

Lk. 17:11-19 “Now One of Them Turned Back”

For the Children: It is interesting to see how polite children are when they visit a friend's house. Do you remember to thank your friend and his parents for having you over? Some boys and girls are too busy having fun to say “Thank you.” Some act as if the adults should be thanking them for visiting their house! Those who realize that their friend and his family were doing them a favour by having them over will probably remember to say “Thank you.” When we realize how much God has done to help us, save us and care for us – blessings we do not deserve at all – we should be even more eager to show our thankfulness to Him. **Questions:** Why do we not deserve God to bless us? Why do church-people sometimes forget to be thankful to the Lord? How can we show that we really are thankful to God?

Introduction:

First Point: Faith and Healing

- 1) The Leper's Plight: Lepers were outcasts according to OT ceremonial law. They were required to keep away from healthy people, until declared clean by a priest (Lev. 14:2ff). Hence the lepers shout to Jesus from a safe distance
- 2) Two Kinds of Faith: The Lord tells them to go to a priest to be declared clean – implying that He is healing them. The lepers know something of Jesus' reputation: they use His name, call Him “Rabbi,” and ask for mercy. They respond with a kind of faith, but it is “miraculous faith” – assent to the power of Jesus to do miracles. With most of them, it does not appear to be saving faith. The Samaritan leper is contrasted with the 9 Jewish lepers, for when he returns the Lord says “Your faith has saved you.” In other words, his faith is the instrument that has joined Him to Christ, who provides healing for the soul as well as the body. Even miraculous faith was often met with physical healing – though that is not the same as today's alleged “faith healing.” See Mt. 9:22, Lk. 18:42. The absence of any kind of faith often met with no miracles at all (Mk. 6:5). But only saving faith leads to salvation
- 3) Jews and Samaritans: This account is part of a long section dealing with the nature of saving faith. In 15:1-2, the Pharisees complain that Jesus associates with tax-collectors and sinners. But these outcasts are the ones turning to Him in faith – like the Samaritan here – rather than the self-righteous Pharisees. The 9 Jewish lepers are typical of the Jews as a whole at this point. What they needed was a faith that gave all glory to God, all service and all thanks and praise – like the Samaritan leper

Second Point: Faith and Thankfulness

- 1) Only One Turned Back: The 9 who failed to thank the Lord were (or had been) all members of the covenant nation. They were even prepared to ask the Lord for help and follow His instructions. Yet they were more focused on their own healing than on the One who healed them. This lack of true gratitude is still a danger for covenant members today
- 2) The Underlying Problem: The underlying problem with the lack of gratitude is a failure to see the extent of one's sin and therefore the abundance of God's healing, saving grace. When we are not sufficiently aware of our own sin, we often think we deserve God to heal us, and that we do not really need saving. By way of contrast, the Samaritan leper humbles himself at Jesus' feet
- 3) Thankful at the Table: Both our preparation for the Lord's Supper and the service itself call on us to examine ourselves for gratitude and to express our gratitude for Christ's sacrifice. The promise of salvation – ultimately, a full healing – certainly warrants greater gratitude than that displayed by the 9 Jewish lepers!

Conclusion:

