

## **THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS; A STUDY IN THANKSGIVING**

Text: Luke 17:11-19

This is the famous story of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus. This beautiful story reminds us “...*there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few*” (1 Samuel 14:6b). It is as easy for the Lord to heal ten, twenty or one hundred people as it is for Him to heal one. The shocking component of this story is the lack of gratitude of the nine. The precious part of the story is the overwhelming thankfulness expressed by this one Samaritan who could not praise the Lord Jesus enough for the healing.

It is only fitting on this Sunday before Thanksgiving that we pause and contemplate why we should give thanks.

### **1. THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED**

Luke 17:11, 12. It was fast approaching the end of Jesus’ mission on earth. This may have been the last time for these lepers to have the dying dream of their life fulfilled, i.e., to be healed and live what many of us would call a “normal life.” Because of their leprosy they could not approach the crowds too closely, therefore they had to lift up their voices if they were to be healed and their cry was, “...*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*” (Luke 17:13b).

### **2. THE OPPORTUNITY TAKEN**

Luke 17: 13. They knew enough about Jesus to know that He cared and that He cared for all, no matter what their circumstance in life. Psalm 103:2-5 reminds us to: “*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.*”

### **3. THE PROTOCOL OBEYED**

Luke 17:14. Our Lord was fulfilling the law in ordering the lepers to go to the priests as outlined in Leviticus 13 and 14. Leviticus 14:1 and 2 says, *"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest."* Jesus said, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"* (Matthew 5:17).

This was an amazing way of healing. The Bible declares, "...they were cleansed." The Greek word for cleansed here is: "katharizo," which means to make clean, purge, purify. This is where we get our word "catharsis." There is no magnificent drama here. We see in the simple act of obedience to Jesus' command, they are awarded healing. We see this truth illustrated in Matthew 9:28 and 29, *"And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."*

### **4. THE PRAISE LAVISHED**

Luke 17:15,16. One man of the ten could proceed no further. He had to stop, turn around and, I believe, with his formerly halting crippled limbs, run back to Jesus. In his formerly raspy voice, (because advanced leprosy affects even the vocal chords) he now raises his voice with great volume glorifying God. He is actually declaring Jesus' Deity before the multitude. When he arrives at the place where Jesus is standing, he drops to the feet of our Lord on his formerly splotched, swollen face that perhaps had even been missing some features and now he presses his handsome, whole face to the earth before Jesus. The thankful man presses his face into the dirt, the very dirt from which the original man was made. The dirt that holds our DNA. *"The first man is of the earth, earthy..."* (I Corinthians 15:47a). Genesis 3:19 says, *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*

The Bible points out that this lone man of thanksgiving was a Samaritan. Jesus talking with a Samaritan is what surprised the woman in John 4:9, *"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with*

the Samaritans.” Even today Jesus will befriend sinners who want help from Him; that’s why He was called a friend of sinners in Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:34.

This man did not just thank the Lord, he lavished and heaped praise on Jesus. In Mark 14:3b it reads, “...there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.” Abandoned praise to God releases great power.

## **5. THE INGRATITUDE DISPLAYED**

Luke 17: 17,18. “And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17). It is unthinkable when we consider the debilitating physical toll that leprosy takes on a person that all ten would not return with the same jubilant praise that this one man gives. Jesus calls this one thankful man “a stranger,” as all Jews of that day considered the Samaritans. But we see the Lord receiving this man in full fellowship. If all of us knew just how good God really is to us, we would all praise Him better. The other nine were seemingly so preoccupied with their healing, they were forgetting the Healer!

## **6. THE GREATER CLEANSING**

Luke 17:19. “And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.” The wording translated into English “made whole” is from the Greek word, “Sozo,” which means, “to save.” This thankful man wanted something much deeper than physical healing; he wanted to be saved. And indeed he did get saved! He received this gift of eternal life, for the Lord declared his faith had made him whole.

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Harry Ironsides said, “We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.” Another hero of the faith, Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “There should be a parallel between our supplications and our thanksgivings. We ought not to leap in prayer, and limp in praise.”

This one thankful man of our story reminds us of the many things we should be thankful for:

**A. Forgiveness of sins.** Psalm 103:12: *"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."*

**B. Eternal salvation that shall never be revoked.** John 6:37: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

**C. A Christian home.** Proverbs 18:22: *"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD."* Psalm 127:3: *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."*

**D. Our Country.** Psalm 33:12: *"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."* Let us never forget, although America has departed severely from her moorings, our foundation and founding was right. As in the parable of Jesus, we were not built on sand, but on the Rock. *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock"* (Matthew 7:24).

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, decorative initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.