

“Cultivate Thanksgiving”

In Luke 17:11-17, we receive call to cultivate thanksgiving. The passage begins with the location. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus passes between Samaria and Galilee. He meets ten lepers. We aren't told their nationality at this point. Instead, we're told about their skin condition. Leprosy had physical, social, and spiritual ramifications, which is why they all stood at a distance. Socially, anyone with leprosy was ostracized, placed outside the city until he or she was healed. This protected others in the city from becoming ill. Spiritually, this distance kept them from the temple.

Seeing Jesus, they cry out for mercy. Jesus tells them all to go and show themselves to the priest. As they turned to the priest, they were all cleansed. So, all of the lepers lifted their voice and cried out to Jesus. All the lepers received mercy.

Yet, only one “saw that he was healed.” He responds in three ways. He praises God, he falls at Jesus's feet, and he thanks Jesus. The first response is expected. Witnesses of God's mighty acts return to praise God.

But his other two responses are unexpected. Falling at the feet of someone acknowledges authority. Thanking Jesus is also unexpected. Remember, Jesus tells them to go to the temple. But rather than going to the temple, the leper travels to Jesus. By falling at his feet and giving thanks to Jesus, the leper shows us a divine truth. Jesus is the true temple. And God's mercy comes through Jesus.

But the one who turned back to fall at the feet of Jesus isn't an ordinary, Jewish leper. At the end of verse 16, Luke drops the bombshell: “Now he was a Samaritan.” The Samaritan comes from the wrong ancestry and lineage. He isn't a covenant member. He is under the

weight of the divine curse. Yet, a Samaritan correctly identifies Jesus's role in the divine plan as the temple of mercy, and he falls at his feet and gives thanks.

Through a Samaritan, Jesus shows us the importance of submitting to Christ and giving thanks to Jesus, for Jesus is the one through whom we receive mercy, he is made whole. Jesus tells him, "Your faith has made you whole."

Thanksgiving is to become the settled and normal habit of our souls. It is thanksgiving that separates us from those whose lives are spent in complaining and forgetting. You must practice it daily, watching your tongue, and putting before you the blessings of God. You must practice it weekly, gathering for worship with God's people, centered on God's saving works in Jesus Christ, with the posture of humility and adoration.

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