

## Where Were The Nine? Luke 17:11-19

Franklin Church of Christ  
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AM Worship

### Introduction:

In **Luke 17:11-19**, Jesus healed 10 lepers. He did not say anything special of them. He did not touch them. He did not ask them to do anything spectacular. He simply told them to go show themselves to the priest, a fulfillment of the Law (**Leviticus 14:1-9**). As they walked to the priest, all ten were healed, but only one returned to thank Jesus. We can hear the disappointment in Jesus' voice as He asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" For a few minutes, let's pretend we are Peter. Being the apostle who wants to do all things to please our Master, we want to find out the answer to His question. Where indeed were the nine? Impatiently we head out to track down the nine cleansed lepers to question them. "Why did you not return to thank my Master who healed you?" What kind of responses would we have heard?

### Discussion:

- I. "He knows I am thankful, I do not have to say it."
  - A. We should all be thankful for our salvation. However, do we actually thank God for it or do we excuse ourselves claiming He already knows.
  - B. According to **I Thessalonians 5:18**, we are to give thanks in everything. God's command was not to feel glad in everything, but to actually give thanks. We may be appreciative, but we are not thankful until we actually give thanks.
- II. "I was getting better anyway."
  - A. We should all be thankful for our health. However, how often have we found ourselves sick and prayed to God to help us get better. When the bug is gone, we think the sickness was just one of those things in life that comes and goes. Surely the sickness would have gone away on its own. Do we neglect then to thank God?
  - B. According to **III John 2**, John prayed for the health of the brethren. Hear is the key, if we think we are going to get better anyway without God's help, then why waste time praying. There is no faith in that prayer. However, if we believe we need God's help to get better, then we need to thank God when it happens.
- III. "I was the one who went; Jesus did not do anything."
  - A. We should all be thankful for the food and clothing we have. How often do we believe we have worked for these things and then not offer thanks God for it?
  - B. **Ephesians 3:20** makes an interesting point. When we pray, God works through us. Thus, many times God is answering our prayers but He is using us to do it. In those cases, it may look like we are doing all the work. In reality, we need to thank God for the ability He is giving us and what He is accomplishing through us.
- IV. "No one else gave thanks."
  - A. I believe we should give thanks for our meals following the example of Jesus (**John 6:11**) and Paul (**Acts 27:35**). Yet how often do we find ourselves eating with a crowd at a restaurant or party where no one else has given thanks. We become somewhat embarrassed and do not want to stick out. Some of us will even try to find a safe haven in scripture saying we do not want to be like the Pharisees who prayed on the street corners to be seen of men.
  - B. **Matthew 7:13-14** demonstrates that we will often be alone in serving the Lord properly. While we must not pray to be seen of men, we must pray when God deserves thanksgiving. In this circumstance, we must let our light shine that our Father in heaven may be glorified.
  - C. Interestingly, we know this excuse to be false. The one leper did give thanks. What a lesson there is here, how many times do we make decisions based on what we are sure everyone else is doing, only to find out our perceptions were misperceptions?
- V. "The Samaritan gave thanks for us."
  - A. Every Sunday, men lead this congregation in prayer. Without fail, they will thank God for our food, clothing, shelter, brethren, salvation and forgiveness. How often do we neglect our own

thanksgiving for these and other blessings as though the prayer in the assembly was good enough? How often do we sit back and just listen during the prayers in the assembly instead of praying along with the leader as though his thanksgiving was good enough for all of us?

- B. **Colossians 3:17** explains we each have the individual responsibility to give thanks. Your thanksgiving does not fulfill my obligation to God and my thanksgiving does not fulfill yours. We must all give thanks for ourselves.

VI. "If I do not have leprosy now, I must have never had it."

- A. How often do we have problems about which we worry for days, perhaps weeks? In the pit of despair, we turn to God and pray for help. However when the problem dissipates or is overcome, do we thank God? Or do we think, "There, you see, that was not such a big deal after all. I just needed some patience."?
- B. **Philippians 4:6** teaches we are not to worry and fret, rather we are to make our requests known to God with thanksgiving. The idea conveyed is when God grants our requests about these concerns, we must be thankful. We need to give God the credit due Him.

VII. "The priest healed me."

- A. The number of times Christians have been in the hospital and made it out alive is mind-boggling. Every one of us have had some illness or surgery which necessitated doctor's care. We ask everyone to pray for us and we spend much time on our knees. When the surgery or illness is over, how many times have we praised the doctors and forgotten about God?
- B. **Acts 17:28** teaches God is the reason we live. Without Him, all the doctors in the world could not keep us alive. We need to be thankful.

VIII. "I'm not sure this will last."

- A. Have you ever been in a storm when the power goes out? I have been through storms when the electricity was out for days. What happens when the lights flicker back on? Do we thank God for His gift, or do we postpone our thanks until we are sure it will continue?
- B. **Job 14:1** explains our lives will be filled with trouble, which means our electricity will probably go off again. Whatever good is happening will probably stop at some time. However, for the times when God has blessed us, no matter for how long or short a time, we need to be thankful.

IX. "I'll thank Jesus later."

- A. One of the biggest problems we have with thanksgiving is just finding time to do it. We know we should give thanks but we have so much to do right now. We will give thanks later. Unfortunately, later gets here and we are still just as busy. We keep putting the thanksgiving off.
- B. **Proverbs 3:27-28** says we must render to others what is due them right now. It is wrong to tell our neighbor to go and come back tomorrow. How much more is it wrong for us to tell God, "Go for now, come back tomorrow, then I will give you the thanks You already deserve."?

X. Why did the one return?

- A. **Luke 17:15-16** shows the one returning. Why did he come back? Because he knew Jesus had healed him and he was thankful.
- B. We also need to return to God with thanksgiving. He has done so much for us.

### Conclusion:

Obviously, these excuses were made up. However, they do not sound so made up to us do they? After all, we have heard them made before. Regrettably, we have all made some of them sometimes, haven't we? As one of the songs we often sing says we should count our blessings. Then we should give thanks for them.