

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide ESV, Unit 22, Session 1

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Jesus Heals the Ten Lepers

Session in a Sentence: Jesus healed ten lepers who called for help but saved one who had faith.

Background Passage: Luke 17:11-19

A few years ago, I preached a sermon on Psalm 100, which is a psalm of thanksgiving. This topic was perfect for the Sunday after the Thanksgiving holiday. During part of our small group time in the week following, we discussed the sermon, and our group came to a startling realization—we weren't particularly grateful people.

Yes, we thanked the Lord when we prayed together and often when we prayed privately. And yes, we had good manners. We thanked all who served us in some way, big or small. But there is a difference between saying, "Thank you," and being grateful. You know as well as I do that sometimes a "thank you" is just the expected thing to say, like answering, "Fine," to those who ask how you are doing. Saying, "Thanks," can simply be the final step in a conversational ritual with little to no thought behind it.

Why do we have conversational rituals that require little to no thought behind them?

Group Time

Point 1: Infirmary leads to desperate cries to Jesus for mercy (Luke 17:11-13).

11 On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance 13 and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

To be a leper was to be an outcast. Even God's law instructed the community to separate themselves from the diseased (Lev. 13-14; Num. 5:2-3). But it wasn't primarily the community's responsibility to ensure this separation; it was the leper's. As if the disease weren't bad enough, self-imposed social exile was added to it. Lepers wore torn clothes, let their hair go, and were required to cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" They also had to live outside the camp or city (Lev. 13:45-46).

What are some ways people experience separation from God and others because of *sin*?

The lepers took advantage of their opportunity with Jesus. They had heard He could heal, so they cried out for mercy. In other words, they prayed for Jesus to intervene and help them. We tend to complicate prayer, adding certain words to make our requests sound important, but prayer is a simple thing. Every Christian's new life begins and continues the same way: **calling out to Jesus for rescue.**

Voices from the Church

"This is the kind of prayer that God loves to answer: a desperate cry for help offered in the name of his Son." ¹
—Philip Graham Ryken

Point 2: Healing leads to a grateful heart for what Jesus has done (Luke 17:14-16).

14 When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; 16 and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

As Jesus turned to the lepers in mercy, He gave a simple command. He sent them on a path of obedience, and on the way, they found the healing for which they longed. Imagine if the lepers had done nothing. If they had delayed obeying Jesus’ word to them, they would not have found healing. On another occasion, Jesus touched a leper and made him clean instantly (Luke 5:12-14), so obeying Jesus’ command in this instance required a prolonged trust in Him to make them clean. It required obeying in faith.

What are some commands in Scripture that require obedience in faith?

Ten lepers found healing on the way to the priest, but only one turned around to find Jesus again. Ten lepers called out for mercy and received it, but only one thought to express his gratitude to his healer. Ten percent of those lepers whom Jesus healed returned to give thanks. How much thanks do we give to Him within our own hearts? Do we thank Him for even ten percent of His merciful gifts?

How often do you express thanksgiving to God for His work in your life?

Rarely, If Ever Sometimes More Often Than Not Almost Always

What are some reasons you have for thanking God?

Point 3: Faith leads to a greater salvation in Christ (Luke 17:17-19).

17 Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

The one former leper to return to Jesus was a Samaritan, a “foreigner,” as Jesus called him. That a Samaritan was the one to return is shocking and provided Jesus with a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate the reason He came. Presumably, the other lepers were Jewish men with a lineage that enjoyed the benefits of a relationship with God firsthand. The Samaritan, on the other hand, was not part of the people of God. Yet the Samaritan was the one to express worship to God and thankfulness to Jesus.

Why should a heightened sense of our own unworthiness lead to a grateful attitude and worship of God for our salvation in Jesus?

As the Samaritan fell before Jesus to thank Him and give glory to God, he received a word from Jesus weightier than any healing of any disease. He found the assurance of eternal salvation because He came to Jesus in faith. We find the same when we come to Him in faith. On the cross, Jesus met our deepest need we didn’t realize we had. He came to save sinners from their sin, and by faith, we receive the salvation Jesus purchased through His death and resurrection.

Justification by Faith: Justification refers to the moment when a person is objectively _____ righteous before God based on the righteousness of Christ’s atoning death. This act of declaration takes place through faith in _____ and not as a result of human _____ or effort.

My Mission

Because we have been saved from our sin through Jesus, we live each day with deep gratitude and worship for what Jesus has done.

- **What will you give God glory for today?**
- **How can your group help others find community that honestly addresses sin without shame?**
- **How can your gratitude and worship to God for salvation by faith in Jesus help you share the gospel with others?**

Voices from Church History

“O leprous sinner, go to Christ at once; go now, tarry not until thou hast left the sanctuary! Wait not until the sermon is over. It is written, ‘To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ ”²

–Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)