

Where Are the Nine?  
Luke 17:17

ETS: Jesus asked why no one gave glory to God except the outsider

ESS: We miss a great blessing when we begin to take God for granted.

OSS: I want people to be thankful and not take God for granted

PQ: What is your “GQ” – Gratitude Quotient?

UW: Reasons

**ME**

Have you ever done something for someone and they didn't seem to appreciate it?

- Taught to **hold the door** for the ladies
  - Get **frustrated** when they walk through and don't say “Thank you”
- Let someone who is **caught in traffic** get into your lane...but they don't respond with a “Thank you” wave

Nice to get that “thank you” wave or **flashing lights** or the **truckers flash** their lights

- Thank you cards, emails or verbal is nice

When someone doesn't say "Thank you" how do you feel?

- Angry?
- Unappreciated?

When someone doesn't say "Thank you" what does it cause you to want to do?

- Not do anything again for that person?

Not saying "thank you" after children's choir performance at FRBC

**Lesson:** Always say "Thank You" even if...

- That is their **job** or **ministry**
  - b/c no one likes to be **taken for granted**
    - *Everyone likes to be appreciated*

Why do some people never seem to say "Thank You"?

- Take you or your act for granted
  - In **marriage**, this is really easy to do!!
    - Take our spouses for granted...**stop saying "Thank you"**
      - **Rationalize:** "That's what they are supposed to be doing"
    - Take our **children** for granted
      - **Rationalize:** "That's what they are supposed to be doing"

- **Reality:** Spouses and children like to be told “Thank you”
  - WHY? It lets them know they are **appreciated**
  - WHY? It is a **motivator** to do more or to keep doing.....

If saying “Thank you” is a big deal for us, is it a big deal for God?

## GOD

**Luke 17:11–12** (HCSB) “While traveling to Jerusalem, He passed between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As He entered a village, 10 men with serious skin diseases met Him. They stood at a distance

- The “serious skin disease” was leprosy

To have leprosy was to be **cursed**.

- The **disease** “begins with **specks** on the **eyelids** and on the palms, gradually spreading over the body, **bleaching** the hair white wherever they appear, **crusting** the affected parts with **white scales**, and causing terrible sores and swellings.
  - From the skin the disease **eats inward** to the bones, rotting the whole body piecemeal.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Easton, M. 1996, c1897. *Easton's Bible dictionary*. Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

- You become a **grotesque** looking individual.

“In Christ’s day a leper could *not* live in a **walled town**, though he might in an **open** village.

- Wherever he was he was required to
  - Have his **outer garment rent** as a sign of deep grief,
  - To go **bareheaded**, and to **cover his beard** with his **mantle**, as if in lamentation at his own virtual death.
  - He had further to **warn passers-by** to keep away from him, by calling out, ‘**Unclean! unclean!**’
    - He could not **speak** to any one,
    - He could not **receive or return a salutation**, since in the East this involves an **embrace**.”<sup>2</sup>

Talk about ISOLATION!

- Isolation from **friends, family** and **society**

It gets worse!

- In the **Old Testament** Hebrews referred to **Leprosy** as a “**smiting**” or “**stroke**” because

---

<sup>2</sup>Easton, M. 1996, c1897. *Easton's Bible dictionary*. Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

they considered it to be a **providential affliction** from God.

- Considered to be “**isolated**” from God!!

V. 12: **As He entered a village, 10 men with serious skin diseases met Him. They stood at a distance**

- “**Stood at a distance**” = due to their illness

**Luke 17:13** (HCSB) “**and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”**”

- **The word translated “master” is the same one Peter used (Luke 5:5) and means “chief commander.”**
  - They knew that Jesus was **totally in command** of even disease and death, and they trusted Him to help them.<sup>3</sup>

**Why did they ask for “mercy”?**

- Based on the **beliefs** of the day, they felt that they **deserved** the illness
  - After all, that is what the theologians would have told them!
- They believed Jesus had the power to heal them, *but they did not take it for granted that He would heal them!*

---

<sup>3</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 17:11). Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

Jesus has to make a choice!

- Ignore them and convey the idea that “They deserved it” OR heal them!

**Luke 17:14** (HCSB) “When He saw them, He told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

- One assignment: “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” ...NOT Simple!
  - **Require an ACT of FAITH!**
    - Require: Stepping out of the comfort zone
      - No guarantee of healing, just “Go and show yourself”

When you are desperate, you will do whatever is recommended!

“And while they were going, they were healed.”

- **Acted in faith and they were healed!**

Apparently, as they are going to see the priest, the one leper notices that they have been healed.

- It would seem that the other nine were healed at the same time.
  - No doubt, he states “Look guys, the leprosy is gone; We are healed!”

But it is at this point the group once **BOUND** by a common illness is now **SEPARATED** by a common healing.

**Luke 17:15-16** “But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God. <sup>16</sup> He fell facedown at His feet, thanking Him. And he was a Samaritan.”

- Notice, what he was doing is not something that was going to go unnoticed.
  - He had to **cross the distance** to get to Jesus!
  - He **shouted out loud** and gave God glory
  - He went to Jesus and “**Fell facedown**” – Everyone saw and heard this!

Luke- who was a detailed man- makes a very detailed observation: “**And he was a Samaritan.**”

- Since they were between Galilee and Samaria, it is **possible** that the other 9 were Jews
  - But **tragedy** and **illness** have a way of crossing over barriers

**Luke 17:17** (HCSB) “Then Jesus said, “**Were not 10 cleansed? Where are the nine?**”

- The other nine *could not* help but hearing this one leper.

- Why didn't the other nine turn back and praise God?
  - They had been healed!
  - They had received **mercy**-which is what they wanted!

**Luke 17:18** (HCSB) “**Didn't any return to give glory to God except this foreigner?**”

- I believe Jesus' **feelings** were **hurt!**
  - He could have ignored them, but He **choose** to heal them
  - *Assuming the other 9 were Jews*, it hurt that His own people were not being appreciative!

Jesus had just freed them from

- **Physical** pain
- **Social ostracism**

Jesus had just given them...

- Their **lives** back
- Their **families** back
- Their **dignity** back

They could now...

- **See** their families
- **Hug** their children and spouses
- **Work** and **support** their families again

- **Attend** parties and events
- **Live** in peace
- Have **properly functioning bodies**

Jesus had given them so much, but only one-**the foreigner**-was grateful!

## **UNGRATEFULFULNESS HURTS**

### **Ungratefulness Hurts God's Heart**

- Jesus was hurt by the 9 who didn't say "Thank you"

### **Reasons why we can be ungrateful... Feel We Deserve Mercy**

I think those 9 Jewish men felt that somehow God **owed** it to them to heal them.

- **After all, they were Jews!**
  - I think there was a sense that they felt they *deserved* to be healed!
    - Felt they never *deserved* to get the illness in the first place.

**Thanksgiving** is a time for us as Americans to be **Thankful**.

- Current Feeling: We "**Deserve**" a good, easy life.

- Deserve **Health Insurance**
- Deserve to have a **Good Paying Job**
- Deserve to have a **house**

Of all people, we as Christians living in America should be grateful.

- We should be **grateful** for **living** in a **free country**
- We should be **grateful** for having a **roof** over our heads
- We should be **grateful** for **air conditioning, heat, hot water.**
- We should be **grateful** for an **abundance** of **food.**
- We should be **grateful** for the **assistance** that we can **receive.**

There is **NOTHING** any one has done that earned us the **right** to be **born** in America!

- *You and I did not have a choice*
  - Only God, in His mercy and Grace, enabled us to be born in this country.

As Christians, we should be grateful for:

- We should be grateful for our **salvation**
- We should be grateful for a **relationship** with God

- We should be grateful for the **benefits** of salvation
- We should be grateful for the **Holy Spirit**
- We should be grateful for **God's Word**
- We should be grateful for the **body of believers** who are here, etc.

### TRUTH: The only thing we “**Deserve**” is Hell

- Our intentional and willful rebellion against God has earned us eternal separation from God.
  - **NO ONE here deserves Heaven**
- The **ONLY** reason eternal life in heaven is possible is because of **God's Mercy**-the same kind of mercy Jesus showed to the lepers!

### **Reasons why we can be ungrateful... Take Mercy for Granted**

**Vance Havner** stated: “Our biggest problem in the church today is this vast majority of **Sunday morning Christians** who claim to have known the Master's cure and who return not [at other times] to thank Him by presence, prayer, testimony and support of His church.

- In fact, the whole Christian life is one big "Thank You," the living expression of our gratitude to God for His goodness.

- But we take Him for granted and what we take for granted we never take seriously.”

When you pray how much of your prayer consists of “Thanks”?

- 10%, 20% or more?
  - Often it is like 1% and the rest is asking God for something to make our lives better on this earth!
    - When was the last time you prayed and did nothing but thank and praise God?
    - Have you ever prayed without asking God to do something?

Why do we often take God for granted?

- I would submit that we take **God for granted** because *we believe* **God owes** it to us.

Patti Greenman, relates this story: “When my niece, Toni, turned six, I excitedly gave her some gifts I had spent extra time shopping for. **Two weeks later**, when I asked if she was enjoying them, I was **disappointed** to learn she had **decided to return some of them**.

- Even after my careful selection of those gifts--intended especially for her--she **hadn't really appreciated them**.

- As I asked God to help me get over my disappointment, I remembered some of the gifts God had given me--gifts that I hadn't appreciated either and wished I could have exchanged for others.

S

## **Reasons why we can be ungrateful... Forget Mercy Has been Given**

Why did the other nine not turn back and why did they not join the one man in glorifying God in a loud voice?

- Reason; They were focused on the wrong thing; their focus was too narrow!
  - Being Jews and having been raised in a culture of **excessive man-made rules and regulations**, they felt that they needed to make it to the priest.
    - They were too focused on what they had to do, rather than what had been done!

Many years ago, as the story is told, a devout king was disturbed by the ingratitude of his royal court. He prepared a large banquet for them. When the king and his royal guests were seated, by prearrangement, a beggar shuffled into the hall, sat down at the king's table, and gorged himself with food. Without saying

a word, he then left the room. The guests were furious and asked permission to seize the tramp and tear him limb from limb for his ingratitude. The king replied, “That beggar has done only once to an earthly king what each of you does three times each day to God. You sit there at the table and eat until you are satisfied. Then you walk away without recognizing God, or expressing one word of thanks to Him.”

Could it be that the reason we do not spend time simply expressing gratitude to God is because our focus is too narrow?

- When God answers a prayer, when God miraculously provides **we focus on what has happened and what we need to do next, rather than stopping**, bending our knees and praising God!
  - Do you thank God as you throughout the day?

Why is this so important?

- **Because when we pass up the opportunity to thank God we will likely never thank Him.**
  - **Nowhere** do we read of the other nine ever coming back to Jesus to thank him.
    - Apparently, they made it to the priest and showed themselves, they were

declared ceremonially clean and they went back to their families.

## **UNGRATEFULFULNESS HURTS GRATEFULFULNESS HEALS!**

### **Gratefulness = Communion with God**

**Luke 17:16** “He fell facedown at His feet, thanking Him. And he was a Samaritan.”

Think about this. Until this time, the leper had only approached Jesus from a **distance**.

- Now, he was **close** to Jesus.
- He was falling at His **feet**.
- He could **reach out and touch** Jesus.
- He was **able to talk** to Jesus **without** “yelling out to Him” like they had before.

The bottom line is that when you make thankfulness to God a common part of your life, you are going to grow in your relationship to God.

- When you take the time to thank Jesus for what He has done and is doing for you, your relationship with Him takes on a new closeness.

That is why we are exhorted in the Scriptures to be a people who give thanks to the Lord.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:18** “in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
  - When we are Thankful “in everything” we are in the will of God!

The **healed leper** fell at Jesus feet and “gave thanks to Him.”

- WHEN is the last time you fell at Jesus’ feet and gave thanks to Him?
  - **Hebrews 13:15** “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”
    - Thankfulness and praise are interlinked!

It is amazing what happens when we will fall at the feet of Jesus and give thanks to Him.

- The leper experienced what none of the other nine experienced—a **close time with God’s Son**.
  - The other nine had only experienced God at a distance, but this leper was **experiencing God face to face**.

One of the beauties of taking time to offer thanks to God is that you end up getting blessed all over again in the process!

Just like that old hymn “Count Your Blessings”

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,  
when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
count your many blessings—name them one by  
one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath  
done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care? Does  
the cross seem heavy you are called to bear? Count  
your many blessings—ev'ry doubt will fly, and  
you will be singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and  
gold, think that Christ has promised you His wealth  
untold; count your many blessings—money cannot  
buy your reward in heaven nor your home on high.

**Chorus:** Count your blessings—name them one  
by one; count your blessings—see what God hath  
done.<sup>4</sup>

## **GRATEFULNESS HEALS!**

### **Gratefulness = Confirmation From God**

**Luke 17:19** (HCSB) “And He told him, “Get up and  
go on your way. Your faith has made you well.”

- It appears that because this man turned back in  
gratitude to Jesus that Jesus **responded by  
forgiving this man his sins and saving him.**

---

<sup>4</sup>Osbeck, K. W. 1990. *Amazing grace : 366 inspiring hymn stories for daily devotions.*  
Includes indexes. (Page 350). Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, Mich.

- It is one thing to experience Physical healing, but it ends at death; while the blessing of eternal life lasts forever.<sup>5</sup>

The Samaritan's nine friends were declared clean by the priest, but **he was declared *saved* by the Son of God!**

- While it is wonderful to experience the miracle of physical healing, it is even more wonderful to experience the miracle of eternal salvation.<sup>6</sup>

When we respond in thankfulness to God, God responds to us!

**YOU**

**How do YOU ensure that you have a grateful heart?**

**Look for God at work**

**Luke 17:15** “But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God.”

---

<sup>5</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1997, c1992. *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (Lk 17:1). Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

<sup>6</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 17:11). Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

- It seems that this one leper was **looking at himself**, checking his skin to see if he was healed as they traveled to see the priest.
  - Perhaps the others, being Jews, felt that the healing would happen when they saw the priest.
    - But this man, a Samaritan, **was looking for the answer** to his request as he was traveling along.

We need to be aware of what God is doing.

- The **reason** we are often **not thankful**, is because we are **not aware** of the reasons why we should be thankful.
  - Everyday, often in small ways, God does things for which we should be thankful.
- Often, we are **not thankful** because we are **not attune** to what God is doing around us, through us and in us.
  - Therefore, we just **excuse** those things as **coincidence** or we don't give them a second thought.
    - Instead of being distant from God and taking God for granted, we need to look around us and be sensitive to what God is doing!

## Stop and Give Thanks

**Luke 17:15** “[the Samaritan] returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God.”

- The Samaritan leper **stopped** and **changed directions**.
- He also left the other lepers behind.
  - He left behind those men that he had apparently had some relationship with.
    - Yet, he turned back to focus on Christ.

When God does something; stop and thank Him!  
Don't put it off.

### *Results of Thanksgiving*

Martin Rinkart was called at the age of 31 to pastor the state Lutheran church in his native city of Eilenberg, Germany. He arrived there just as the dreadful bloodshed of the 30 Years' War began, and there Rinkart spent the remaining 32 years of his life faithfully ministering to these needy people.

Germany, the battleground of this conflict between warring Catholic and Protestant forces from various countries throughout Europe, was reduced to a state of misery that baffles description. The German population dwindled from 16 million to 6 million. Because Eilenberg was a walled city, it became a

frightfully over-crowded refuge for political and military fugitives from far and near. Throughout these war years several waves of deadly diseases and famines swept the city, as the various armies marched through the town, leaving death and destruction in their wake.

The plague of 1637 was particularly severe. At its height Rinkart was the only minister remaining to care for the sick and dying. During that year he conducted 40 to 50 funerals a day! One of those funerals was for his wife.

Yet out of those terrible times, Martin Rinkart wrote one of the great hymns of the time: “Now Thank We All Our God.” Listen to the first stanza:

*Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom His world rejoices; who from our mothers' arms hath blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

Jesus asked “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?”

Do you think God ever asks those questions about us?

- Questions like “I saved him/her why don't they ever express thanks?”

- Questions like “**Look at what I have done, yet he/she didn’t even bother to stop and say “thank you.”**”

Does **God ask** those question because He is on an **ego trip**? No.

- The reason God wants us to give thanks is because giving thanks to God has a way of **drawing us closer** to Him.
  - Giving thanks to God gives God an **opportunity to bless us** even more. **We miss a great blessing when we begin to take God for granted.**

### **PQ: Are you a Thankful Person?**

- When is the last time you really spent time thanking God?

Why not spend some time today in a prayer of thanksgiving. No requests, just thanksgiving and praise.