**Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart**

2 Chronicles 7:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:1-13; Luke 17:11-19; Psalm 111 10.13.19

Summary: I think we learn several things about gratitude when we look at the story of the ten lepers and Jesus.

INTRO:

We live in an amazing world. We have so much and so many things to make our lives easier. We should be thankful that we live in this modern technological age!

Did you realize that until 1750, a thing such as glue did not exist? How in the world did they fix things back then, not to mention life without Duck tape!

How did floors and carpets get cleaned before 1901 when the vacuum cleaner was invented?

What was breakfast like before 1906 when cornflakes were invented?

Did you realize that until 1910, no person used aluminum foil to cook with?

Do you know what people put leftovers in before 1947 when tupperware was invented?

Where did we eat before 1954 when McDonalds opened?

Did you know that the remote control did not hit American homes until 1956?

Did you realize that it wasn’t until the mid 1970s that ATMs were around?

How did we remind ourselves before 1974 when post-it notes were invented?

What did people do who hate eyeglasses do before 1987 when disposable contact lenses were invented?

We live in a world with such comforts, do we not!? Our world today is easier and more comfortable and more desirable than ever before. Things are constantly being invented to reshape our world and create a better life. In fact, in 2004 Popular Science Magazine showed the best recreation invention which was a shoe by the Adidas company with a built in microprocessor that decides how soft or firm support the wearer needs. That is comfort! Those things that I mentioned are certainly THINGS TO BE GRATEFUL FOR.

Today we are going to look at a passage that is all about CULTIVATING A GRATEFUL HEART. (Read LUKE 17:11-19 for Facebook listeners)

The opening verses of this passage tell us a little bit about what Jesus was doing. He was traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem. This trip of His would eventually end in His death. When traveling with Jesus, however, you never got to go around Samaria like other people. All the Jews of the day would travel around Samaria and then cross back over the Jordan to reach Jerusalem. Jesus marched His followers right through Samaria (see John 4). In fact, Jesus even commands His apostles to preach the message in Samaria as part of their mission field (Acts 1:8). We find this event begins when Jesus stops in a village on His journey.

**I TEN MEN WITH THE SAME PROBLEM.**

The story of this passage begins while Jesus is still on the outskirts of the village. Jesus is met by ten men with leprosy. What is leprosy? Leprosy was a slowly progressing and incurable skin disease. They had no cure and it was very infectious. Rifampicin wasn’t developed until 1968, and multidrug therapy for leprosy wasn’t until 1982! So, in Bible times, the people were put out of the population and were to fend for themselves so they would not infect the rest of the people. It makes sense that as Jesus approached this village, that the lepers met Him. They were outside the town because they were infected. All ten of these men were infected with these painful sores.

All of these men would have had trouble getting food or shelter. They were struggling to survive. Verse 12 tells us that they stood at a distance. They could not go near other people. These lepers had to stand at a distance from all people and even from Jesus. All of these men would have wished themselves back in their homes with their families. All of these men would have wished for steady work and good meals. But they had none of that. And then they saw Jesus.

**II. TEN MEN WITH THE SAME PRAYER.**

All ten of these men had the same request. Luke 17:13 records it for us, *"Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"* These men spot Jesus from a distance and ask Him to show them pity. They ask Him to heal them of this skin disease that has ruined their lives. They ask Jesus to act on any pity He may be feeling for them and to restore them to health.

Illus: These men were more desperate for help then the two men who were walking through a field one day when they spotted an enraged bull. Instantly they darted toward the nearest fence. The storming bull followed in hot pursuit, and it was soon apparent they wouldn’t make it. Terrified, the one shouted to the other, "Put up a prayer, John. We’re in for it!" John answered, "I can’t. I’ve never made a public prayer in my life." "But you must!" implored his companion. "The bull is catching up to us." "All right," panted John, "I’ll say the only prayer I know, the one my father used to repeat at the table: ’O Lord, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful.’" DESPERATION is sometimes the spring from which prayer flows!

These ten men who were all afflicted with leprosy all had the same desperate prayer. They had all pinned all their hopes and desires and faith on this Jesus that they had seen entering the village. What were they counting on? What emotion were they counting on from Jesus? Verse 13 tells us it was the PITY of Jesus that they had appealed to. PITY is sympathy or sorrow that is aroused because of the suffering and horrible condition of another. I think that pity is more than an emotion, it is ALSO AN ACTION. Sorrow is an emotion. Sympathy is an emotion. Pity is an action. The ten men were hoping beyond all hope that Jesus would act on His feelings for their bad situation. But there was only . . .

**III. ONE MAN WITH A HEART OF GRATITUDE.**

Jesus does heal the men. It would not be much of a story if He hadn’t. All ten of these men had been stricken with a contagious skin disease and all of them were healed. Jesus instructs the men (verse 14) to show themselves to the priests. A person who was healed of an infectious disease must be pronounced clean by the priests. They were in many ways the guardians of the health of the community.

Verse 14 not only gives us the instructions that Jesus gave these ten men, but also that while they were on their way to the priests, they were healed. As they walked, sores began to heal. Perhaps those fingers and toes that had been eaten away or disfigured were made whole. Pain went away. Skin returned to its normal color. All of this happened while they walked.

Verse 15 tells us that the group parted company. Nine of the men assumingly went on to the priests and were declared clean. One returned to Jesus and was praising God in a loud voice. This Samaritan man "*threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him"* (Luke 17:16). This one man had an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

Illlus: Francie Swartz in her book “Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work” tells about a guy named Jerry who was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. And when asked how he was doing he would always say, "If I was any better I’d be twins." Jerry was a restaurant manager who everybody loved to work for because he was so positive. And Francie said, "I don’t get it Jerry, you can’t possibly be upbeat all the time how do you do it?" And Jerry replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself Jerry you have two CHOICES today: you can either choose to be in a bad mood or choose to be in a good one. And I choose to be in a good mood." "Oh its not that easy," I protested, Swartz writes. "Yes it is," Jerry responded, "life is all about CHOICES." Well several years ago, Jerry’s restaurant was robbed. The thieves panicked and shot him and he was rushed to the emergency room. He spent eighteen hours on the operating table and several weeks in intensive care but he survived.

And later she asked him how he did it. He said, "When I was laying on the floor I remembered I had TWO CHOICES, I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live. The paramedics were encouraging, but when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw the looks on the faces of the doctors and nurses I got really scared. Because in their eyes I read HE’S A DEAD MAN and I knew I needed to take action." And there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me and she asked, ’Are you allergic to anything?’

’Yes,’ I replied. And the doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. ’BULLETS,’ I answered. And over their laughter I yelled ’I’m CHOOSING TO LIVE, operate on me as I am alive not dead.’ And Jerry lived thanks to the skill of the doctors, to his attitude, and to the grace of God. And Francie Swartz says, "I saw Jerry six months after the accident and asked him how he was doing and he replied, ’If I was any better, I’d be twins." And much of life is determined NOT BY CIRCUMSTANCES but by PERSONAL CHOICE. It matters how you choose to live. And so I challenge you to begin to make a personal choice and DECIDE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO REJOICE IN THE LORD NO MATTER WHAT.

That brings us to the final point for today, the question:

**IV. WHAT MAKE A HEART GREATEFUL?**

As Jesus said in verse 19 to the Samaritan who returned to say “thank You,” Jesus said, *“Rise and go; YOUR FAITH has made you well.”*

The grateful heart is the HEART OF FAITH. The heart that BELIEVES that Jesus is not just the HEALER of our diseases, but that He is the HEALER of our SPIRITUAL LEPROSY, for indeed, sin is like a leprosy. Leprosy kills the body. But sin kills the SOUL. Jesus is the healer. He took our sin upon Himself as the Apostle Peter writes *“He himself bore OUR SINS IN HIS BODY on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.”* (1 Peter 2:24)

Close:

I think I learn several things about gratitude when I look at the story of the ten lepers and Jesus. I see in this story the obvious EXAMPLE OF A HEART FULL OF GRATITUDE. This man had received a gift of healing and he fell at the feet of his Healer. This one man who returned to Jesus was truly thankful and he honored God.

I also learn something about God from this passage as well. I want you to notice verses 17-18 after this man came and honored Jesus with his thanks. WHAT WAS JESUS’ REACTION? Jesus certainly appreciated the faith and praise of this man... He shows this in verse 19 as He says *“Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”* But verses 17 and 18 tell me something more. WHAT DID JESUS EXPECT? What did Jesus expect from ALL TEN of the men? God expected ALL TEN to come and thank Him and to praise God for the miracle that was done. The only one who returned was a FOREIGNER!

God loves it when His children offer their thanks to Him.

HE LOVES TO HEAR IT. HE WANTS TO HEAR IT. HE DESERVES TO HEAR IT. We serve a God who has done MIGHTY and MIRACULOUS things in our lives and He not only deserves our thanks, but He wants it as well.

Giving God our thanks is part of WORSHIPING Him.

HE LOVES IT WHEN WE GIVE THANKS WITH A GRATEFUL HEART!

**PRAYER:**  Dear Lord, we thank You from the bottom of our hearts for Your kindness to us and especially for the gift of eternal life in heaven. We ask for the Holy Spirit to continue to shape us and cultivate in us a grateful heart. In the name of Jesus, our healer. Amen.