

Ten Healed; One Truly Saved

Luke 17:11-19

What would make you shout for joy? ... Or fall down at someone's feet in thanks?

1. Disease (12)

- Quarantined (Lev. 13-14)
- Thought to be caused from serious sin – a serious & distinct judgment from God
- Separation from those with leprosy wasn't just for health reasons, but spiritual
 - They were outcasts, cut off from family, cut off from worship and prayers at the Temple.
 - They were in tremendous pain.
 - There was no hope of cure.
 - They knew their disease would spread and spread until limbs fell off, ...and eventually they'd die.
- “Outside the camp” --an important concept

Leviticus 13:45 "The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.'
⁴⁶ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. **He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.**

2. Pleading (13)

- They had likely heard of Jesus' healing – even a Leper in Luke 5.
- Like the pleading of two blind men, woman at Cana, Blind Bartimaeus
- Loud / public pleading -- *All ten cried out in desperation.*

3. Healing (14)

- Jesus only tells them to show themselves to the priest... “local health inspectors.”
- Priests had to declare them clean before they'd be allowed inside the camp.
- Luke 5--Jesus tells why: Moses commanded it & as a testimony to the priests
- By faith had to start heading for the priest before healed (contrast with Naaman 2 Kings 5)--*all ten believed for healing.*

4. Praise (15-16)

Falling down – “on his face at Jesus' feet” – is *worship* (16)

Those servants of God tell people to “get up” when they bow, because they're not God

- Peter in Acts 10:25-26
- An angel in Rev 19:10
- Jesus doesn't refuse people bowing to him (Rev 1), which means he's God.

His praise sprung from:

1. an acute awareness of his desperation
2. an assumption that his healing was undeserved, in a sense (Jesus could heal, but he didn't have to)
3. a realization of the glory, power, and wonder of his healing

He truly understood what changed and the difference it made.

His praise/thanks to God aren't out of sheer duty; it looks impulsive and irrepressible.

- He turns back immediately, before he gets to the priests (as soon as he saw that he was healed)
- He didn't need the priests to tell him what he already knew... he considered thanking Jesus more important than being certified to be clean by the priest.

True & False praise--

- *easy to FAKE our thanks and praise, or be half-hearted, or motivated mainly by duty*
- *real praise (impulsive and irrepressible) is rooted in a true experience of grace and healing...that first knew its own desperation.*

5. Thanklessness (17-18)

Possible reasons why the nine did not return and give thanks: (guesses...)

- 1) *Maybe it was for fear of further identifying with Jesus (a marked man)*
- 2) *Maybe it was simple self-centeredness.*
- 3) *Maybe their love for family superseded their love for Jesus (wanted to get home).*
- 4) *Maybe it was confused religion preferring to give thanks in the Temple directly to God rather than to Jesus--a messenger only in their minds.*
- 5) *Maybe they didn't thank God at all, but simply thought that now healed their world had finally been righted.*
- 6) *Maybe it's because they delayed. Maybe the 9 others imagined they would eventually go back to Jesus ... delaying was the deadly enemy of their faith.*

Do any of these resemble you?

Connection between Unbelief and Thanklessness in Rom 1 (**DISCUSSION #1**)

The Lord is "kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35)

6. Ethnicity (16, 18)

Ethnicity is no small part of Luke's telling of this story

- *"and he was a Samaritan" (16) "no one returned ... except this foreigner." (18)*
- stressed multiple times in this book

The nine were mostly likely Jews (assumed Jew if not mentioned otherwise in Luke)

Important contrast – 1 Samaritan believed and worshipped, but 9 Jews were thankless.

Implications:

- God's kingdom is for **Jew and Gentile alike**
- Relationship with him is **not predicated on race, heritage, blood, or ethnicity**
- Jesus is **reaching down** to the **lowliest**. (A Samaritan leper!)

7. Salvation (19)

literally: *"your faith has made you saved."* It's not a word for cleansing, but salvation.

- 9 were healed, but only one was eternally saved.
- 9 were healed physically, but only one was healed spiritually and eternally.
- The faith that Jesus commends in v 19 is not the faith that cried out for healing in v 13, but the true belief of the ONE likely happened once he saw his cleansing.
- This led to him returning....inevitably so.

How and why this guy was saved:

- It wasn't the intensity of his **thanks** and or the intensity of his **praise** that saved the one.
- It wasn't the amount of his **faith** that saved him.
Neither faith nor praise can ever earn God's favor.
- It was his true understanding of his desperation and God's saving power that saved him. ... *That's all that repentance and faith is.*

So True Faith ... (this list should look familiar)

- 1) Isn't afraid to identify with Jesus, regardless of any human threat.
- 2) Doesn't see Jesus as just a means of certain benefits
- 3) Doesn't see family or any other good thing in life as more important than Jesus.
- 4) Sees Jesus as the true Temple, and the Great High Priest, who alone can declare us to be cleansed.
- 5) Knows that any healing is completely of his grace – not deserved, not earned.
- 6) Doesn't delay in faith and praise and thanks. It sees Christ as the sovereign Lord, God in the flesh, as the pre-eminent one.

This guy's healing is a window into what conversion is like.

Leprosy was used at times as a symbol for sin in the Bible.

- Sin's infection spreads; sin's problems spread
- Sin is corrosive
- Sin is numbing
- Sin is deadening
- Sin sometimes puts us outside the camp from fellowship with others

- Sin separates us from fellowship with God, like those with leprosy couldn't go to the Temple in worship.
- Sin makes us helpless – there was no human cure.

Like the Samaritan leper, we need to see our sin disease as *disgusting, deadly, and destructive* and *see Christ as the only hope for our salvation*.

Isn't it wonderful that Isa. 1, where Israel's sin is pictured as leprosy, goes on to say:

Isaiah 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow...*

"We are sinners and we know ourselves to be sinners, lost and helpless in ourselves. But we are saved sinners; and it is our salvation which gives the tone to our life, a tone of joy which swells in exact proportion to the sense we have of our ill-desert; for it is he to whom much is forgiven who loves much, and who, loving, rejoices much."

--Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism: Volume I*

Our greatest need is not a physical healing; it is not the removal of pain and the increase of ease; it is not material blessings. Our greatest need is to apprehend Jesus and be saved from the leprosy of our inmost being. (DISCUSSION #2)

Like the lepers, we were "far off" ...but he has cleansed us and brought us near.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ***you who once were far off*** have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:17 And he came and preached peace to ***you who were far off*** and peace to those who were near.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is for you and for your children ***and for all who are far off***, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

And Christ went "outside the camp" for us.

Hebrews 13:12 So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Questions for Introspection (DISCUSSION #3)

1. What kind of faith in Jesus do you have?
 - No faith?
 - Temporary faith? (gospel appeal)
 - True faith?
2. Christian, are you growing in our thankfulness and praise?
 - The praise and thanks of the one Samaritan leper was just the beginning, not a completion of what Jesus wants.

- No shortcuts; this can't be motivated by guilt or duty, but through a growing realization of our desperate state, being undeserving of his healing, but nevertheless seeing the glory and power and complete healing that he brings.

3. Are we too stayed in our thankfulness to Christ and our affections for Him?

- The healed leper came back glorifying God with a loud voice.
- He fell on his face at the feet of Jesus.

May I suggest that it is either that you have forgotten your need, your desperation, or you've forgotten the glory and power of his mercy

4. How's your fight against sin going these days?

- The thing about sin that is horribly different than leprosy is that no one with leprosy likes it.
- Sin is so distorting, so deceiving, that we often like it.
- May God give us the grace to see cankerous sores for just what they are – to see them as just as ugly and potentially deadly as they are.

Next Week's Text:

Philippians 2:4

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Study Helps and Application

Discussion 1: Gratitude--A Biblical Emphasis.

For what is more absolutely condemned in Holy Scripture than ingratitude? Or what more peremptorily (*absolutely, emphatically*) required than the contrary temper (*disposition, attitude*)?

--George Whitefield (*Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty*)

- Christians have put a lot of time and energy into “finding God’s will” for their lives. Here is a verse that speaks directly to God’s will for *your* life. (We have a lot more available on this in our *Decision Making and the Will of God* class.)

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ **give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

We often see it affirmed:

Colossians 2:6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, **abounding in thanksgiving.**

Colossians 3:15,17 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. **And be thankful...** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father through him.

Colossians 4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in **it with thanksgiving.**

Ephesians 5:4,18,20 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but **instead let there be thanksgiving.** ... ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ... ²⁰ **giving thanks always and for everything** to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And we see ingratitude exposed as sin:

2 Timothy 3:2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, **ungrateful**, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Romans 1:18,21 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ... ²¹ For although they knew God, **they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- *Is your life characterized by thankfulness?*

I say, declare it [*thankfulness*] by your lives. For to give him thanks, barely with your lips; while your hearts are far from him, is but a mock sacrifice, nay, an abomination unto the Lord.

-- Whitefield (*Thankfulness ...*)

- *Is your thankfulness genuine and heart-felt or mere lip service?*

[Leaders--None of us is as thankful as we ought to be. This is a good time to lead out in confession and repentance as you see Whitefield does below...]

You have heard, my dear friends, how I have been exhorting every one of you to show forth your thankfulness for the divine goodness, not only with your lips, but in your lives. ... I find my own heart so little inclined to this duty of thanksgiving for the benefits I have received, that I had need fear sharing Hezekiah's fate, ... I need, therefore, and beg your most importunate petitions at the throne of grace, that no such evil may befall me; that the more God exalts me, the more I may debase myself; and that after I have preached to others, I myself may not be cast away.

-- Whitefield (*Thankfulness...*)

Discussion 2: Understanding Our Greatest Need. A popular critique of the Church today is that she is too preoccupied with the next life. Challenging the relevance of the gospel message, popular authors think the church should focus more on the *perceived* needs of the masses:

“Most people today don’t fret over whether Christianity can get me to heaven. They want to know: Will it make me a better person?”

--Leonard Sweet in *The Gospel According to Starbucks*

“...we can tell the world that there is life after death, but the world really seems to be wondering if there is life before death.”

--Shane Claiborne in *The Irresistible Revolution*

Imagine an indignant friend (in or out of the Church) asking you ...

- *Do you seriously believe that gospel proclamation is more important than ...*

- *becoming (and teaching people to become) a better person?*
- *having (and teaching people to have) a more fulfilling life?*
- *feeding the poor, caring for “the least of these” ...?*

*[yes--these are **very** important too, but right now we are talking about their **greatest** need... It is true that a church that turns a blind eye to the needs of the poor is sick. It is also true that the church that compromises gospel proclamation for the sake of “relevance” is sick. The former is still widespread in suburban churchianity, and the latter is a reaction against these errors understandably crying out for authenticity. **We do not have to choose between truth and authenticity!**]*

- *What is the greatest need of fallen man?*

[reconciliation with God... escaping His just wrath... on God’s terms... graciously provided through faith in the work of our perfect Savior on the cross ... substitutionary atonement (2 Cor 5:21). Contrast momentary suffering with eternal separation from God--reemphasize that care for the poor is important...]

Discussion 3: Introspection--Ryan closed with four questions:

- ***What kind of faith in Jesus do you have? (No faith? Temporary faith? True faith?)***
Go through the six characteristics of true faith from the sermon:
 - Isn't afraid to identify with Jesus, regardless of any human threat.
 - Doesn't see Jesus as just a means of certain benefits
 - Doesn't see family or any other good thing in life as more important than Jesus.
 - Sees Jesus as the true Temple, and the Great High Priest, who alone can declare us to be cleansed.
 - Knows that any healing is completely of his grace - not deserved, not earned.
 - Doesn't delay in faith and praise and thanks. It sees Christ as the sovereign Lord, God in the flesh, as the pre-eminent one.

- ***Are you growing in our thankfulness and praise?*** Compare what has been done for you to what was done for the ten lepers. They were healed of a dreaded disease. If you have put your believing trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross:

Ephesians 2:1-9 And ***you were dead in the trespasses and sins***² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience--³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, ***and were by nature children of wrath***, like the rest of mankind.⁴ ***But God***, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, ***made us alive together with Christ***--by grace you have been saved--⁶ ***and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places*** in Christ Jesus,⁷ ***so that*** in the coming ages ***he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace*** in kindness ***toward us*** in Christ Jesus.⁸ For ***by grace you have been saved*** through faith. And this is not your own doing; ***it is the gift of God***,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Give thanks to God for one another and yourselves. (*grace = unmerited favor*)

- grace in salvation--the miracle of spiritual resurrection--that we are "no longer dead in trespasses and sins"
- grace in mercy--that we are no longer "children of wrath" (that we deserve)
- grace in adoption--(Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5)--that we are more than forgiven sinners, but rather cherished and jealously guarded children of the living God ... pity the fool who seeks our harm or destruction!
- grace in glorification--"seated with him in heavenly places" objects of his "immeasurable riches"
- grace in gifting--(Rom 12; 1 Cor 12) for the building up of the Body. Get specific in thanking God for the gifts of your brothers and sisters in our CG.
- grace in resources--we can so easily take for granted our "daily bread" and other necessities--we are extremely blessed materially
- grace in ... *others you think of*

- *Are we too stayed in our thankfulness to Christ and our affections for Him?*

Have you either forgotten your need, your desperation, or the glory and power of His mercy?

- *How's your fight against sin going these days?*

- Unlike leprosy, we often find that we like our sin--Are you liking your sin? Are you even in the fight?
- Consider your sins, especially the ones you don't want to consider (or confess to anyone else...). What prevents you from seeing them as ugly "cankorous sores"... the way God sees them?

Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Additional Resources

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We often see it affirmed: Col 2:6,7, 3:15,17; 4:2; Eph. 5:4,18,20

And we see ingratitude exposed as sin: 2 Tim 3:2-5; Rom 1:18,21

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- *Is your thankfulness genuine and heart-felt or mere lip service?*

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