

Daily Discipleship

Luke 17:11-19

Discipleship: *A New Gratitude*

Focus Question: *What fills your heart with gratitude today?*

word of life

“Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.” Luke 17:15 (NRSV)

Read Luke 17:11-19

As Jesus traveled towards Jerusalem between Samaria and Galilee, a group of ten lepers approached him. Due to their disease, they were forbidden to come near people, so they kept their distance.

1. *What would it have been like to be a leper in the first century?*
2. *What would it be like to not have contact with family and friends?*

It is not clear if the lepers had been waiting for Jesus to come to their village entrance or if the visit was a surprise. Either way, their prayer was a simple one, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (Luke 17:13 NRSV) Most certainly it caught the attention of Jesus.

3. *How might the lepers hoped Jesus would extend mercy to them?*
4. *Define and describe mercy.*

Jesus saw the lepers but did not immediately heal them. Instead, he instructed them to go and show themselves to their priest. Did the lepers rush to the priest convinced that they were healed and were eager to receive the blessing? Did they think Jesus was brushing them off? Were they filled with hope at the possibility of being healed? Were they simply obedient?

5. *How might the lepers react to the words of Jesus?*

It is unclear if Jesus healed them because of the amount of faith of the lepers or because of his own compassion for them. Also, there is no way to know the minutes, hours, or days which passed before the lepers discover their own healing. Perhaps the lepers traveled some distance to the priest before the healing of their skin transformed their bodies.

One thing is clear – only one leper noticed his own healing and returned to give thanks. He turned back and retraced his steps in order to personally thank the giver of the gift. This was not a quiet, meek word of thanks. Instead, he praised God with a loud voice. He was healed! He can rejoin loved ones in life. He was given a new chance at living. He threw himself on the ground at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.

6. *If you had been one of these lepers, how would you have responded to the healing?*
7. *What happened to the nine who did not return?*
8. *Why do you think the other lepers did not return to thank Jesus?*

For those in the first century, it would have been shocking to realize the grateful man was a Samaritan, the least likely to do the right and proper thing. Yet, Jesus blessed him with a second blessing. “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.” (Luke 17:19 NRSV) Earlier the leper had been cured of a physical ailment, but in his second interaction with the leper Jesus made him whole.

9. *How does Jesus bless the leper in their second interaction?*
10. *What is the difference between being cured and being made whole?*

word among us

Imagine a scene on a beach where a lifeguard has just risked his or her life in order to save a child who wandered off. The child's mother is frantic until the child is safely placed in her hands. The mother tightly holds her child and turns to the lifeguard and asks, "But where is my child's jacket?"

What? Where is the gratitude? The child's life has been saved.

1. *What would you say to the mother?*
2. *Could you imagine this scene ever happening or is too absurd? Why or why not?*

Gratitude – that is the theme of the story of the ten lepers! Jesus showed mercy to them by healing them. No longer did they need to live in isolation, but Jesus gave them back their life.

3. *Pause to consider what you are grateful for today. How do you show God your gratitude?*

In the story, the lepers cried to Jesus for mercy, but Jesus responded by sending them to the priest. Their healing was not instantaneous. Consequently, it might have appeared at first to the lepers that their prayers went unanswered.

4. *What can we learn from this delayed answer to prayer?*
5. *Do some prayers take longer to be answered? How so?*
6. *How do you understand unanswered prayer?*

The story of the lepers is also about negligence. Nine of the ten did not give thanks to God for their healing. Perhaps the lepers raced to their loved ones first. Perhaps, the priest delayed the other nine. Perhaps there might be other explanations for the behavior of the other nine. Perhaps. Even if we place the best construction on their behavior, the story ends without them coming back to Jesus to acknowledge him as the giver of the gift.

7. *Where do you find yourself in the story?*
8. *What helps you to remember to give thanks to God?*

All ten were made clean and were cured of the leprosy, but Jesus extended a second blessing to the only leper who returned to give thanks. The leper was made well. It does not matter that he was a Samaritan. More importantly, he remembered who healed him and responded with gratitude, worship, and praise.

9. *Is it possible these lepers raced to their loved ones first?*
10. *How else might they have shown their gratitude?*
11. *How have you been made well by Jesus?*
12. *If you lived this week filled with gratitude, what would each day look like?*

Prayer

Giver of all gifts, thank you for your daily gifts to me. Take the wounds of my life and heal me. Make me well. Thank you. Amen

Dig Deeper

Psalm 111

last word

Take time each day
to thank God
for your blessings.



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