

Understanding the Miracle of the Ten Lepers Luke 17:11-19

Introduction:

1. The Bible lists many characteristics of lost, unregenerate people. One of those characteristics is unthankfulness. **Romans 1:21; 2 Timothy 2:2**
2. Christian people should be a thankful people. According to **Ephesians 5:19-20**, we should have a song in our hearts and praise on our lips. Why is this? One word - Jesus.
3. In Luke 17, we have the story of the ten lepers. Leprosy was a dreaded disease because it meant isolation. The leper was removed from society. He lost everything (his family, his job, his material possessions, his dignity).
4. This is why these lepers stood afar off (vs. 12) and had to yell to get Jesus' attention (vs. 13). Jesus instructed them to go and show themselves to the priest (vs. 14). Under the law, the priest had to pronounce them clean before they could re-enter society.
5. As they went, all ten were healed completely from the disease (vs. 14). One returned to Jesus to say thanks (vs. 15-16). The Bible notes that he was a Samaritan.
 - The Samaritans were a mixed race that had been contaminated by foreign blood and false worship. They were despised by the Jews and considered a lower class of people.
6. Where were the other nine? That's a great question and it is one Jesus asked (vs. 17-18). The other nine were self-centered. They wanted to get to the priest as fast as they could so they could get on with their lives and the things they longed to do.
7. The Samaritan man was the only one that was Christ-centered. The nine were completely enamored by the miracle; the Samaritan was enamored with Christ.

What is the doctrinal application of this miracle?

1. Remember, Christ's earthly ministry was to the nation of Israel. In fact, Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem when this miracle occurred (vs. 11).
2. This miracle served as a picture of Israel's response to Jesus Christ.
3. The nine unthankful Jewish lepers perfectly illustrate the nation of Israel.
 - The nation of Israel was self-serving and self-seeking, just like these nine lepers.
 - Israel loved the signs, wonders, and miracles that Christ did, but they were not interested in Christ's message. **John 12:37**
 - These Jewish lepers epitomized the religious leadership of Israel. They were outwardly cleansed, but inwardly they were spiritually empty. **Matthew 23:25, 27-28**
 - "Do a miracle - give us a sign." There was a willing acceptance of the miracles, but a rejection of Christ as the Messiah. There was no turning in repentance to Christ.
4. The thankful Samaritan leper represents the small believing remnant of Israel.
 - The Samaritans lived in Israel but were not considered part of Israel. They were outcasts.
 - The believing remnant likewise were rejected and were outcasts.

- Just as the Samaritan leper stood all alone in his worship of Jesus, the believing remnant of Israel was a small minority. Jesus called it the "little flock."
- They were the ones that were cleansed inwardly as well as outwardly. They appreciated the miracles, but the miracles led them to true worship and faith in Christ.

What is the practical application of this miracle?

1. There is a practical application for people of all ages. What is the primary practical application for us today? It is very simply this - a Christ-centered life leads to a thankful heart.
2. Nine of these lepers were self-centered and self-seeking, but one was Christ-centered. His focus was on Christ and it demonstrated his faith in Christ.
3. There is a verse in Paul's epistles that can appear to be very tough and almost impossible when you first read it. **1 Thessalonians 5:18** commands believers, "*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*"
4. You scratch your head and think, "In everything? In times of distress, trouble, financial reversal, catastrophe, pain, sorrow - give thanks?"
5. This Thessalonian church had been going through severe persecution for their faith in Christ (2:14-15, 3:3-4). Paul tells them to give thanks in this.
6. Do you know what the key to this verse is? It's the three words, "*in Christ Jesus.*"
7. Life is always changing. There are ups and downs. Nothing stays the same, but there is one thing that never changes no matter what you ever go through.
 - **Who God has made you in Christ and what God has given you in Christ never changes.**
8. Let's look at **Romans 8:31-34**.
 - Because of our position of being in Christ, all that is Christ's eternally is ours also. Every heavenly blessing that is part of Christ's inheritance is ours also. This is what it means when it says that with Christ, God has freely given us all things.
9. This doesn't mean that we won't encounter every conceivable type of trial down here on earth. This is clear in verses 35-38. But no matter the trial, it cannot change who we are in Christ and it cannot change how God feels about us. **Romans 8:39**
 - We are forever the objects of His love and grace. Every eternal, heavenly blessing has been showered upon us in Christ.
10. So when we are Christ-centered (like this Samaritan leper), there is no situation in which we cannot give thanks. Even in the midst of pain and sorrow, we begin to focus on Christ and all that is ours in Christ, and our hearts well up with joy and thanksgiving.
 - Self-centeredness looks at the circumstances and says, "Woe is me."
 - Christ-centered looks beyond the circumstances to Christ and says, "I'm blessed - thank you, Jesus."
11. Faith looks beyond the physical circumstances to the person of Christ and the glorious eternity that He has insured for us. **2 Corinthians 4:15-18**