The Thankful Ex-leper

**Read:** Luke 17:11-19

**Text:** Psalm 105:1 “O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.”

**Introduction:** I remember hearing this story when I was a child in Sunday School. I always thought that surely the nine silent lepers must have lost their healing. Be honest; you thought so too didn’t you? Look with me at another verse please. Romans 11:29 says: “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.” What light does this verse place on our story?

**10 respected His situation:** Lepers could not come into contact or even very near to clean Jews. Verse 12 says that they all “stood afar off.” They gave Him space to get away if He choose not to heal them. No doubt they had heard that when He touched a sick person they were healed but just in case He did not heal them they did not want to cause Him to be unclean. I am concerned with the attitude of many Christians who seem to think that they have a right to anything that they choose to demand from God. If there was a magical way to order heaven to acquiesce to my requests then I would be God.

**10 asked for mercy:** There was not a hint of a sense of entitlement in their request. When a condemned man asks for mercy then it is plain that he has stopped justifying himself. When a sick man asks for mercy then it is plain that he realizes that he cannot heal himself. Have you ever not prayed for healing because you thought that your sickness was no big deal? “It’s just a headache so I’ll take an aspirin.” But when it’s cancer we pray *and we pray desperately*. Maybe if we had resorted to prayer for our headaches and had a few miracles then we could pray with faith for the more difficult things.

**10 went to see the priests:** It was a strange request since they still had leprosy but they really had nowhere else to go anyway. This is an excellent example of obedience when obedience doesn’t make sense. Any one of them could have said to Jesus: “That doesn’t make sense. We won’t even be able to get close to the temple in our condition. We demand healing first and then we will do what you say.” They made no such demand…they just obeyed what Jesus said. I need to point out here that obedience to Christ does not guarantee that we will get what we want but it does guarantee that God will be pleased with us. Do you remember what the three Hebrew boys said to Nebuchadnezzar? Our God is able to deliver us but if He doesn’t; we still will not bow.

**10 were cleansed:** Can you imagine what it must have been like when the first one realized that he was healed? Perhaps he shouted with joy and began to dance around. Another began to peel off his clothes to see if all the leprosy was gone. Another just sits down and sobs great sobs of joy. A couple of them begin to run toward the city and the priests.

**1 turns around and goes back to fall at Jesus feet to say Thanks:** All ten were healed but nine failed to express appreciation. One Samaritan man decided that the formality of seeing the priest could wait a little longer. He must tell Jesus how grateful he is for the miracle of healing.

**9 missed a personal encounter with Jesus:** Jesus talked to the one face to face but the nine never got that honor. The one could tell his children about how Jesus healed him and how good it felt to talk to the savior. He could tell them that not only was he healed of leprosy but he was made whole from the inside out. The nine others could talk of being healed but they could not tell their children of how Jesus person-ally touched them or talked to them. They were healed but there is no record of them being made whole. They may have remained bitter about the lost years and or family time caused by their sickness but the thankful ex-leper was made whole.

**Conclude:** Thankfulness pays off with great dividends. A thankful

person is not a bitter person. A thankful person is a better person.