

# Where Are the Nine?

Luke 17:11-19

## Introduction:

1. This account of the healing of the lepers is found only in Luke's gospel
2. Note the similarities in all these lepers
  - a. They were all afflicted with the dreaded disease of leprosy
  - b. All were determined to do something about it
  - c. All had heard of Jesus and believed that He could cure them
  - d. All appealed to Jesus for mercy
  - e. All obeyed Jesus and set out to go to the priests
  - f. All were healed
3. Note the one difference – one of the healed lepers returned to praise the Lord and give thanks for his healing
4. We ourselves often don't realize how blessed we are, or how thankful we ought to be, until what we have is threatened to be taken away.
  - a. It is good and fitting that as Christians, we ought to celebrate Thanksgiving for God has certainly been good to each of us.
  - b. Someone said gratitude is the source for all other Christian virtues
  - c. Then perhaps we need to reason that ingratitude may well be the source of all, or at least many of our faults as well.
  - d. When we take for granted what God has done for us, we become calloused and filled with pride and then God can no longer use us.
  - e. For a Christian, every day ought to be a day of thanksgiving.
    1. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world
    2. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy
    3. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week
    4. If you can attend church meetings without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than 3 billion people
5. I've never seen an episode of the television show "The Simpsons" but I read in one episode the family was sitting down for a meal and the dad asked Bart to give thanks before the meal and Bart said, "Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing."
6. Some people may laugh at that line, but I think it reveals a real problem many people have.
7. They live their lives enjoying the blessings of God but never once stopping to say "Thanks."

## **I. The Ten**

### **A. Their Condition – vs 11-12**

1. They Were Unclean
  - a) *Jesus was on the road to Jerusalem between Galilee / Samaria*
  - b) *Leprosy was painful and disgusting to the one who had it and contagious and loathsome to others*
  - c) *Most of us have heard stories of the horrors of having leprosy in Biblical times.*
  - d) *Lepers were called “the walking dead,”*
2. They Were Afar Off
  - a) *The lepers stood afar off because of well-established quarantine laws – Lev 13:45-46*
  - b) *Lepers could not approach other people*
  - c) *They were required to warn others (“unclean!”)*
  - d) *These lepers were on the outside of the village, but on the road Jesus was traveling*
  - e) *They were kicked out of their homes and villages and forced to live in colonies with other lepers.*
  - f) *They couldn’t work or worship at the temple.*

### **B. Their Cry – vs 13**

1. The lepers had to shout since they were afar off
2. They apparently had heard of Jesus or recognized him
  - a) *They didn’t specifically ask for healing, they asked for mercy*
  - b) *No physician could heal them, no medicine could cure them.*
  - c) *They were completely helpless before the onslaught of this deadly disease.*
3. We like to think that we are sufficient, that we are capable of handling life, but the truth is, we are born helpless into this world, and we are helpless to stand before sin and Satan.

### **C. Their Cleansing – vs 14**

1. The Instruction – “Go”
  - a) *Jesus seemed to be giving a curt dismissal and a refusal to help these lepers*
  - b) *Jesus appeared to be reminding the lepers that their condition was to be supervised by the priests and not by him*
    - (1) *Only the priests had authority to pronounce a leper to be cleansed – Lev 14:7*
    - (2) *This instruction might have seemed cruel or crazy since these men had not yet been healed*
2. The Faith – “they went”
  - a) *Even though it sounded crazy, these lepers did as they were told and as they went they were healed*
  - b) *Only when they exercised faith were they healed*

## **II. The Nine – vs 17**

### **A. Jesus Expected All to Be Thankful – “Where are the nine?”**

1. One waited to see if the cure was real.
2. One waited to see if it would last.
3. One said he would see Jesus later.
4. One decided that he had never had leprosy.
5. One said he would have gotten well anyway.
6. One gave the glory to the priests.
7. One said, "O, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."
8. One said, "Any rabbi could have done it."
9. One said, "I was already much improved."

### **B. Jesus Was Surprised that the Nine Did Not Return**

1. Jesus seemed surprised that the other 9 did not show up
2. Maybe they thought that could be just as thankful to the Lord in their hearts without really going back to Him

## **III. The One – vs 15-16**

### **A. He Realized**

1. He wasn't healed when he left Jesus
2. Along the way he was healed

### **B. He Turned Back**

1. He must return to the one who healed him
2. Other concerns could wait

### **C. He Glorified God**

1. Only God could have healed this leprosy
2. The healed leper gave God the glory

### **D. He Humbled Himself**

1. He fell down before Jesus
2. He said “thank you”

### **E. He Was a Samaritan**

1. The one who returned was a Samaritan – were the others Jews?
2. Samaritans did not have sound theology, but this one had gratitude
3. The Jews had proper theology but they were not thankful.

## **F. He Was Made Whole – vs 19**

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

1. Concentrate on that last word; it's the word *sozo* which means "saved."
2. It's the same word the Philippian jailer used in Acts 16 when he said, "What must I do to be saved?"
3. The word means to "be made complete or whole."
4. Jesus didn't come to earth to heal people of diseases; otherwise He would have established a hospital.
5. He came to this world to seek and to save the lost. He came to make people whole.
6. Ten men were cleansed, but only one man became "whole."
7. Ninety percent of them only received a small portion of what could have been theirs, and only one received full salvation.

### Conclusion:

1. Similarities between our condition (when we were lost) and the lepers
  - a. They were outcasts – we were outcasts from heaven
  - b. They had a condition that could not be healed by human means
  - c. They were helpless and hopeless except for Jesus
  - d. They were on their way to certain death
  - e. They had a life-changing encounter with the Lord
2. The nine did not take time to give thanks
  - a. Could it be that nine out of ten are not thankful?
  - b. Are only 10% of believers really thankful?
3. The one was thankful – are we thankful?

Pastor Jack Hinton had the opportunity of leading music for a worship service in a leper colony on the island of Tobago. There was time for one more song so he asked for a request. A woman who had been facing away from the pulpit turned toward him and raised a fingerless hand. The woman's nose and ears were entirely gone, and most of her lips had rotted away. Nonetheless, she asked if they could sing Count Your Many Blessings. Pastor Hinton was overcome with emotion and had to leave the service. A team member followed him out and said, "Jack, I guess you'll never be able to sing that song again." The pastor replied, "Yes I will, but I'll never sing it the same way again."

### The Attitude of Ingratitude

Hot springs and cold springs are found side by side in some parts of Mexico. Because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon, women often bring their laundry to such places so they can boil their clothes in the hot springs and then rinse them in the cold ones. A tourist who was watching this procedure commented to his Mexican guide, "I imagine they think Mother Nature is pretty generous to supply such ample, clean, hot and cold water here side by side for their free use." The guide replied, "No, Señor, there is much grumbling because she supplies no soap."

Ingratitude is not limited to Mexican peasants; Israel demonstrated the same attitude. God had just performed some awe-inspiring miracles for His people's benefit. He had slain the first born of Egypt so that Pharaoh would free the Israelites. He had provided a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night to guide their journey. He had opened the Red Sea for them to cross and brought it crashing back on the Egyptian army pursuing them. Yet when they hit their first snag, instead of trusting God, they turned to complaining.

Times of need are times for praying, not complaining. Complaining says to God, "You aren't taking very good care of me." Prayer says to God, "I may not understand what's happening, but I trust You to take care of me."

Do you feel life is treating you unfairly? Are you tempted to complain? Try this. Take a notebook and list some of the marvelous things God has already done in your life, such as providing your salvation, a measure of health, a supportive family and an inspired Bible. Then look with confidence that He will provide for your situation today as well.

Nothing cures ingratitude as quickly as a good memory.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.