

It Is Written

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“Where Are The Nine?”

by Jarrod M. Jacobs

Jesus once saw ten lepers outside of a certain town. They asked Him for healing, and He obliged them by telling them to show themselves to the priest (Lk. 17:11-14). As they left Jesus, they were cleansed. Yet, as they noticed their healing, there was only one of the ten who returned to Jesus to thank Him (Lk. 17:15-16). At this response, Jesus asked, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Lk. 17:17). Sadly, only the “stranger” had returned to thank God for the blessing (Lk. 17:18). At this, He blessed the Samaritan, telling him how his faith had made him whole or healthy (Lk. 17:19).

We often remember this miracle of Christ because of the ingratitude shown by the nine lepers whom the Lord healed. This needs to be stressed, yes, but I believe there are some other lessons we can learn from this miracle. As in other Bible examples, we see that these people started correctly, but they ended badly. Let us study Luke 17:11-19 and learn some things that we can apply to ourselves today.

An Appeal To The Right Source (v. 12-13).

These men needed a cure for an incurable disease. To whom could they turn? There is only One who could cure them, and this is Christ! Their appeal was the correct one, for they asked Jesus for “mercy”. Notice, they called Him “master.” In the original, this word for master (“epistates”) means overseer or commander. They recognized Jesus as having power or authority, specifically, authority over diseases like leprosy. When they appealed to Jesus for help, they were asking the right One! Of course, we know Christ does not only have power over physical ills, but He has power over sin as well (Mk. 2:9-11)!

Are we going to the right source for the healing of our spiritual ills? Are we asking Christ for forgiveness when we repent? At the same time, are we praying for the lost among our family, friends, coworkers, and strangers, and praying for opportunities for their salvation? Truly, there is no other who can save, but Christ (Acts 4:12). To whom are we looking for salvation? To whom are we looking for grace as His children?

An Act Of Faith (v. 14).

This point may not be as obvious at first glance. Yet, when Jesus told the lepers to show themselves to the priest, it was an act of faith! How do we know this?

Remember that all involved were still living under the Old Testament law at this time. Thus, God commanded that when a Jew had contracted leprosy or was healed of leprosy, he needed to show himself to the priest (Lev. 13-14). What made this an act of faith was that Jesus told them to show themselves to the priest before they were actually healed (Lk. 17:14)! Pay close attention to this fact in this verse.

Therefore, when Jesus commands them to go, one might have asked, “Why? I am not healed.” No one did, but this might have been a natural response. In context, these lepers take Jesus at His word and go to the priest before any healing took place. Actually, they were healed on the way! Thus, they showed their faith in the power of the word of Christ.

In like manner, Christ asks us to do many things by faith. Our salvation (Mk. 16:16), worship (Jn. 4:24), daily living (Rom. 12), as well as the demands upon us to control our minds, speech, and action (Jas. 1:26-27) are to be done by faith. He tells us to do these things and promises blessings now and a greater blessing of Heaven to come! We who are Christians do this, having never heard His voice or seen Jesus in the flesh (1 Pet. 1:8). We do this, having never seen Heaven. Thus, we are living by faith as well. If these lepers could trust and follow the Lord, we should be able to do the same thing (Jn. 14:6; Heb. 6:19-20, 11:6; Jas. 2:24, 26).

A Grateful Minority (v. 15-16).

This section is where most folks focus, and for good reason. Here, we see one return to Jesus. This

Samaritan was the only one to thank Jesus for his healing (Lk. 17:18). Isn't this the way of things? How many of us truly stop and give thanks to God? Think about it! As we pray to God about matters, when those things are resolved, do we offer God thanks for listening and for helping? We often pray to God that we or a loved one might have "safe travel on the road" or on an airplane, etc. When this person makes it safely to the destination, do we stop and thank God for safe passage? Are we too busy unpacking at that point to thank Him?

Are we thankful for our food? Our families? Our freedoms? Are we thankful for health? For our salvation? For hope? Truly, if we began praying a prayer thanking God for what He has provided, both conditionally and unconditionally, could we ever truly quit praying? How grateful are we? How have we shown it?

An Ungrateful Majority (v. 17-18).

Nine of the ten lepers showed themselves to the priest as Christ commanded. Yet, they never paused to thank the One who made it possible! In this case, these people started off right, but they ended wrong. What a tragedy! May we never be like this.

One has asked, "If tomorrow we only receive the things for which we thanked God today, what would we have?" This question cuts to the bone, does it not? When we study the Bible, we see many Old Testament heroes who paused to thank God. We also see New Testament heroes like the apostle Paul reminding us, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Even the living creatures in Heaven thank God continually (Rev. 4:9)! How is it that man seems so forgetful about this? Nine of ten lepers forgot! This ingratitude is a problem that results in further sin if we do not stop it (Rom. 1:18-32)!

Is God Within Your Plans?

by Bob Tidwell

We make plans in our lives many times. Do you ever stop and think about God being a part of your plan-making? The faithful child of God would and should.

If you were to have to make a move to another city and state, what would be your priorities in making such a huge step? How would your plans affect you and your family? Would you seek out to find the Lord's body working in this new location and be a part of the work to serve and worship God? Would God be in the forefront of the decisions you determine to do in carrying out these changes? Would God be first in your life? (Matthew 6:33) Would you seek to please God with your choices? (2 Corinthians 5:9)

James wrote: "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil." (James 4:13-16).

When we make plans, we should first seek to please God in what we are planning to do. Are the plans we make first authorized by the Lord? (Colossians 3:17) Secondly, we should also have the attitude that "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" as James teaches us.

Being with God forever and having eternal life should be our aim everyday. (Colossians 3:1-2). The decisions we set on accomplishing in this life should always be toward pleasing God. Are your plans according to God's will? Is He included within them?