

Ten Lepers - Luke 17:11-19
4-12-15 AM

All Christians are the TEN Lepers, healed by Jesus Christ. Some of us may be of the NINE Lepers. We should want to be the ONE Leper.

We all hate ingratitude. We probably have stories of favors we have done only to be rebuffed by people lacking gratitude for our sacrifices. We hate it, but do we show it? Particularly, do we demonstrate a lack of gratitude towards God?

Luke 17:11-19 records Jesus healing ten men. Specifically, ten lepers were saved by Jesus Christ. Let us use the word "save", since we know that Jesus often used physical sickness as a metaphor for sin (Matthew 9:1-8). They were not literally saved, but the lesson from this for us is about salvation and gratitude. Jesus asked "where are the other nine", not because He did not know (He was God), but for us to consider their absence.

This story is about those who are saved (or think they are saved) but do not return to Jesus in thanks. Consider that these men heard of Jesus, and believed in Him (His power to heal). They confessed Him as master, and even obeyed His commandment to go to the priest. It is very much like the plan of salvation. For the sake of this lesson, we are going to fabricate likely scenarios as to why the other nine did not return, as a type for us to consider why we are sometimes ungrateful towards God.

One of the Lepers Did Not Return Because: He did not believe he was ever sick. Of course, it does not fit the facts of the record, but we do know that most people go through life denying their sickness of sin (I John 1:8-9, John 9:35-41). Only by admitting sickness can we be healed (Acts 2:38).

One of the Lepers did not return because: contrary to what he thought, he never was healed. Again, not true to the story, but true for the application. He was one who believed that hearing Jesus alone healed him. He did not "show himself to the priest". You see, in order to be cleansed of our sins, we need faith, but faith without works fails - James 2:18-19.

One of the Lepers did not return because: He did not want to be healed. Jesus asked the lame man in John 5 if he wanted to be healed. Today many people simply do not want to be saved. They enjoy the pleasures of sin - Hebrews 11:25. They have too much to lose - Matthew 19:19-23. Simply stated, we cannot love the world and Christ too - I John 2:15.

One of the Lepers did not return because: He was too busy living it up. There must have been a lot of things these men wanted to do that they had been denied for too long. It was not sinful, but they put it before God. This is the enticement of the world, which includes the works of the flesh - Galatians 5:19-20. Saints fall prey to the world - II Timothy 4:10. We were not saved just to sin more - Romans 6:1

One of the Lepers did not return because: He intended too, but too many things interfere. He had the full desire to go back, but did not because the “cares” of the world can choke us out - Mark 4:18-19. God must be an intrinsic priority; meaning, God defines all things in our lives.

One of the Lepers did not return because: He did not think it mattered *how* he thanked Jesus. Perhaps he thanked Jesus from his home or on the road. We need to “give thanks” in a proper manner; In Spirit and in Truth – John 4:24; On the first day – Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 16:1; With the assembly of Christians – Hebrews 10:25.

One of the Lepers did not return because: He did not think it mattered *where* he went to thank Jesus. He might have said “all roads lead to God”. In truth, Jesus was only in one place, and the lepers knew where that was. Only one road leads to Christ - Matthew 7:14. In a similar way, there is only one “body” of Christ - Ephesians 4:1-6. Ultimately, we were not saved in any other name but Jesus Christ.

One of the Lepers did not return because: He was angry that he had been healed. That might sound absurd, but consider that now this man might only see the responsibilities that come with being healed. Now he would have to work, etc. When we are healed (saved) we have works to accomplish (Ephesians 2:10 & Romans 6:16). That being said, there are great rewards to this work – I Corinthians 15:58.

One Leper DID return because: He knew where he was healed, and he knew where Jesus was, and he was grateful for the gift of God. Consider Romans 5:8; His gift was given while we were deplorable before God. Jesus said that his faith made him well. Since all the lepers were healed, it seems likely that this refers not to his physical condition, but his spiritual one.

Our faith and His Grace makes us well (Ephesians 2:8). But again, his faith was manifested by his action of returning to Jesus and giving thanks.

So here is the application question: Will you return to Jesus? Nine failed to return for whatever reasons. We need to apply the idea that their absence is regardless of their intentions or the feeling in their heart. They may have been overwhelmed with gratitude, but without actions, it was meaningless. Faith without works is dead.

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