

I. Introduction

Good morning! Today, we are having a shorter time of worship than usual because we are looking forward to hearing the music of Big Street MP band. But we do want to get into the Word of God and learn a few things first. Take a look at this map of the northern part of Israel in the time of Jesus. Jesus had been traveling through the Galilean countryside, teaching along the way. In today's passage, Jesus is somewhere along the border between Galilee and Samaria, and He is probably headed down toward the Jordan River so that He can follow the road along the river to Jerusalem.



The disciples and a crowd of people were with Jesus. We can imagine them walking along, perhaps on a road similar to this one in Samaria. But, as Jesus and the disciples came to a certain small town, a group of men standing a distance away off the side of the road called out to Jesus for help. Let's read the story in Luke 17:11-19.



II. Scripture Luke 17:11-19 (NIV)

[11] Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. [12] As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance [13] and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" [14] When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. [15] One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. [16] He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. [17] Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? [18] Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" [19] Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

III. Teaching

The ten lepers had probably been waiting outside the town, hoping to beg some food from passing travelers. By law, they were not allowed to get close to any healthy person, but they could cry out for help and ask for some scraps of food or a couple of coins. These lepers had once been healthy men, possibly with wives and children and good jobs. But the disease of leprosy had made them outcasts from society, so they lived outside the village, maybe in caves or makeshift shelters.

They seem to have heard the news about the wonderful teacher who traveled the roads teaching and performing miracles. And on this day, Jesus finally came to them. When they saw Him coming, their hearts must have been filled with new hope. They moved as close to the road as they dared, but still stayed at some distance, as the law required. **Luke 17:13**, and they, **“called out in a loud voice, ‘Jesus, Master, have pity on us!’”**



This story is literal history. There were ten lepers and they were healed by Jesus. At the same time, the Creator God who is the Author of history has arranged the events of that day to speak to us of our own needs. You see, all of mankind suffers from a terrible disease, the disease of sin and death. Some people are very aware of their sins and some are unaware, but all people are sinners. Sin is a little like leprosy. Sin numbs our sense of right and wrong and condemns us to a sort of living death. Sinners are alive physically, but they are spiritually dead. The ten lepers were judged as unclean and regarded by society as living dead men because of their disease. In a similar way, all of mankind is under judgment because of sin. For the ten lepers, and also for us, only one hope remains, to cry out to Jesus, **“Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”**

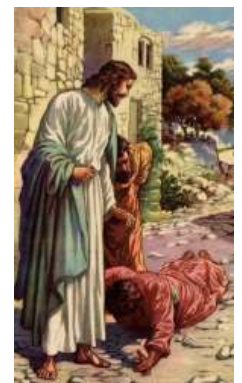
When we call out to Him, Jesus answers our cry, although not always in the way we expect. Consider the case of these ten lepers. Jesus saw them and heard their cry for help and responded. **Luke 17:14a, “When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’”** Jesus’ command to the lepers offered hope, but it was also scary. The lepers knew that the priests could not cure them. In fact, it was the priests who had pronounced the lepers unclean when their skin disease first became apparent. It was the priests who had ruled that they must stay far away from the healthy. If the lepers went to the priests again while they still suffered from the disease, they would probably be punished severely. At the same time, if they were healed, only the priests had the authority to pronounce them clean. I think the lepers must have felt the urge to say, *“No Lord, heal us first, and then send us to the priests!”* It is always a temptation to want to see the miracle first before we obey. But the Lord wants to see obedience first, because that requires faith.

It took some faith to turn away from Jesus in obedience to His command and begin the long walk to see the priests. But their obedience was soon rewarded, **Luke 17:14b, “And as they went, they were cleansed.”** It must have been a strange and marvelous feeling. They walked along in obedience to Jesus, stumbling on feet numb from the disease. And then, strength and feeling flowed back into their hands and feet and they began to walk with strong, confident steps for the first time in years. It must have been exhilarating to feel the miraculous healing flowing into their bodies.



Nine of the men continued onward, probably hurrying to see the priests with new energy. Now that they were healed, they were, no doubt, eager to be pronounced clean by the priests so they could go home to their families and friends. But one man had a different thought. **Luke 17:15-16, “One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan.”** I am sure that this man also wanted to get home and see family and friends as soon as possible. But for him, there was something even more urgent. Giving thanks to Jesus had to come first. The others continued on their journey, but this man came back, praising God and rejoicing, and then throwing himself down before Jesus and giving thanks.

Luke 17:17, “Jesus asked, ‘Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?’” I think Jesus asks this question for our benefit. Our Lord wants us to stop and reflect. All ten were healed when they cried out to Jesus for mercy. But nine did not return to give thanks. **“Where are the other nine?”** How sad and lonely it is! Our Lord pours out His blessings on all people, but, at least in this example, 90% of those blessed by Jesus do not take the time to say, *“Thank you, Lord!”*



Let us look to the Samaritan man for our example. Like him, let’s make it a priority to praise God and give thanks to our Lord. It is right to give Him thanks and praise because He has created all things, He has given us life, and He has provided a wonderful salvation for us from sin and death. Jesus freely offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who confess their sins and cry out in faith, *“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me!”*

Luke 17:18-19, “Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? Then he said to him, ‘Rise and go; your faith has made you well.’” Jesus’ words here are not just about physical healing, all ten men in this story received physical healing. But now Jesus proclaims something more, a full healing, which includes salvation, to the man who returned giving thanks and praising God. We can hope that all ten of the former lepers eventually trusted in Jesus for salvation from their sins. But in this passage, only the one is blessed with the assurance of salvation.

Most of do not suffer from a physical disease as severe as leprosy. But we all need salvation. We all need the free gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life that Jesus offers to all who repent from their sins and trust in Him. **Romans 6:23** tells us, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** I pray that all of us would trust in Jesus and receive this free gift of salvation. Jesus did not charge the lepers a fee for healing them, and He does not charge anything for salvation either, it is a free gift of grace, received by faith. In a moment I will pray for all of us and in my prayer I will include a prayer of salvation that you can join in by praying along with me in your heart. If you have not yet received this wonderful gift of forgiveness of sins, then please consider praying with me and receiving today. Jesus is

here with us and He will hear your prayer. On the other hand, if you need to hear and understand more about Jesus before making decision to trust in Him, that is okay, but please do not wait too long. The decision to follow Jesus is too important to keep putting off week after week. Talk to me or to a Christian friend and find the answers to your questions so that you can trust in Jesus.

IV. Conclusion

In closing, I would like to share Psalm 95:1-3. These words are a wonderful reminder to us to give thanks continually to our Lord for the wonders of His love and grace. **Psalm 95:1-3:**
“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.
For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Let's pray.

V. Closing Prayer