

Introduction: In this season of thanksgiving in the Church, it is fitting to begin by retelling a children's sermon I heard as a ten year old boy. *** One day God sent two of His angels to a certain town, each with a basket. The first angel was told to collect prayer requests in his basket. We could call him the Please angel, as in, 'O God, please ...'. The other angel was told to collect prayers of thanksgiving in his basket, the Thank You angel. By the end of the day the request basket was overflowing. It took all the might of the Please angel to bring it to God and lay all the petitions of the people before God on His Throne. However, the Thank You angel had a very different day. He presented an empty basket to God! Children, God wants to give us what we need, and we should ask Him to help us. But, we must never forget to thank Him for all He has given us, even the many good things we never even asked Him to give us. Please remember the Thank You angel and his empty basket. Don't let him go back to God again with an empty basket. Try to put many 'Thank You's' to God in his basket every day. *** In Luke's account of the ten lepers who were cleansed by Jesus, one who was healed humbly praised and thanked God. But, we should ask ourselves what is in human nature that causes us to take miracles for granted, almost as if we deserved them. Do we really think we are better than God? Even peers thank one another. And why did only ten percent of the healed lepers thank God? The book of Psalms closes with an exhortation for ALL who have breath to praise Yahweh. (*Psalms 150*) *** Perhaps the two greatest sins of people are familiarity and pride. Many who have known God for years have lost some of their awe of Him, and take His wonderful works for granted. It seems new converts are always the most grateful children of God. *** This truth is beautifully illustrated by this one leper. He was from a nation God had handed over to the Assyrians some seven centuries before Jesus because of their extreme idolatry. Whatever he knew of God would have come from only the first five books of The Bible. *** With this background, let's examine this incident in more depth SO we can be more grateful to God.

I. Ten lepers raise their voices to Jesus for mercy; and, as they obey His command they are cleansed. (*Verses 11-14*)

- A. As Jesus went through to Jerusalem, entering a village near Samaria, ten lepers met Him and stood distant. (*Verses 11-12*)
1. And it was, in the going to Jerusalem. (*Verse 11a*)
 2. Jesus was passing through along the border between Galilee and Samaria. (*Verse 11b*)
Locations: Jesus was from Nazareth on the Sea of Galilee, the northernmost part of Israel under David. Samaria was south of Galilee, and Jerusalem was in Judea in the extreme south. Jerusalem was about seventy miles south of where Jesus was.
 3. And as He was going into a certain village, ten lepers met Him. (*Verse 12a-b*)
Lepers: The end of the sentence is actually: ten lepers, men. The last word emphasizes their humanity in God's eyes. Even lepers bear the same image of God as the first man, Adam.
 4. They stood at a distance. (*Verse 12c*)
Leviticus: The Torah required every leper to cover his face and shout out: 'Unclean! Unclean!' And to avoid infecting others they had to live 'outside the camp' or town. (*Leviticus 13:45-46*)
- B. They raised their voices: 'Master have mercy on us'; and, He said, 'Having gone, show yourselves to the priests'; and, going they were cleansed. (*Verses 13-14*)
1. And they raised a voice, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! (*Verse 13*)
Master: Somehow they knew His Name, Yeshua (Savior). But more importantly, they called Him Master, meaning they recognized His absolute authority.
Mercy: They asked Jesus to have mercy on them. We saw two weeks ago that mercy is one of God's major character qualities. On Mt. Sinai His first words to Moses were, 'Yahweh, Yahweh, God merciful and gracious'. (*Exodus 34:6*)
 2. Seeing, He said to them, 'Going, show yourselves to the priests'. (*Verse 14a*)
Priest: The priests both determined when someone was a leper, and when a leper had been cleansed. The latter is described in *Leviticus 14*. With His command, Jesus is declaring a miraculous cleansing to these ten men who were lepers.
 3. And it was, as they departed, they were cleansed. (*Verse 14b*)
Closure: This part of Luke's narrative ends as it began, with the Hebrew narrative marker phrase 'And it was'.
Obedience: They immediately obeyed Jesus' word of command to them.
Cleansed: As they obeyed Jesus' command in faith, His word to them was fulfilled. They would now show the priests that they had been cleansed of leprosy. This is a miracle!!!

II. One came back praising God and thanking Jesus – a Samaritan; but, Jesus said, 'Where are the other nine?', and to the one, 'Your faith has saved you'. (*Verses 15-19*)

- A. One leper who was cleansed praised God, and threw himself on his face before Jesus, thanking Him. (*Verses 15-16*)
1. But one of them, seeing that he had been healed, turned back with a great voice praising The God. (*Verse 15*)
Seeing healed: He had a present awareness a healing miracle had been done in him. This prompted him to turn back.
With great voice: As he returned, he was praising The God with a great voice because of his healing from leprosy!
 2. And he threw (himself) upon (his) face at the feet of Jesus, thanking Him. (*Verse 16a*)
Humble worship: This is true humble Biblical worship. The words used for worship in both the 'old' covenant and the 'new' covenant are literally to bow before God with the forehead touching the ground. He worships Jesus as The God who created everything and rules what He created.
Thanksgiving: He also thanked Jesus as The God. Thanksgiving is also worship that flows out of humility before God.
- Application:** May we pray that God will humble us so that we are always aware of His great goodness to us and our great need for Him. And may this move us to be more continually grateful to God.

3. And he was a Samaritan. (*Verse 16b*)

Pagan idolater: Ahab and Jezebel brought idolatry and pagan worship to Samaria. (*2 Chronicles 18*) When Assyria defeated Israel, pagan people from five nations were settled in Samaria. (*2 Kings 17*) This was the spiritual heritage of this Samaritan leper. Yet, in a miracle of grace, he was the only one of ten cleansed lepers who thanked The God. This is a great blow to human pride before God.

Very few people are thankful

B. Jesus said, 'Where are the other nine? Only this man of another birth returned to praise God? Your faith has saved you'. (*Verses 17-19*)

1. But, asking, Jesus said, 'Were not ten cleansed?' (*Verses 17a*)

Ten: Jesus knew He had healed all ten lepers who asked Him for mercy.

2. 'But the other nine, where (are they)?' (*Verse 17b*)

Ninety percent: Nine out of ten (ninety percent) of the lepers Jesus miraculously cleansed could not be bothered to return and thank Him. Jesus noticed this and questioned it.

3. 'None were found having returned to give praise to The God, except (if not) this foreigner'. (*Verse 18*)

None praise God: Jesus' last question is why none (of the Jewish lepers) were found to return.

This 'other birth': The word Jesus used is best translated 'another birth (genus)'. In other words, this man who was a leper was from a different gene pool than the nine (Jewish) lepers. And this unexpected person, not a direct descendant of Abraham, gave praise and thanks to God and Jesus!

Application: May we resolve to pray for grace to praise God and thank Jesus for the many blessings we have received. May we be part of the minority who give God what He deserves: our full gratitude!

Very few people are thankful

4. And He said to him, 'Having risen, go!' (*Verse 19a*)

Go about life: Jesus, pleased with his grateful response, charges him in words similar to what He told His disciples after His resurrection, namely, 'As you are going, make disciples of people from all nations'. (*Matthew 28:18-20*) He sends this grateful healed leper from a different nation out to live his life for God.

5. The faith of you has saved you. (*Verse 19b*)

Saving faith: The faith IN The Savior brings salvation.

Salvation: The Greek word for salvation is similar to the Hebrew word for peace. It means restored to safety, rescued from danger, healed from sickness and made whole (KJV). IN Savior Jesus, it means divine forgiveness of sins resulting in reconciliation to God and adoption as His child. This five-fold fruit of saving faith is more than enough reason to thank God every day!

Saving faith produces praise and thanksgiving

Upper Room: Jesus Himself practiced thanksgiving to His Father God at The Upper Room Passover Feast before His crucifixion when He thanked God for both the bread and the cup. (*Matthew 26:26-27; Luke 22:14-20*) This is significant because He charged His followers to partake of His Body and Blood until He returned. (*1 Corinthians 11:23-25*) We will soon partake of this sacrament. But first, we will hear a word from a church father.

Chrysostom: Do we not offer daily? Yes, but making remembrance of his death ... is one and not many. ...

Because this sacrifice is offered once, like that in the Holy of Holies. ... We offer always the same, not one sheep now and another tomorrow, but the same thing always. Thus there is one sacrifice. By this reasoning, since the sacrifice is offered everywhere, are there ... a multiplicity of Christs? By no means! Christ is one everywhere. He is complete here, complete there, one body. And just as he is one body and not many though offered everywhere, so [there is] one sacrifice. (From sermon on *Hebrews 9:11-14*)

Application: May we all be grateful for the gift of salvation IN Jesus by faith, and witness to Him. And we bear witness to Him by proclaiming His death in the sacrament. (*1 Corinthians 11:11:26*). So let us partake thankfully!

Very few people are thankful.

Conclusion: When ten lepers met Jesus on His way to Jerusalem He cleansed them; but, only one who was healed returns to praise God and thank Jesus. Jesus responds by asking the Jews why only a non-Jew returned to praise God. He then sends the Samaritan to go on his way after saying to him his faith has saved him.

Very few people are thankful