Jesus Heals Ten Lepers
Luke 17:11-19 NKJV

Tonight as we prepare our minds and hearts to celebrate Thanksgiving, I would like for you please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke, chapter seventeen. And let's read verses 11-19.

Luke 17:11-19 (NKJV)

11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.
12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.
13 And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”
14 So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.
15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, 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 So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?
18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”
19 And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”
The late Curtis Hudson once said,

“Gratitude is not a part of our nature. Anything you have to be
taught to do is not part of your nature; and anything you do
without being taught is a part of your nature.”

For example, It is a duck's nature to swim. If you pick up a duck and
throw him in a pond, he swims automatically. That's his nature.
But if you pick up a cat and throw him into a pond, he will fight and
kick, and possibly even drown, because it's not his nature to swim.

You and I are NOT thankful by nature. In fact, it is our human nature
to be ungrateful. If you stop and think about it, no child was ever born
with gratitude in his or her heart. Most children come into this world
with their fists clenched as if to say, “mine, mine, mine.”

Everyone of us had to be taught to say “thank you” didn't we?

Illustration: I remember as a young boy there was a man in the
Church where my was ministering in Virginia by the name of Cecil
Hubbard. Every Sunday Mr. Hubbard would give us kids a stick of
Wrigley's Spearmint or Juicy Fruit gum.

And my mom would always say, “What do you tell Mr. Hubbard?”

And we would answer, “Thank you Mr. Cecil.”

In time we started saying “thank you” to Mr. Cecil without being prompted.
The point is, we had to be TAUGHT to say “thank you.”
In a spiritual sense, you and I had to be taught to express our gratitude to GOD. If you and I were never taught where our blessings come from, we wouldn't know who to thank would we?

But chances are when we were all very young, our parents, and our Sunday School teachers, and our ministers taught us that all of our blessings come from GOD, and that we owe GOD a debt of gratitude for all His blessings.

In our scripture text this evening we meet a group of men who soon forgot where their blessings came from.

Let's take a closer look at this account.

******************************

First of all notice......

I. The CONDITION (vs. 11,12)

11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.
12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

1. Dr. Alan Gillen says, “Disease is a constant reminder of how much things have changed since GOD pronounced a curse on the earth. At first, “everything was good,” but Adam's sin brought death and decay into the world.”
2. One of the worst diseases to ever befall man is the disease called “leprosy.” The term “leper” or “leprosy” occurs 68 times in the Bible; 55 times in the Old Testament, and 13 times in the New Testament.

In Biblical times the term “leprosy” was used to describe a wide variety of skin diseases, including eczema, psoriasis, ringworm, and even common skin rashes.

Illustration: Several weeks ago I got into some “poison ivy” or “poison oak” and developed such a bad rash on my arms, back, and legs that I had to take prednisone for ten days. By biblical definition, “I had a form of leprosy for nearly two weeks.”

3. But by far, the worst form of leprosy in Biblical times was what we know today as Hansen's disease. This severest form of leprosy is still a major health problem in many parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

4. The symptoms of the disease start in the skin then spread to other parts of the body such as the hands, the feet, the face, and the earlobes. People who suffer with leprosy experience gross disfigurement of skin and bones, and the twisting of limbs, and the curling of the fingers to form the characteristic “claw hand.”
5. While to the outward observer leprosy appears to inflict severe pain upon the afflicted, the exact opposite is true. The disease deadens the nerve endings to the point a leper can put his hand in a fire or pick up a pot of boiling water without feeling anything.

Those who have carefully studied leprosy patients for years report it is very common to find lepers whose fingers and toes have been eaten off by rats, and they never even felt it.

6. While leprosy itself doesn't actually kill its victims, the disease assures that the afflicted will die a slow, horrible death by degrees for the rest of his or her natural life.

7. In Biblical times, if one had leprosy they were considered cursed by GOD for sin in their life. This is why lepers were banished from society and had to live in colonies with others who suffered from the disease.

8. As Jesus passes through the regions of Galilee and Samaria on His way to Jerusalem, He is met by a colony of ten lepers. Nine of the men are Jews, one of the men is a Samaritan, all ten are lepers and social outcasts.
9. Ken Gire sums up the life of these men this way:

“There they live. Without love. Without hope. Without the simple joys and dignities of life.
(ed. This was the pitiful existence of those called “lepers.”)

Secondly I would have you to notice......

II. The CRY (v. 13)

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

1. Among all the other effects leprosy had on the physical body, it also attacked the vocal chords; so when Luke says, “And they lifted up their voices,” when should not imagine them speaking in loud, clear voices, but rather in raspy, eeries voices.

2. Notice how the men addressed Jesus. They said, “Jesus, Master.” They not only knew Jesus by name, they also acknowledged His authority, they called Him “Master.”

It is interesting to note that other than His own disciples, this is the only time anyone else referred to Jesus as “Master.”
3. By calling Jesus “Master” the lepers were submitting to Jesus' divine authority.

4. Notice again they cried, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Mercy, like grace is a gift of God's undeserved favor. GRACE is getting what we do NOT deserve. MERCY is NOT getting what we DO deserve.

By crying out for “mercy” these lepers were acknowledging that they didn't deserve to be healed. No doubt they believed about themselves what everyone else believed and that is that they were “cursed by God” and deserved to have leprosy.

They weren't thinking, “Yes, we're lepers, but we're good, decent lepers.” They were thinking, “We are filthy, sinful, unclean lepers who don't deserve anything, but JESUS, MASTER, have mercy on us.”
Thirdly, I would have you to notice.....

III. The **COMMAND** (v.14a)

14a So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.”

1. Earlier in Luke's gospel, in chapter 5, Jesus encountered a leper. And in that miracle, Luke tells us Jesus reached out His hand and touched the leper and the man was immediately healed.

2. That's what we might expect Jesus to do here with regards to these ten lepers.......to “reach out and touch them and heal them.” But that isn't what Jesus did. Instead, Jesus commanded the ten to go show themselves to the priest.

3. You remember earlier I told you that the term “leprosy” covered a wide-range of skin conditions in biblical times. Often less severe forms of “leprosy” such as various types of skin rashes would clear up in a matter of days or a few weeks. And when the person who suffered from the skin affliction though the rash was gone, Mosaic Law required that they go show themselves to the priest for inspection if the priest pronounced them clean they were then permitted to return to society and go back to their home.
4. Now it is very obvious to Jesus that these men are still covered with their leprosy. There is absolutely no indication their condition has improved or that it will ever improve. So why did He command them to “go show themselves to the priest?”

Jesus was “testing their faith.” He was commanding them to “go show themselves to the priests before there was any evidence of healing.”

What Jesus commanded them to do defied all logic and reasoning. His command demanded complete faith on their part.

Next I would have you to notice......

IV. The CURE (v.14b)

v. 14 b And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

1. You know any time we read this account or hear a sermon preached on this miracle we tend to focus all our attention on the calloused ingratitude of nine of these ten lepers once they were cleansed.
2. But the fact of the matter is that ALL TEN of these men did a lot of RIGHT things!

- All ten came to the RIGHT PERSON FOR HEALING...... JESUS.

- All ten made THE RIGHT REQUEST.....”Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

- And all ten RIGHTLY OBEYED what Jesus commanded them to do, they went to show themselves to the priest.

3. There is no evidence that they hesitated....or delayed going......or argued among themselves about whether they should go. Luke simply says, “And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.”

4. All these lepers had to do to receive healing was to simply take Jesus at His word. They only needed to “trust and obey.”

The implication of the text is that as they were going to see the priest they were healed instantly. Every spot, every blemish, every disfigurement was gone “just like that.” (snap of fingers)
But then we come to the part of this account we wish could have been written differently.

Notice......

V. The **CALLOUSED** Response (vs. 15-19)

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, 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 So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?
18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”
19 And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

1. Before we look at the **calloused response of the nine**, let me draw your attention to the **one leper’s considerate response**.

   Remember earlier I told you nine of lepers were Jews and one was a Samaritan. Guess which one came back to thank Jesus.......THE SAMARITAN.

   Charles Spurgeon said, “Ten men prayed for a miracle, but only one praised the LORD for his miracle.”
2. The fact that this man was a Samaritan makes his expression of gratitude all the more meaningful. You see, he wasn't just a social outcast because of his leprosy, he was also a spiritual outcast because he wasn't a full-blooded Jew.

Samaritans were “half-breeds.” Therefore they were hated and despised by the Jews. They were looked down upon as inferior and hopelessly irredeemable.

3. And yet it was this Samaritan who came back to humbly bow before Jesus to express his deepest gratitude for all that Jesus had done for him. Here is a portrait of the true spirit of Thanksgiving. True thanksgiving is an attitude of genuine humility and heartfelt gratitude!

4. Now contrast that Samaritan's considerate response with the calloused response of the other nine, remember they were JEWS. They represented God's chosen people.

Jesus asked the Samaritan, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to GOD except this foreigner?”

5. Do you hear the hurt in Jesus' voice? I granted healing to all ten of you, where are the other nine?
6. Did the other nine simply “forget” to say thank you? Were they really that calloused and ungrateful?

Perhaps the real reason they didn't come back is because they were so focused on getting on with their lives that they simply didn't come back to thank the One who gave their life back to them. After they showed themselves to the priest and were declared cleansed, these nine men rushed back home to their families.

**********************************************************************************************

CONCLUSION

What can we learn from this account we have looked at this evening?

For one thing, we all were once lepers in a spiritual sense. We were unclean. We were not worthy to even come into the presence of Jesus. We were entirely dependent upon His grace and mercy to cleanse us and to make us whole.

Another valuable lesson we must learn is that **THANKSGIVING IS A CHOICE!** Like the Samaritan, you and I have a choice each day to “take the time” to thank Jesus for cleansing us, and making us whole, and giving us a brand new life. Or, like the other nine, we can simply choose to be so busy with living life that we don't pause to thank the One who makes life and eternal life possible.

You see, when all is said and done, **THANKSGIVING is either a priority to you or it isn't. Let's make THANKSGIVING A PRIORITY!**