 8:28-29).

1 Thessalonians 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

The secret to living the Christian life is learning to be thankful to the Lord for everything in our life as we submit to His will and providence over our lives. Every blessing we have comes from God. He saves us, heals us, strengthens us, supplies our needs, and gives us His joy and peace. In fact, great blessings can also come out of the trials that we face in life such as the blessings of His sufficient grace, mercies, redirection, and Christlike transformation in our lives. Have you been a thankful Christian while passing through the difficult times of life? God does not want us to become sour but thankful for His acts of providence over our lives.

The Bible says in Colossians 3:15:

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

Thanksgiving is the attitude of gratitude. When our attitude is right, we will be thankful to God for the great things He has done in our lives and even the trials He brings our way, since it is through trials that we can grow and mature! When you have a bad attitude you will start complaining and forget to be thankful to God for the great and marvelous things He has done and is doing for us!

The title of this devotional study on thankfulness is taken from a text of Scripture where Jesus asked a very important question: “Where are the nine?” In this passage of Scripture, we see the importance of showing gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord for blessing our lives in so many wonderful ways.

Luke 17:17 is the them verse:

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?”

As we will see later in this study, nine lepers forget to come back and give thanks to the One that healed them. Only one returned and gave thanks to the Lord. Jesus used a supernatural event, the healing of ten lepers, to teach a lesson to His disciples about gratitude or thankfulness to God. The sin of thanklessness is something that we are all guilty of at certain times. The sin of ingratitude and a worshipful heart of gratitude are both illustrated in the story of the ten lepers.

God wants us to be thankful for His many blessings.

This lesson on thankfulness is broken down in three ways.

A. Ten unclean men

Luke 17:11-14

“And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.”

We read in this text that the Lord Jesus was traveling toward Jerusalem along the borders of Samaria. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the final Passover and His appointment with the Cross. This is why Jesus was passing between the borders of Samaria and Galilee. But the other reason was to heal the ten lepers.

There are four observations in these verses.

1. There is the passing of time (11a).

The Bible says, "it came to pass." This tells us that time is marching on for every one of us today. Time never stops ticking away. Time waits for nobody. This brings up some important questions.

- ✓ Have we been thankful to God through the changing seasons of our lives?
- ✓ Do we possess a thankful spirit as we face new challenges and become tried with some specific illness or test in life?
- ✓ How many times have we given God thanks this past week during our time of prayers and devotion?
- ✓ As time moves on and we are faced with another day, are we going to be thankful to God for the wonderful things He has done in our lives?

Beloved, God does so many great things for us every day of our lives! We should never stop praising and thanking Him!

"God is so wonderful I can't explain
But I can say glory Hallelujah
Praise His holy name."

As the clock of life moves forward and eventually winds down, we ought to be thankful to God for all the blessings He gives us, even those blessings we receive during the difficult times, the storms of life. We should be grateful in both the ups and downs of life. As we go through our life we are to recognize that God is always good!

Psalm 34:8 declares:

"O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him."

As we trust in God, walk by faith, we can be thankful to God for all the events that transpire in our lives because through them all we experience the goodness of God – His spiritual blessings, provisions, and daily supply in life.

2. There is the purpose of God (11b).

Next, the Bible says, "that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." This indicates that Jesus was moving according to His Father's divine timetable. He passed by at the right time and His movements were according to the purpose and plan of God. In this case, His purpose was to heal ten lepers and be a great blessing to them and bring a spiritual benefit to one leper in particular.

Jesus was going to become a great blessing to these ten men as went out to heal them. This should be the same purpose we possess as we move throughout life – to be a blessing to others! Many times, we want to be on the receiving end, but we must remember how wonderful it is to be on the giving end. Jesus was recorded as saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). I have found out that thankful people are normally giving people. And if we are thankful to the Father for His blessings we will learn to be giving to others and to the work of God. Let us invest in flesh and blood these days!

C. H. Spurgeon used to preach only once each year "for his orphans." At that great meeting many would come to hear the famous preacher, and an offering would be received for his orphanage. After one of these meetings he is reputed to have been leaving the building where the service had taken place when one of those "superspiritual," narrow-minded, nitpicking individuals accosted him with the charge, "Why, Mr. Spurgeon, I thought you preached for souls and not for money!"

The story relates that Spurgeon gravely replied, "Why, Mr. So-and-So. Normally I do preach for souls and not for money. But my orphans can't eat souls and if they did, my brother, it would take at least four the size of yours to give one of them a square meal!"

The point is this, we should be willing to reach out to others in many ways and become a blessing to them as Jesus was to these ten lepers.

"Out in the highways and byways of life
Many are weary and sad.

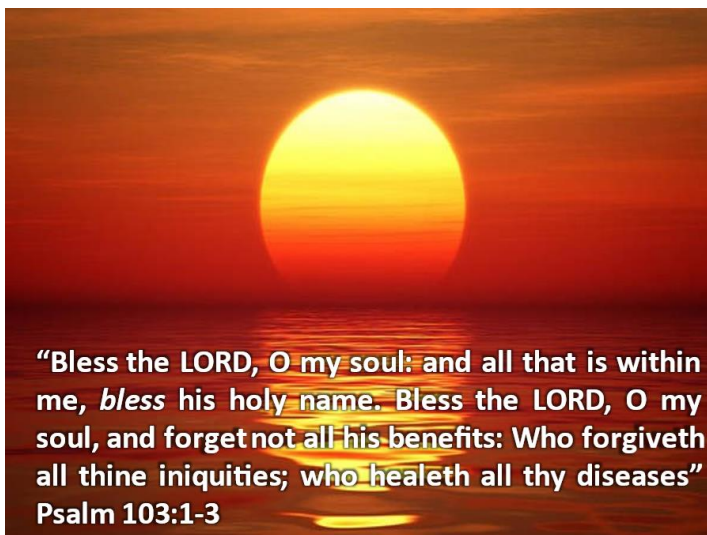
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife
Making the sorrowing glad.
Make me a blessing, make me a blessing.
Out of my life May Jesus shine.
Make me a blessing to Savior I pray.
Make me a blessing to someone today!"

As it relates to thanksgiving, we can be a personal blessing to others through investing in the lives of others. This is what Jesus did for these ten lepers. But we can also discover the personal blessing that comes into our own lives when being a blessing to others.

Today all of us should be thankful that Jesus passed by our lives, saved us, and blessed our own personal lives in so many wonderful ways. As I think of how He healed these ten lepers, I'm also grateful that Jesus has brought me the physical blessing of health and strength to live another day.

"Lord of all to Thee we raise,
This our hymn of grateful praise."

We should be thankful to the Lord for the many times we have recovered from a cold, virus, and other forms of disease and sickness.



Of course, David was not declaring that he was healed of every disease and would live perpetually without any physical ailments. He was simply giving thanks to God that whenever He was healed of some malady, He acknowledges that the physical healing came from the Lord.

David recognized that God is the ultimate Healer. If any forgiveness or healing comes into our lives, God must get the credit and glory! The Lord may use surgeons, doctors, and medicine to aid in the process, but the surgeon can only dress the wound and write out a prescription; God is the One who brings ultimate recovery and healing, whether by His direct touch or indirectly through medicine and the body's ability to heal itself.

We should be thankful and offer up praise to God for the physical health and strength that God gives to us every day. We need to reevaluate the level of our thankfulness to God. Do we give thanks to the Lord for so many of His blessings, including every time we are healed of a physical ailment?

In Luke 17:13 the lepers cried out, "Master, have mercy on us." They were crying for physical mercy to be showered upon them so they might recover from their dreadful disease.

In Philippians 2:27 Paul spoke of Epaphroditus and said:
For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.
We must remember that every physical recovery that we experience is given to us because of God's added mercy and blessing. God showers His pity upon our lives when He raises us up physically and gives us a new start! God is so wonderful! Have you thanked Him for His healing touch?

James 1:17 says:
"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The wonderful gift of recovery from illness and the many other blessings God gives to us daily, the forgotten common blessings, even the recovery from a common cold, must never be forgotten. We need to thank God for all of His blessings!

Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse once attended a luncheon with 30 to 40 people. Before they ate their meal, a man offered prayer and began by thanking the Lord for the food and water. Barnhouse said he had forgotten

what other things were mentioned, but he was gripped by the thanks given for water--common, ordinary drinking water. He concluded, "I then began to think of other common things for which we never thank God, and began thanking Him." We too forget to express our gratitude to the Lord for the commonplace things of life, even though they can be so vital to our existence. Every true blessing has come from His hands. This should cause our hearts to be thankful to Him today.

“For each new morning with its light,
Father, we thank thee,
For rest and shelter of the night,
Father, we thank thee,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything thy goodness sends,
Father, in heaven, we thank Thee.”

3. There is the peril of people (12-13)

This is illustrated in two ways.

- People are separated from God (vs. 12).

These men were ceremonially defiled and forced to live outside the village according to Mosaic Law (“ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off” – vs. 12). Their peril consisted of a physical separation from the people. But Jesus was teaching something much deeper than this. He was teaching the lesson of spiritual separation from God through the uncleanness of a person’s sin. This is because the Mosaic Law taught a typical lesson relating to lepers and leprosy. It taught the lesson that people are defiled before God with their sin and uncleanness and in need of His mercy and salvation.

The Mosaic Law deemed leprosy and lepers as unclean people. The lepers were considered ceremonially unclean, which meant they were unable to go to the temple to worship, and the temple was where God manifested His presence. Sin does the same. It puts us at enmity with God, severing our relationship with Him and leads to our destruction.

So there was a definite typical lesson behind leprosy in the Old Testament which portrayed the need for spiritually unclean people to be made clean before God's sight. The lesson is that sinners are separated from God for they are spiritually dirty and defiled and in need of forgiveness.

Leviticus 13:46 teaches that leprosy pictures sin and uncleanness before God: "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be."

Numbers 5:2-3

"Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell."

Leprosy was incurable by man. Those with leprosy were so despised and loathed that they were not allowed to live in any community with their own people (Numbers 5:2). Among the sixty-one defilements of ancient Jewish laws, leprosy was second only to a dead body in seriousness. A leper wasn't allowed to come within six feet of any other human, including his own family. The disease was considered so revolting that the leper wasn't permitted to come within 150 feet of anyone when the wind was blowing. Lepers lived in a community with other lepers until they either got better or died. This was the only way the people knew to contain the spread of the contagious forms of leprosy.

The picture that the Mosaic Law painted was that lepers were unclean people who had to live separated from the rest of God's people. Of course, they were unclean physically, but the purpose of the Law was to teach and typify how all men were also unclean spiritually before God, and in need of God's saving mercy and grace.

Is this not the way it was when we were spiritually lost and outside the blessings of God? There was a time when we all unclean and "stood afar off" (Luke 17:12). There was a day and time when we all stood afar away from God and His blessing of salvation and eternal life. What a terrible life of emptiness it was! There was nothing of any lasting value going on in our

lives. We were absolutely lost and going to hell without any ray of hope. We were spiritually diseased with sin and blindness.

Ephesians 2:17 says

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

This verse portrays a similar truth. As the ten lepers were far off and in need of healing, so every unsaved person is far away from God, and in need of spiritual healing. We all were once “far off” (far away from God and His life and blessing as these ten lepers were) but one day God saved us and began to bless our lives beyond measure.

Are you plagued with spiritually leprosy today? Have you ever had your sins forgiven through Christ’s shed blood? If not, then you are still a leper who is “far off” from God, unclean before God, and in need of mercy. The good news is that God will save you and heal you from the leprosy of your sinfulness and unclean condition before Himself through the saving merits of His Son Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-2 explains it in this way:

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in! Let us never forget it! Let us sing God’s praises for He found us filled with the uncleanness of sin and brought His special saving and satisfying touch upon our lives!

“Feeding on the husks around me
Till my strength was almost gone,
Longed my soul for something better,
Only still to hunger on.
Poor I was, and sought for riches,
Something that would satisfy;
But the dust I gathered round me
Only mocked my soul’s sad cry.

Hallelujah! I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings;
Thro' His blood I now am saved."

- People need to call upon God for salvation (vs. 13).

In the account of Luke 17 we discover that these lepers were legally required to stand at a distance from all people; therefore, their communication with Christ could only be done by shouting for mercy ("Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" – Luke 17:13).

The Mosaic teaching and spiritual lesson behind this verse on leprosy indicates that we must all call on the Lord for mercy and receive His free gift of salvation. Every person who is spiritually separated from the Lord must call upon Him for salvation and their spiritual healing. We could not come into the great blessings of salvation until we came to Jesus Christ by calling upon Him for our spiritual deliverance. The Bible says that they "lifted up their voices" and declared "have mercy on us."

Romans 10:13 testifies of this same salvation analogy:

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Have mercy on us! When we call upon the Lord to save us He extends His mercy to us! Mercy is God withholding His wrath and judgment from us which is something we all deserve to receive. Mercy is when God grants us the forgiveness of sins instead of judgment for our sins.

Titus 3:5

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

"Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,

Knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary.
Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary.”

Have you ever lifted your voice to the Savior and asked Him to save you from your own spiritual plight of sin and judgment? Are you clean before God through receiving His forgiveness through Jesus Christ? If you don't call upon the Lord to save your soul, you won't receive His mercy! You must personally call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul from hell. Why haven't you made the call? Are you too proud, religious, legalistic, and stuck up?

Luke 18:13 reveals this similar truth:

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

The publican realized that all He could do was to call out to God in mercy and ask for his salvation. Paul realized that when he called out to the Lord for salvation that He too received His mercy.

1 Timothy 1:13 records Paul's life:

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

When was the last time we just thanked the Lord for His mercy and our great deliverance and salvation from hell? The Scriptures repeatedly speak about the thankfulness we are to have for His saving mercy.

The Thanksgiving Hymn of Psalm 100:4-5 declares:

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

Many other Psalms indicate the need to praise God for His enduring mercies which would include the greatest mercy of all – the mercy related to our spiritual deliverance of salvation.

Psalm 106:1

“Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Psalm 107:1

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Psalm 118:1

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.”

We have something to be thankful for today and every day! We have been given mercy that we do not deserve to receive.

Someone said:

“Mercy is God withholding something we deserve (wrath and judgment) while grace is God giving something we don’t deserve (salvation and eternal life).”

We have been visited by the God of eternity and have been spiritually blessed by His glorious plan of redemptive salvation. He has forgiven us of our leprosy, the leprosy of sin and uncleanness, and we have been rescued from an everlasting hell. What more can we say but this: “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever” (Ps. 89:1).

“And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed” (Luke 17;14).

Yes, they were cleansed physically but the Bible is conveying a much deeper lesson here from the Old Testament typology for leprosy. The spiritual parallel is that they we can also be spiritually cleansed of our leprosy and malady of our own sin and separation from God for the Bible teaches that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

What a cleansing it was when we came to the Savior in simple faith and only trusted in Him! What a day of joy and gladness.

“O how well do I remember how I doubted day by day,
For I did not know for certain that my sins were washed away;
When the Spirit tried to tell me, I would not the truth receive.
I endeavored to be happy, and to make myself believe.”

But it's real, it's real,
O I know it's real;
Praise God, the doubts are settled,
For I know, I know it's real.
But it's real, it's real,
O I know it's real;
Praise God, the doubts are settled,
For I know, I know it's real.

B. One grateful man

Luke 17:15-16 goes on to say:

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Are you this grateful man? Are you this person who comes back to Jesus to thank Him? We should all take time to return to the Lord and give Him praise and thanks for His great blessings in our lives.

a. A grateful heart returns thanksgiving to God (15a).

The text says that this man “saw” that he was healed and in seeing it he “turned back” which means he returned to the Master to thank Him for His healing. In turning back, the Samaritan recognized the great Blessor and blessing that was given to him.

Beloved, if there is one thing that we should always be thankful for it is our spiritual deliverance from our own uncleanness (leprosy of sin) and

separation from God. This man saw that he was healed. In a similar way, we must once again see the great significance of our spiritual healing – WHEN it happened and WHO it came from! We must have a fresh glimpse of Calvary again and remember that it was on Calvary's cross that Jesus paid the sinner's fine to grant us forgiveness and mercy.

Folks, we must turn back and look back to Calvary and never forget! It was there where the great price was paid for our sins. Jesus was judged on our behalf to cleanse us forever and give us deliverance from hell. We must see it again; we must rehearse the dreadful scene over and over in our hearts.

“Show me the cross of Calvary,
Open my eyes to see;
Thy dying form in agony,
Lord, make it real to me.
Lord, make Calvary real to me!
Jesus dying in agony.
Thy great sacrifice let me see;
Lord, make Calvary real to me!”

A.J. Gossip said:

“Get the people in the sight of Calvary. Pause there... hushed and reverent; enable them to look, to see it, make it real to them, not just an old tale that has lost its wonder and its stab, but a tremendous awful fact.”

Calvary is not only the place of atonement; it also the place of amazement. Are we so familiar with the cross that we no longer pause to wonder and to worship?

Some of us need to open our eyes once again to what God has done for us! “Lord, Make Calvary Real to Me.” We need to keep going back to Jesus, back to Calvary for without the cross we would all still be lepers lost in sin and on our way to hell.

Of course, we need to also look back and give thanks to God for all the blessings He showers upon our lives on a daily basis. If we are not careful we will only focus on all the seemingly negative things that are going on

and forget to see God's hand of blessing in our lives. Even through the difficult times we must return to the Master and thank Him. Are you that grateful person? Of has your thanksgiving become dormant and silenced in the midst of the trials of your life?

George Herbert

“Thou hast given so much to me
Give one thing more—a grateful heart:
Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if thy blessings had spare days,
But such a heart whose pulse may be Thy praise.”

b. A grateful heart rejoices in God's blessing (15b-16, 19).

This is seen in how the Samaritan “glorified” God (vs. 15). To glorify God means to render doxology or praise and honor up to God for who He is and what He has done for our lives.

By the way, it seems that when the Samaritan glorified God, who was Jesus, he also acknowledged his belief in Him as His own Messiah and Savior. His gratefulness became the proof of his newfound faith in Christ.

Luke 17:19

“And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

This man had already possessed faith in Jesus for physical healing. So, Jesus at this point seems to be suggesting that this man also possessed faith in Him as the personal Messiah and Savior. Apparently the faith that the Samaritan had was not merely faith in Jesus for physical healing (deliverance), the text would also suggest that it was much more than this. It was a faith that was placed in the Messiah Himself for spiritual healing and the deliverance of salvation. I believe the Samaritan's faith not only made him whole physically but also spiritually. Jesus had this in mind when speaking to the grateful man who returned to Him after his healing from leprosy.

It may be that all ten were cleansed from leprosy but only one was cleansed of his sin! This man was a foreigner and outcast to Jewish people. The astounding thing is that this man was a Samaritan! Imagine a Samaritan giving thanks to a Jew! But because he did, this man received an even greater gift; he was forgiven and saved from judgment for his sins.

The word for “whole” (vs. 19) means to save or deliver and the text could literally read “Thy faith has saved you or delivered you!” Again, I think this was more than just faith for healing. This is the kind of faith every lost sinner needs to place in Jesus to be saved. It’s our faith in Christ that saves us – not our works (our good deeds or living).

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to say that he would go on saying throughout eternity, “I only trusted Christ.” This cleansed leper “turned back” (vs. 15) to thank Jesus for his healing. This man’s response was reminiscent of the conduct of Naaman who was cleansed through Elisha.

2 Kings 5:15

“And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.”

Naaman returned to give thanks to the one God used to bring healing to his body. He returned to ultimately thank God for showering His mercy upon his life.

Luke 17:15 once again states:

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.”

Have we returned to the Master in prayer and praise to thank Him for the great things that He has done in our lives? Do we on a consistent basis

stand before Him with an open heart or praise and thanksgiving for the many blessings He has given to our lives? The Master is waiting for us to return! He deserves our praise and thanksgiving these days. He is worthy of it! We need to glorify God and give him thanks as this man did.

This man gave thanks and worshipped God in two ways.

➤ By his posture.

Luke 17:16 says that he “fell down on his face at his feet.” This is a prostrate position of worship. It is a humble position that recognized utter unworthiness for blessing. He fell down at His feet! It is there where we really learn how to worship God!

“Go, worship at Immanuel’s feet;
See in his face what wonders meet:
Earth is too narrow to express
His worth, his glory or his grace.”

➤ By His praise

Luke 17:16 also reveals that this man gave thanks (“giving him thanks”). This man was praising God through thanksgiving. He gave the Master thanks for all that He had done for his life. The same should be true of us today.

“Thank you Lord, for saving my soul.
Thank you Lord for making me whole.
Thank you Lord for giving to me,
Thy great salvation so rich and free!”

This praise and thanksgiving was not some kind of legalistically prescribed pattern. It was an automatic and reciprocal response to God for what He had done for him. Thanksgiving in our times of worship and prayers is to be automatic and spontaneous. It is not to be manufactured or manmade or some kind of required law that we do out of habit and necessity.

Someone once remarked:

“If we haven't learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else.”

A. W. Tozer reminds us:

“God is trying to call us back to that which He has created us, to worship and enjoy Him forever!”

We are to be worshippers first and workers second. And when we cultivate a grateful heart of thanksgiving in our worship we will be living as God wants us to live. We will also be much happier and content in life.

Alexander Whyte, the famous Scottish preacher, invariably began his public prayers with an expression of gratitude. One cold and rainy day when his people wondered how he could be grateful for the weather, he began by saying, "We thank Thee, O Lord, that it is not always like this." An appreciative heart brightens a dreary day and shortens the longest night!

In its simplest form, we might define worship as the act of giving back to God His rightful worth through the humble acts of prayer, thanksgiving, singing, meditation, preaching and even Christian service and sacrifice. It is showing God the worth and value that He holds in our lives. This text is focusing on thanksgiving in worship.

The church today has lost sight of the bended knee and the kissing of the Master's feet! We live in the “me” generation instead of the God generation. But we must remember that it is God who is worth everything! Let us give Him our thanksgiving in worship today! We can do this in the quietness of our own hearts, in the songs that we sing in church, during the day when we are mowing the yard, and when we are working at our jobs. When it comes to thanksgiving in our time of worship, we are the givers and God is the receiver!

William Bright said:

“And now the wants are told, that brought
Thy children to thy knee;
Here, lingering still, we ask for naught
But simply worship thee.”

C. Nine ungrateful men

Luke 17:17-18 finishes the narrative:

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.”

Jesus asks two questions to teach us about thankfulness.

a. Were there not ten cleansed?

Yes, ten were cleansed but only one returned. It was the “stranger” (foreigner) which has reference to the Samaritan. The other nine, who were obviously Jewish and who were eager to be declared clean by Jewish Law and return to normal life in society, evidently continued to the priest, forgetting to give thanks.

The lack of gratitude by the other nine was typical of the rejection of His ministry by the Jewish nation.

John 1:11

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”

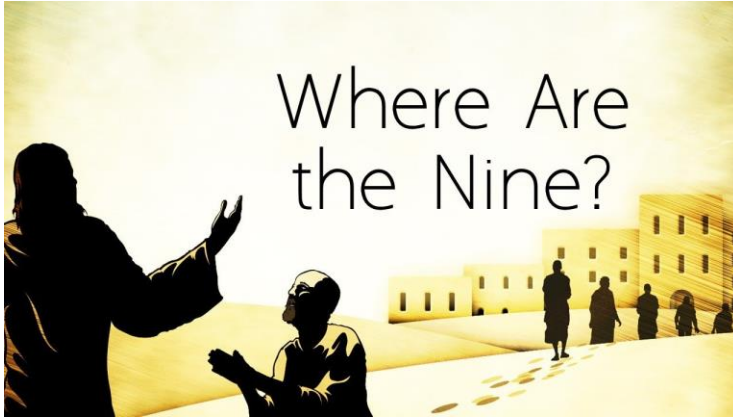
The nation accepted the things that Jesus could do, such as healing them and feeding them, but it did not want to accept Him as their Messiah and Savior. However, those outside the nation, such as this Samaritan leper, a person doubly repulsive to the Jews, were responding to His person and salvation offer.

So why did the nine fail to return and give thanks? There may be a lot of reasons, but the underlying reason why they did not return is because they lacked a grateful heart! The thanksgiving had gone out of their hearts and lives. How about you and me? Have we been giving thanks to God on a daily basis? Have we been coming back to the Master and thanking Him for all that He has done and is doing in our lives?

Someone remarked:

“When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.”

b. Where are the nine?



This is the theme and title of our study. This question by Jesus implies that the nine should have returned but did not. Where are the nine? In other words, where are the thankful? Where is their worship and praise to the Master

who had blessed their lives? Where are the nine? But more importantly, where are you? Are you one of the nine? Have you been ungrateful to your God and Savior? Or do you possess a continual spirit of worship and a heart of thanksgiving? When was the last time you thanked the Lord for saving your soul? When was the last time you just poured out your heart to Him with thanksgiving for His many blessings?

Why don't we return to the Master and give Him thanks? It's because we are forgetful and sometimes ungrateful. The sin of being ungrateful is in my opinion the greatest sin we could ever commit. May God speak to all our hearts today, so we might cultivate a new and fresh heart of thanksgiving.

God deserves to hear from our lips and hearts today!

There was a ministerial student named Edward Spencer in Evanston, Illinois, who was part of a life-saving squad. In 1860, a ship ran aground on the shore of Lake Michigan near Evanston, and Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue 17 passengers. As a result, his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever thanked him.

Beloved, let us not fail to thank God His blessings in our lives – both physical and spiritual. Of course, the greatest blessing of all is when the Lord rescued us from the terrible plight of our sin and uncleanness, providing us with a clean slate of forgiveness forever.. Because of these glorious blessings we should enter His courts with thanksgiving. We must remember to return to the Master, return to Calvary, return with a grateful heart and give Him the praise of our lips.

Hebrews 13:15

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

