

Sunday, June 23, 2024 | The Road to Redemption

Week 29 | Luke 17:11-19 | "Restored & Redeemed"

Last week, Jesus gave his disciples *three* principles: being drowned is preferable to being a stumbling block, it takes less than a grain of faith to forgive, and do not expect to be commended for doing what is commanded.

Studies have shown a close relationship between *gratitude* and an individual's well-being. Giving thanks can make you *happier*.¹ When we're thankful, we focus on things we *already have*; we force ourselves to see the good rather than the bad in our lives. After all, hyper-fixing what we lack guarantees that we will become ungrateful, discontented, and unhappy. However, if we make it a habit to give thanks in both the good and bad, we will have an overall sense of satisfaction and peace. Thanksgiving can positively impact one's mood.

This is especially true for the Christian. Gratitude is one of the best indicators of whether or not a person has been saved. Believers, more than anyone else, ought to know that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (Ja. 1:17). And this knowledge ought to lead us to search for the blessings that've already been given to us by God. Doing so makes us aware of how active the Lord is on our behalf, giving us an overwhelming appreciation for how blessed we are.

I want you to notice *two* things:

i. **Ten lepers come to Jesus in desperation.**

READ: Luke 17:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

"On the way to Jerusalem" is a reminder that the Lord was headed to the cross.

¹ General Editors, "Giving thanks can make you happier," Harvard Health Publishing, August 14, 2021, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>, [accessed, June 22, 2024].

The phrase “[between Samaria and Galilee](#)” is about as nondescript as possible. Remember, to a people who didn't have maps and borders were not definitive, a generalized description such as this was enough. We are not supposed to track Jesus' precise movements but to remember his destination.²

Lepers were required to keep their distance, about 50 paces, from people.³ Hence, this is why they had to raise their voices.

Lepers had to isolate themselves from the community and were forced to live in colonies. Though there are exceptions, they had to sever all contact with friends and family. Whenever a person contracted leprosy, it was like a living death. Garland explains “that the cure of a leper was akin to raising the dead.”⁴

The last time we saw an interaction between Jesus and a leper was in Luke 5. In that instance, the Lord *touch*ed the leper, and he was cured. This time, however, rather than touching the lepers, Luke tells us that Jesus commanded that they “[go and show \[themselves\] to the priests](#)” (cf. Lev. 13:19). And rather than doubt Jesus, they ***obeyed***.

Notice it was not “[before they went](#)” but “[as they went](#)” that they were “[cleansed](#).” It was in the going that they received their healing.

When Luke said that the lepers were “[cleansed](#),” he used the Greek term **καθαρίζω** (*kath-ar-id'-zo*). This term has both a physical and spiritual dimension. So, when he said that the lepers were “[cleansed](#),” he meant they were not only ***cured*** of any physical ailment but also ***purified*** of any ritualistic defilement (cf. vs. 15, “he was healed.”).

Think about this: because of their obedience, all ten lepers were “[cleansed](#).” They had enough faith to believe that they would get what they asked for if they listened to Jesus' instructions. They even go so far as to call Jesus “[Master](#),” an honorific that was only used by the apostles. This shows their deep respect and recognition of Jesus' authority. Their faith and obedience led to their healing and restoration.⁵ And if it weren't for what happens next, this would be a pretty good illustration of obedience. We are cleansed only when we believe and obey God's word. Blessings do not come ***before*** obedience but ***after***.

² Garland, David E., *Luke*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan, 2011), p. 689.

³ Edwards, James R., *The Gospel According to Luke*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Nottingham, Eng; APOLLOS, 2015), p. 483.

⁴ Garland (2011), p. 689.

⁵ Ibid.

However, as with the other four miracles in Luke's travel section (11:14, 13:12; 14:4; 18:35), this one does not highlight the miracle itself but the teaching that follows it.⁶ As we will see, a person can call out to Jesus, receive help from Jesus, and not worship Jesus.

Desperation may make you come to Jesus, but only appreciation will make you return to Jesus.

ii. **One leper returns to Jesus in appreciation.**

READ: Luke 17:15-19 (ESV)

¹⁵ Then **one** of them, when he saw that he was healed, **turned back, praising God** with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he **fell on his face** at Jesus' feet, giving him **thanks**. Now he was a **Samaritan**.

¹⁷ Then Jesus answered, "Were not **ten** cleansed? **Where** are the **nine**?" ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give **praise** to God except this **foreigner**?" ¹⁹ And he said to him, "**Rise** and go **your way**; your **faith** has made you **well**."

When the lepers first came to Jesus, they "stood at a distance," and they were so far away that they had to lift "up their voices" (vs. 12-13) just to be heard. However, when this Samaritan leper returned, he did not stand afar off; he came up and "fell on his face at Jesus' feet."⁷ But notice, he was just as loud! Luke says he praised "God with a *loud* [emphasis added] voice." Even without going to the priest, this man knew he was clean. He was no longer a social pariah.

Just as the so-called "sinful woman" anointed Jesus' feet (cf. 7:38), this Samaritan leper worshipped at Jesus' feet. Moreover, just like the sinful woman was an outcast, so too was the leper, not only because of his disease but also because of his ethnicity.

So long as they come by faith, Christ welcomes the outcast.

In response to the Samaritan's worship, the Lord provides three rhetorical questions that invite us to meditate on the situation.

"Were not ten cleansed?" Yes, Lord. You healed a total of ten lepers.

"Where are the nine?" They're likely going to the priest and not coming to you, Jesus.

⁶ Bock, Darrell L., *Luke 9:51-24:53*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 1996), p. 1397.

⁷ Bock (1996), p. 14:03.

“Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” That is correct, my Lord. None but the Samaritan has returned. Only the Samaritan has given proper praise to God.

9 people took the opportunity to be healed, but only one took the opportunity to be saved. The majority thought of the Lord only as a healer; the minority thought of the Lord as a savior. Faith is often found in the most unlikely of places.

Remember how we learned that “cleansed” had a physical and spiritual dimension? 9 of the 10 lepers thought that because they had been “cleansed,” they had also been saved. They equated their physical state with their spiritual state. However, this needed to be clarified.

You see, when Jesus said to the Samaritan leper that his “faith” had made him “well,” the Greek term for “well” is not καθαρίζω (*kath-ar-id'-zo*) but σώζω (*sode'-zo*). And it means to be “saved.” Admittedly, this term can be used to describe what we'd think of as healing (cf. Lu. 8:36; Jn. 11:12), but generally speaking, when the Bible refers to someone as being “saved,” it is stating that they are being rescued (cf. Lu. 6:9; 8:12; 9:24; Jn. 3:17; etc.). In other words, though all ten lepers were cured that day, only one was saved. The nine lepers had their health restored, and the Samaritan leper had his physical and spiritual health restored.

So, what's the takeaway?

Gratitude to Christ is the telltale sign of saving faith.

An attitude of gratitude indicates the magnitude of one's beatitude.

Faith and thanksgiving are inseparable. You cannot have one without the other.

READ: Psalm 107:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

² Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble

³ and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

READ: Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV)

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.

What sort of person are you?

Are you thankful for what the Lord has done for you? Have you returned to him? Do you bow at his feet and worship him?

Or are you ingrateful? Have you gone on your merry way? Have you gotten what you need from God and then turned your back on him?

What sort of person are you?

Ten lepers were ritualistically restored, allowing them to be welcomed back into their respective communities, but only one leper also had his relationship with God restored.

Everyone benefits from God's mercy. The Lord sends rain on the just and the unjust. But only the just know to whom they should give thanks. And it is the just who will not only benefit from God's everyday blessing but also the blessing of salvation.

Video Description:

The Road to Redemption | Week 29 | "Restored & Redeemed" (Luke 17:11-19)

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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