

What Happened To Your Grateful?  
Where Are The Nine?  
Luke 17: 11-19

***“Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said “go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus ‘s feet and thanked him and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, “we’re not all 10 cleansed? Where are the other nine? 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.”***

Today we're going to focus in on a group of social castaways that I spoke briefly on last Sunday but want to go into greater detail today. The story starts out with Jesus simply walking along his way minding his own business when he hears a group of people who have leprosy calling out to him from a distance. I want to peel back the layers of the story and focus on some details that would be otherwise missed if we didn't focus in on it intentionally.

The first thing I want you to notice is who is crying out to Jesus. It is a group of people that have leprosy. In those days if it were determined that you had this infectious disease called leprosy you were cast out and stripped of all your possessions, your job, and your status in society and thrust into a village of rotting flesh.

Needless to say, the people who are crying out to Jesus are doing so from a desperate place. And to make things worse, this leper village was not just made up of Jews but also Samaritans which were sworn enemies. So they were not only dealing with the misery of leprosy they were also dealing with the misery of being forced into a toxic social situation. Sounds like fun. Even wolves and sheep, when the flood comes will seek high ground together for a short period of time. So when Scripture says that ***“Jesus heard them crying out from a distance”*** hopefully this gives us some context behind they're desperate cry for help.

Let's look at **verse 12** ***"As he was going into the village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, Jesus, master, have pity on us!"***

Notice Scripture says they ***"called out in a loud voice."*** It must've been quite an effort to cry out in a loud voice because one of the major symptoms of leprosy is that your voice is slowly taken away. Have you ever heard that in desperate situations you are given strange physical strength? I can imagine this was the situation with these lepers.

I asked Dana a few nights ago if she thought she could pull my 240-pound frame across the living room. She tried but could not do it but she said if she had to under a desperate situation she can get the job done. I believe this is the same desperate supernatural strength that were seeing from these 10 lepers as they cry out to Jesus with all that they have, seeing this as their last opportunity to be made whole.

Have you, in your desperation ever cried out to Jesus with groans that could not be uttered that flowed out of you supernaturally and that your strength could not afford? And in that moment of desperation did it get the attention of the Savior?

This account gives credence to ***Psalms 34 verse 18 that says, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."***

No matter who you are or what you've done and no matter the source of your pain, if you cry out to the savior he will be there to bind up your wounds.

Even though these 10 lepers were isolated they still knew who Jesus was because they called out to him and addressed him as Jesus and master. They had some concept of who he was and what he could do but did not know him and his totality as Lord and Savior. They're only concept of him was nothing more than a healer. This seems to tell us that even though we may not know him thoroughly he will meet us where we are.

We also see in scripture that Jesus had gone near to the lepers because it was when "he saw them" not when "he heard them" that he spoke. This move by Jesus is breaking social barriers and social taboos concerning the sick. This also shows us the nature of Jesus. It shows us his love and compassion to be near the hurting. When you cry out to him in desperation you can rest a sure, just like these lepers, he will draw near to you. When he draws near to us, it gives us the advantage of not only hearing his voice but also getting a glimpse of his loving kindness and compassion that can only be seen up close.

Jesus answers their desperate plea by saying, ***“go, show yourselves to the priest.”*** ***And as they went, they were cleansed.*** Notice what Jesus did not say in the verse. He didn't say “be healed” or “go watch yourself in the river and you will be cleansed.” He simply said, ***“go and present yourself to the priest.”*** The reason why Jesus told them to present themselves to the priest is, in those days the priest also acted as the public health official. So when a person claim they were free of an infectious disease they would have to present themselves before the priest to verify that they were in fact free of disease.

When Jesus gave the command to these 10 lepers to present themselves to the priest, to their credit they obeyed. But notice that they obeyed without being immediately healed. ***Verse 14 says, “and as they went, they were cleansed.”*** To set out to see the priest while they still had leprosy was crazy unless they believed that Jesus could and would heal them along the way.

We need to, in times of desperation and need, as we pray out to Jesus trust that he has heard our prayer and is acting on our behalf even while we are waiting. Some of the sweetest praise comes from a time and place of desperation. And as you walk in obedience and faith, may you receive your healing as you give him the praise and honor that only he and he alone deserves. Sometimes we have to set out for the priests while we still feel the leprosy.

***Verse 15 says, “one of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praised God in a loud voice. Then threw himself at Jesus’s feet and thanked him and he was a Samaritan.”*** This lepers voice had returned to him and the first thing he used it for was to give thanks to Jesus himself. His healing had brought him closer to Jesus then before. Thankfulness binds us to Jesus with a supernatural bond. As someone once wrote, “Nothing is so sweet to a loving heart as to pour its self out in thanks to him.”

It's also interesting to note who it was that came back to give the Lord thanks. The only one out of the 10 came back to say thank you was a Samaritan. The numbers of the thankless often far surpass those who are thankful. It's easy to say what we don't have or what we didn't get or what we deserve. Some people can see no blue in their sky if only one small cloud appears.

I believe this man that was pouring out his gratefulness at the feet of Jesus was healed of the more fatal leprosy of the soul as he poured himself out before the

father. Today do not miss your opportunity, when the Lord comes through for you, to pour out of the deepest part of your soul the Sweetest gratitude to the sweetest savior the world has ever known. Let this be your evidence that you are a true believer and that the world would bear witness that there is a healer still among us.