

Luke 17:11-19, "The Grateful are Rewarded"

- ✓ Luke records 5 specific miracles that Jesus performs from the time He leaves Galilee in chapter 9 until He arrives in Jerusalem in chapter 19, this is the fourth of those miracles. Leprosy is very nasty and deadly disease and one of the oldest diseases as well, today known as Hansen's disease, it is primarily acts and anesthetic, numbing nerves in hands, feet, noses, eyes, ears, etc. People with this disease cannot feel heat, cold, fractures, sprains, injuries of any kind. They leave injuries untended, and the result is the eventual loss of fingers and toes or even feet and hands. The disease can be transmitted through touch, including the clothing of the infected, it can also be transmitted through the air by breathing in the airborne bacteria. Highly contagious and no cure in times past, so they were segregated into their own communities in remote areas away from friends and family the rest of their lives. They heard that Jesus heals, but can you imagine that they were not expecting Him to say, "go show yourselves to the priests," Luke 17:14, the priests had been there all along and were no help. They obey and are healed, their skin clears up, toes and fingers reappear, it is the best day of their lives. But then all the good these men experienced was eclipsed by the majority's lack of gratitude in Luke 17:17-19. These guys really miss out, what good is the healing if you never know the Healer, a miracle without a relationship with the Miracle Worker, being rescued but never really knowing the Savior.

1) Why didn't the 9 others return? It is pure speculation with regards to them, but I bet we can come up with some reasons that might have kept us from finding Jesus in the midst of our blessings.

- 1) Maybe they didn't go back because it just wasn't convenient. It's never really convenient to be grateful, to have to right a card or find the person, in their case, Jesus could have been miles away on foot. The writer of Hebrews calls praise a sacrifice, which means it will cost us something. It will cost you to get up and come to church and pay attention and seek after God at the time His church assembles. It takes effort to spend time with Him, to chisel out a part of your day to read His word and pray, to give Him thanks. Gratitude will never be convenient, but it takes our inconvenience to know the Savior.
 - 2) Maybe, they didn't go back because they were too proud. It is interesting that they have no problems finding Jesus and crying out to Him in their affliction but can't speak to Him in their healing. Gratitude is humbling "I needed something, and you provided it", "I was in a bad way, and you rescued me." Gratitude is a reminder of our neediness, that we are not self-sufficient. But he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but favors the humble." James 4:6. Healing and help are rather small when compared to grace. We need to be thankful for everything because we need humility in everything.
 - 3) Maybe they didn't go back because they thought there was no use in telling Him since He knows everything anyway. God does know whether or not we are grateful, but we need to be careful not to take Him for granted. Do you like to be taken for granted? God doesn't need our praise or thanksgiving, God needs nothing, but we need it, and the world needs it. This world is a messed-up place, people are living on the grace of God everywhere. He could throw the world into Hell today and be absolutely right in doing so; but they aren't thanking Him. We are supposed to be the difference in a nasty, dark world, and when we thank God, which is one life and voice aimed in the right direction. We gripe and complain about how bad the world is, but are we doing what we can to make it better? Thanksgiving is one face turned upward saying "all that's good is because of Him."
 - 4) Maybe they didn't go back because they thought of other things that they weren't grateful for. Maybe they thought of their sorry friends who hadn't visited them in several years or their children who'd gotten busy with life and hadn't dropped by. Maybe it was their rabbi who had washed out on them when they needed him the most. Bitterness and thanksgiving cannot coexist in a person; this underscores the need for forgiving people. Show me a bitter person and I'll show you and ungrateful person, their bitterness in one thing will keep them from being thankful for so many other things.
 - 5) Maybe they didn't go back because they felt sorry for themselves. Maybe they had been lepers for a long time, lost a lot of time with friends and family. "Yeah, He healed me, but why didn't he do it 15 years ago?" We count our blessings on our fingers, but we count our complaints with a calculator. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "It is only with gratitude that life becomes truly right."
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