



[Larry Bird]

[Your desire to give praise and thanks to God for what he's done in your life transforms the way we look at our present and future circumstances. You'll become more contented with what's happening right now and more hopeful about what's going to happen in the future.]

But the MAIN POINT that **we're going to see in the Word of God today, is that your inner desire to give praise and thanks to God is a Window into Your Soul.** It is one of the **evidences** that God has saved you and has given you His gift of eternal life.

I'd like you to stand with me as we **read together** from **Luke 17:11-19.**

The word of God talks about giving thanks in 138 different passages of Scripture. But, here's a factoid, - only here in the NT are thanks brought directly to the person of Jesus rather than the name of God (although of course Jesus is God.)

Let's walk through this text and I want you to notice what happens in this encounter with Jesus.

I. FIRST OF ALL, WE SEE 10 LEPERS RECOGNIZING JESUS.

Looking verses 11-13 of our text. The Bible says that Jesus was *on his way to Jerusalem*. He was going there for the final time to die as our Redeemer. And as he made his way to Jerusalem, the Bible says that *he passed along between Samaria and Galilee*. As He was in this border region He was met by 10 lepers who stood at a distance, something lepers were supposed to do because if you had leprosy, you were *quarantined*. I used to have to spend some time explaining what it meant to be quarantined. Not so anymore,

If you were a Jewish person with leprosy, you couldn't go into the temple. You just stayed away from everyone. And if you saw anyone from a distance, you were supposed to call out and say *Unclean, Unclean* so everyone would know that you were contagious.

When these lepers saw Jesus, the Bible says they shouted out to him from a distance and said "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*". They recognized who Jesus was, they knew his name, and they had heard about him.

They believed he had the power to heal leprosy. He had healed other lepers, even in the Gospel of Luke.

But even more than that, they recognized that he is the *Master* Jesus. This is the only time in the Word of God that anyone other than the disciples addressed Jesus, as *Master*.

Others would call him *teacher*. The word *master* is a word that means *Commander-In-Charge*.

They recognize that Jesus was not just a man. He wasn't just a teacher. He wasn't just a rabbi. He wasn't just a leader. *He was the Son of God with all of God's authority.*

And so they called out to him and said *Jesus, Master*.

II. SECONDLY THEY REQUEST REQUEST MERCY.

Notice what they said in **verse 13**. *Jesus master, have mercy on us*, literally in the original language of Scripture, they said *Jesus master, mercy us*. "Jesus, don't just *feel* mercy for us, Jesus, *mercy us*, show us some mercy." No doubt they were hoping he would heal them.

You see, when you recognize who Jesus is then you also recognize that you can ask him anything, and he has the power to do it.

Since Queen Elizabeth died back 2022, I've heard a number of stories about things she did and things she said. One I heard recently, I really like. It was told to a reporter by Richard Griffin, her chief bodyguard (protection officer).

Richard was with Queen Elizabeth and they were walking around the grounds of Balmoral Castle in Scotland. It was something they often did, just the two of them walking together - her and her bodyguard. And he said they unexpectedly saw two American hikers that we're also walking on the grounds. And Queen Elizabeth did what she would usually do when she saw people, she said hello to them - and it was obvious from the start that these two hikers did not know who she was.

And so one of them just starts talking to her about the things they've been doing while they've been in Great Britain and places they've seen.

And one of them asks her, "*So you live around here?*" And she said, "*Well, no, I actually live in London. But I have a holiday home just over the hill there.*" She didn't tell them she was the queen.

And then the hiker said, "*How long have you been coming here?*" She said, "*Well, I've been coming here for about 80 years on a regular basis.*"

Then He said, "*Well, you **have you ever met Queen Elizabeth?***" And she said "*No, I've never met her. But Richard here has met her many times.*"

And so then the hiker looks at Richard the bodyguard and says "*You've met the queen? What is the queen like?*" And Richard, her protection officer said, "*Well, she's cantankerous sometimes. But she has a really lovely sense of humor.*"

The hikers were so impressed that he knew the queen that they came and stood next to Richard and a hiker hands his camera to the Queen Elizabeth and says, "*Would you please take a picture of us, because I'd love to have a picture with someone who's met Queen Elizabeth?*"

And so the queen takes their picture! And then she said, "*Would you like to have your picture made with me?*" And they said, "*I guess so, why not?*" And then Richard took the camera and took a photo of them with the queen.

And then they walked off. And after they were gone, the

Queen looked at Richard her bodyguard and said "I would love to be a fly on the wall when they get back home to America and they show their friends those pictures. I hope someone will recognize who I am."

I'll tell you something. Today Luke is telling us who Jesus is.

- Jesus is the Son of God with all of the power of God in Him who can transform your life.
- Jesus alone has the power to forgive you of your sins, to save you and give you eternal life.
- Jesus alone has the power to meet you right where you are today.

And some of you need to do the same thing these lepers did - just cry out to Jesus and say, *Jesus, master, have mercy on me.*

- He has the power to touch your marriage with his mercy and to make things right again.
- He has the power to touch your family with his mercy and put together all the broken pieces that you can't figure out how to put back in place.
- He has the power to touch a broken heart and give you renewed hope.
- He has the power to touch your body with his mercy and make you well.
- AND He alone has the power to redeem you from your sin give you eternal life.

These lepers who saw Jesus, they didn't have much going for them. They had this terrible disease that separated them from everything and everyone that they loved. BUT, they had **two things** going for them. They recognized who He was.

And so they **asked for mercy.**

And when you call on him and when you receive his mercy in your life, you really do have something to be deeply thankful for.

And then thirdly, as we look at this text...

III. WE SEE THE 10 LEPERS RECEIVING A BLESSING.

Looking verse 14 of the text. The Bible says *when Jesus saw them, he said to them, go and show yourselves to the priests.*

- He didn't touch them and heal them on the spot. Sometimes he touched sick people and healed them like that, but that's not what he did here.
- He didn't speak a word of healing and say, *be healed of your leprosy.* Sometimes he did that. That's not what he did here.

Instead, Jesus simply gave them a command. *Go and*

show yourselves to the priests.

The background is that if you had leprosy and you felt that your leprosy had gone, you couldn't just decide that you were no longer contagious. Leviticus 4 said you had to go to the temple in Jerusalem and go to the priest and the priest would examine you and check out the places where you had had leprosy, and if he said that you were clean and officially declared you cleansed of your leprosy, then, and only then were you clean.

And so Jesus said to them, *while they still had the leperous sores and disfigurements in place Go and show yourselves to the priests.*

And look at what the Bible says in **verse 14.** *And as they went they were cleansed.* They began walking from where they were toward Jerusalem, and we don't know how far they got, probably not too, too far based on the rest of the story, but *then* the miracle came.

Now their going was an act of faith and obedience. Remember that. It's very important, but there is also an important "twist" about that later too.

It was an act of faith and obedience to God. Being sick it could have been painful to take that journey. It must have seemed nonsensical to them to think about going to the priest. After all, they still had the sores all over their bodies. It must have seemed like something irrational to do. And yet by faith and obedience to the son of God, they believed and acted, and as the Bible says *as they went they were cleansed.*

[FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TRIGGERS GOD'S ACTIONS]

May I remind you of something? God's blessings come into our lives at the point of faith and obedience to the Son of God too. Even when it doesn't make sense, even when you're still in your pain, even when you don't know what's going to happen next, when you obey him, he will work in your life to bless you as he sees fit. And so the Bible says they begin to make their way. *And as they went they were cleansed.*

LEPROSY POINTS TO SOMETHING DEEPER

Now, these ten men had this literal physical disease called leprosy. But it's also true in the Word of God that leprosy is used as a symbol for sin¹. It's a symbol for *spiritual uncleanness.*

We're unclean because of our sin. And the Bible says *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* That means every person here has a *spiritual* leprosy.

- You look at someone and he seems like a great athlete. God looks at them and says *he's got leprosy.*
- You look at someone, say she's a brilliant lawyer and God looks and says *she's got leprosy.*

¹ The words for healing diseases as used in Scripture are: therapeúō; iáomai & sózō, to save, to heal, to bring to a state or position of safety. The verb used for healing leprosy is always atharízō,

to cleanse (cf. Matt. 8:2, 3; Mark 1:42; Luke 4:27; 17:14, 17).

Ex. When our Lord commissioned the Twelve, He said "heal the sick" (therapeúete): (Matt. 10:8). But is not leprosy a sickness? Jesus makes it stand separately: "cleanse the lepers" (katharízete).

- You look at someone and say they've got a great personality and they're so attractive and God looks at them and says *we all have spiritual leprosy*.

The good news is through Jesus Christ you can be cleansed. He can touch you. He can just speak a word over you. And by his grace and by his mercy that spiritual leprosy can be taken away and you can be cleansed.

And THAT is where the story goes to now.

The fourth thing I want you to see in this text.

IV. WE SEE ONE LEPER RESPONDED WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

Looking **verse 15** of the text, *then one of them, when he saw that he was healed turned back*. Stop right there. He was walking with the rest of them toward Jerusalem to show himself to the priests. *And he saw that he was healed*. Jesus healed all ten, so they *all* saw that they were healed.

That must have been an amazing moment. Your walking, looking ahead, and suddenly you feel completely different. You look at yourself, you look at the others, and all your leprosy is GONE. Completely gone!

And that's what happened to this leper. One step and he was full of leprosy, But the next step and he was totally well.

And when that happened, notice what the Bible says. He *Turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus feet, giving him thanks*.

He shouted out to Jesus *with a loud voice*. That phrase *loud voice* in **verse 15** is literally, *megas & fo-nay*. We get our word *megaphone* from it, *with a loud voice*. *This is not timid praise, this is over the top, out of your mind, steeped with gratitude praise!* He comes back, *falls down at Jesus feet, giving him thanks*.

- Ten lepers recognize Jesus. Ten Lepers requested his mercy. Ten Lepers received the blessing.
- ONE leper responded with Praise and Thanksgiving,

TWO SURPRISES

And then Luke, right at the end of **verse 16** tells us something surprising. *Now he was a Samaritan*. And Luke wants you to be surprised by that - *now HE was a Samaritan!* It's probable from this statement that most of the others were Jews.

And just like the parable of the Good Samaritan, it's the *one who seemed the most unlikely* one of all to turn to the Messiah was the one who did turn, and *he was a Samaritan!* (Maybe you're the next unlikely one?)

Then Jesus Himself expresses even greater surprise in vv. 17-18 and He puts it in the form of 3 questions:

- First question was *we're not ten cleansed?* The answer is *yes*.

- Second, *where are the 9?* Well, they're going on their way.
- 3rd question, **Verse 18** *was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?* And the answer is *No, he is the only one*.

Then look in **verse 19**. *And Jesus said to him. Rise and go your way*. and then look at this *your faith has made you well*. Literally, Jesus said. *Your faith Has saved you*. (translation notes in most versions – same word translated “saved” is used)

Every Bible scholar you can name. Every Bible scholar you can read, will tell you that when Jesus said *your faith has made you well*, he was saying, hey, *it's not just that your body has been made well*. He was saying *your soul has been made well*. *You are saved*. **Your faith has saved you**.

So that's the end of the account. And it's all pretty clear cut. **Ten lepers were healed. One leper was saved**.

And the **response** of that one leper differed from the rest – he ran back to Jesus and bowing his knee and giving thanks to the one who saved him? Gratitude welled up inside of him that he could not help but to come and express to Jesus.

See, when someone really intervenes in your life and does something for you that you can never do, or pays a debt that you could never pay - you don't feel like you “have” to give him thanks, **No, you “want” to give him thanks. It's the desire of your heart!**

Remember what I said to remember earlier? **How many acted in faith** and obedience? All ten. **How many** were not just healed, but **saved from sin?** One.

Heartbeat necessary

You may be thinking, “*Hey, what's going on? They all put faith in Jesus Christ. Aren't we saved by faith in Jesus Christ? And didn't they all put faith, trust, belief in Jesus Christ?*”

Today, through this story we are all given a chance to delve a little deeper into important Biblical theology.

It's obvious here that not all faith, even faith in Jesus, is saving faith. Why? Because being a true follower of Jesus (Christian, converted, saved) involves more than affirming/believing correct truths, it involves a renewed heart and a changed soul. We call that *Spiritual Life*.

What is one way we can determine if a person is alive. We check for a heartbeat. (stethoscope)

And in Luke's Gospel (and others) having a converted soul and having true saving faith linked to salvation, **is thoroughly connected with glorying God and possessing a genuine heartbeat of thankfulness and praise.**²

² Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary

(Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 434.

No one told him he *should* go back to Jesus, no one *made* him go back – he simply knew *he needed to and wanted to* go back and worship, praise and thank Him! (new heartbeat)

Ten lepers were healed. All experienced the beginning of faith, for all went out in faith to show themselves to the priests. But for nine there was no heartbeat of new life. Let me **illustrate** this from 3 other places in the Bible.

- a) It's just as Jesus taught in the parable of the Sower and the Seeds, the seed that fell upon the rock, were those that received Jesus' "*word with joy ... but ... only believed for a while*" (8:13). **Only one soil of 4 retained the seed of the word, which rooted itself deeply in that soil and it resulted in fruit.**

In this case *the fruit is profound praise, glory and thanks expressed back to God in Jesus Christ!*

- b) Or the nine are like those that the writer of Hebrews 6 speaks of "*who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come and have even been healed of leprosy, but in spite of all that, their hearts were cold toward God.*
- c) It's also as Jesus tells us in **Luke 13**. He says that people *will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'*²⁷ *But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me!...'*³

Please listen carefully. **Luke is (God is) warning his readers (that's us) that one can experience God's work and yes, even his healing touch. He's even saying that you can obey him and even exercise a type of faith/belief in Him, but still fall short of life-changing salvation.**

Luke's readers were urged to make certain they were identified with the one leper who received that life changing salvation!⁴

And who is he again? A Samaritan? Yes. But that's not it. The Window into His Soul, the evidence that he now received life-changing salvation, and *one of the evidences that any of US have too - **is a heart filled with thanksgiving that spills over in unashamed praise and glory to God!***

What is one way we can determine if a person is alive. We check for a heart beat.

Listen, we can't play God and judge who is a genuine believer or not. That's God's prerogative and His alone. But we can and should look deep into the *window of our own souls* and ask the question, "what do I see?"

- For example, as we did today. when you took the bread and the cup and consider the atoning love of Jesus to die in your place, - was it just a religious act you did? Or did

you remember what Jesus did to save you, do you well up inside with thanksgiving? Do you love God for what he has done for you.

- You know, one of the only things that God in Creation has woven into the warp and woof of our days on this earth is to set aside 1 day in 7 for corporate worship and praise of God. I think that shows how essential it is for us.
 - So ask yourself? Does regular praise, and worship of Jesus feel more like a duty or burden? OR, are you more like the one leper knew he HAD to return? He wanted to return. He needed to return.
 - Is worshipping Him, serving Him a duty or the only logical way to live? that you can't live without?

As I said at the beginning, the desire and will to **give thanks and praise to God is a Window into our Soul. It's one of the evidences that God has saved you and gave you his gift of eternal life.** And if there's no desire and will to do that, then you really need to ask yourself the question, "do I have eternal life?" Has Jesus Christ saved you?

Because when he saves us, our hearts overflow with Thanksgiving.

Conclusion

Let's pray.

GOSPEL

Jesus came to give us Spiritual Life, and that life is only possible because of what He did for us at the cross. At the cross he paid for our sin and he rose to give us new life. He died so we could live. We didn't deserve it, we couldn't earn it – but he did it anyway, because he loves us so much.

The only thing left to do is, like the leper, RECOGNIZE who He is, and what He did for you and to RECEIVE His gift by faith. To trust him as you're your Savior and receive Him as your Lord. If you really do that, you will then return His love with your gratitude.

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus. I know I am a Sinner. I know you are the Savior. Right now I turn from my sin and I turn to you in faith. Forgive me and make me Yours. Be my Savior and my Lord forever. Amen.

³ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 13:26–27.

⁴ Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 435.