

KINGDOM CHARACTERISTICS | LUKE 17:1-19 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 5/24/2026

*I. Forgiveness Required (1-4) | II. Faith Requested (5-10) | III. Faith Filled Response (11-19)

INTRO: In a world marked by offense, shallow faith, and growing ingratitude, Jesus calls His followers to live differently! The **True Evidence of the Kingdom** is not merely found in **what we PROFESS** with our lips... but in **what is REVEALED** through our lives. → In **Luke 17:1-19**, Jesus emphasizes the **Kingdom Characteristics** of Forgiveness, Faith, and Gratitude. **These are Not Optional Virtues for the believer...** they are **Visible Marks** of a heart transformed by the King ... **KINGDOM CHARACTERISTICS** *

I. FORGIVENESS REQUIRED (17:1-4) – **READ: Jesus had just exposed the Pharisees’** spiritual corruption and their love for money and status, which offended them (**16:14**). – He then turned to His disciples to teach them of the difficulty of dealing with people. *He first addresses the...*

A. Certainty of Offenses (1) – Jesus warned that **OFFENSES** are inevitable in a fallen world. (*Everyone is so easily offended these days!*) – The ancient {**Grk. Skandalon**}, describes “the stick” that springs the trap or sets the bait. It can also mean **“Stumbling Block,”** *i.e.*, something that people trip over.

- **“Woe”** is pronounced on the one causing stumbling. – **The Pharisees** had been spiritually misleading people, causing others to stumble through hypocrisy and false religion.

B. Certainty of Judgment (2) – In (**Matt 18:1-5**) Jesus reveres “children as the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven,” because of their humility and childlike faith. – But here, Jesus **WARNS** of the danger of stumbling “one of these Little Children,” *i.e.*, **BELIEVERS**.

1. Jesus uses Shocking Imagery for Violators: **Millstone around the neck... Drowned in the sea**. – A **“Millstone”** is a **Large Stone** which was used for grinding grain and weighs about a ton.
 - **Jesus’ “Millstone Judgment”** illustrates the seriousness of misleading people spiritually. – This tells us that **God takes spiritual damage seriously**—especially toward vulnerable believers!
2. Jesus’ **Warning** also applies to Kingdom People! → Believers are to take seriously the Spiritual Impact they have on people. → **Our Words and our Works influence others!** → Our Attitudes affect weaker believers: Parents, Pastors, and Mature Christians **must walk carefully, so as NOT to offend!**

P/A: Ask Yourself: Am I helping people Come to Christ or **Stumbling people**, pushing them away from Him? → **Does my example Build faith or Weaken it?** → **Offense will happen, but don’t let it be you!**

When offended, have a...

C. Careful Response (3) – Jesus specifically cautions His disciples, saying, **“take Heed yourselves.”** – He commands **Rebuke, Repentance, and Repeated Forgiveness!** (*This is Not always easy to do!*)

1. **If your brother Sins** against you: **REBUKE HIM!** {**Grk. epitimao**} → to correct, strongly confront. (**Prov 17:10**) says, Rebuke is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool! – One of the problems with Christendom today is that **we have lost the care to Confront Another when offended**. (*To be practiced correctly (tt. Matt 18:15a); first confront him alone! – Not gossip about him first!*)
2. **If your brother Repents:** **FORGIVE HIM!** {**Grk. aphitemi**} → to release, let go, cancel debt. – **WHEN** you tell him his fault and *he “hears you,” then you have gained your brother* (**Matt 18:15b**).
 - **Rebuke should keep in mind the need to Restore!**
 - **Some can Allow this Once...** but what about when the **Offense is Repeated** numerous times?

Jesus provides a...

D. Correct Response (4) – **The Pharisees believed** that one should forgive a maximum of **3x's a day** for the same offense. But Jesus doubles the number, and adds one as if to say; 'When an offender genuinely repents each time, then **the offended** should **FORGIVE** without hesitation every time!'

1. **The Phrase: "seven times in a day"** speaks of **Continual Grace**. – Kingdom Character **forgives repeatedly** because God forgives repeatedly!
2. **The Possibility:** If you **struggle with forgiving** the repeating offender, let me present it to you differently: **Forgiveness is difficult because Pride wants Revenge... but Grace calls us to restoration.**
 - **Forgiveness is Not ignoring sin, it's it releasing your bitterness!**
3. **Kingdom People** are **not defined by how often they are Wronged**, but how often **they Release others**. – **(tt. Col 3:12-14)** *"...forgiving one another...but above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."* – **Love is the rule here!** → Kingdom Character is Quick to Forgive as Christ did! → Kingdom Character should Not keep a record, because *it endures all things* (1 Cor 13:4-8a)

P/A: Who do you need to forgive today? – Kingdom character is revealed not by how loudly we worship, but by how quickly we forgive. *Which leads us to our next point...*

II. FAITH REQUESTED (17:5-10) – **READ (5-6): The disciples recognized their insufficiency.**

So, they make...

A. The Request for Faith (5) – **"Increase our faith"** i.e., **HELP!** – **What an Honest Response.** – Jesus' command to keep forgiving **Seemed Impossible** in their own strength. – However, notice that their request was not for more Power, Authority, or a Better Strategy... **they asked for FAITH**, because **it's HARD to forgive someone who has deeply hurt you.** – Only faith in God can accomplish this! *(Precisely!)*

- **Illustration: A Deep Wound is not healed by "Pretending it Never Happened!"** – But **Kingdom Forgiveness believes God enough to release the offense even when the pain is still real!**

P/A: Perhaps YOU are in a position right now where you **Can't Find Forgiveness for someone who has deeply hurt you – **You are Not Alone!**... Jesus knows how you feel! *He also wants you to understand...***

B. The Sufficiency of Faith (6) – When we think of **FAITH**, we usually picture big and amazing things happening. But **Jesus emphasizes that the most amazing thing that Faith can do is **fix broken relationships****

1. **Jesus contrasts the Mustard Seed and the Mulberry Tree.** – The **Mustard seed** is commonly the smallest known seed. And the **Roots of a Mulberry Tree** are known for being **DEEP and STRONG!**
2. **Just like a deep planted tree, Unforgiveness and Bitterness can grow deep roots in our hearts.** – But, **Faith in God can pull those roots out completely and cast them away!** **Do you have Any?** – Possibly a Root of Bitterness (Heb 12:15); a Mulberry Tree of Unforgiveness (v.6); a Hedge of Hostility! **Only by FAITH can you get to the "ROOT" of the problem!** – When you have it, **it will obey you!**
3. **The issue is not the Amount of faith but the Object of faith.** – Even faith as small as **a mustard seed is sufficient** when it is placed in a great God. *(True Faith always involves surrender to God's will)*

Segue: Jesus moves from the subject of faith and trust in God, to the **Attitude of Serving God...** because genuine faith will always express itself in obedience...

C. Their Duty by Faith (7-10) – **READ:** After teaching about forgiveness and faith (1-6), Jesus addressed a danger that can quietly grow in the heart of disciples: **ENTITLEMENT!** – The disciples may have begun thinking: “*If we forgive repeatedly and “serve faithfully,” then surely God owes us special recognition!* – Jesus constrains such a mindset with the illustration of a Servant and his Master. – “**Servant**” {Grk. *doulos*} → slave, one owned by another.

1. **The Expectation of Duty (7-9)** – *A servant does not expect special recognition for simply doing what was commanded.* Service is **Not Transactional**—it is the normal responsibility of belonging to a master. – **P/A:** **A Disciple serves consistently without expecting applause or reward!** – Faithful obedience is not about earning favor, but living under Christ’s lordship.

2. **The Identity of Humility (10)** – Jesus personalizes the teaching, *likewise... YOU!* – Even after complete obedience, the servant says, “*We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.*” – Not WORTHLESS, but undeserving of special praise for ordinary obedience!

- **Obedience does not Earn God’s debt**—it expresses our dependence and privilege! (Rom 12:1) says, “*...by the mercies of God, ...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*”

P/A: Every act of obedience is **Grace-Enabled Service**, not a reason for spiritual pride or entitlement. – Ask yourself: “*Do I serve God with a sense of awe and privilege, or have I begun to feel entitled to certain outcomes?*” Faithful Service is a Kingdom Characteristic.

III. FAITH FILLED RESPONSE (17:11-19) – **READ:** This passage reveals that **TRUE FAITH is more than receiving God’s blessings**—it is **RESPONDING** with **Gratitude, Worship, and Surrender.**

A. Fervent Cry (11-13) – Being outcasts, *these 10 lepers cry out for mercy.* → They “*stood far off*” because the Law required separation from society. **Their cry tells us that they believed Jesus could help them.** I love that! – Faith begins when we recognize our need and cry out to Christ for mercy!

B. Full Cleansing (14) – Jesus **SAW** them! → He knew what they needed, and gave one simple command: “*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*” (cf. Lev 13:2,3; 14:2-32) – They **OBEYED before they saw any evidence!** And *as they went, they were CLEANSED!* {Grk. *katharizō*} → purified, made clean. This miracle reveals that **God honors trusting steps!**

C. Faithful Return (15-19) – **Luke highlights a Dramatic Contrast.** All ten lepers were cleansed, but Only One Responded correctly to the miracle!

1. **Recognized Cleansing (15-16):** This phrase “*One of them*” emphasizes both the Gratitude of the one and the Ingratitude of the nine, even though all experienced the same mercy.

- **He saw** that he was healed and immediately **went back to Jesus to give thanks.**
- **He praised** God out loud and then **fell at Jesus’ feet.** (*This shows deep respect, humility, and gratitude*)

P/A: Luke also points out that he was a **Samaritan**, an outsider, showing that true worship is about the heart, not background. (*The others neglected to Give Thanks! Only eager to be declared clean by the priest!*) –

If God has helped you in any way...don’t just move on. Turn back and thank Him with a humble heart!

2. Recalling Ingratitude (17-18): The phrase, *“where are the nine?”* highlights the tragedy of **ingratitude** after mercy was shown them – **P/A:** Blessings without gratitude reveal a distracted or ungrateful heart.

3. Received Grace (19): Jesus highlights the one man’s Faith, commends his Response, and declares his Wholeness. – *“Rise and go your way; your faith has **made you well.**”*

a. Many receive God’s blessings, but only those who return with **thanksgiving and worship** will **experience the fullness of what God intends**. The thankful leper experienced not only physical healing, but spiritual restoration ... literally, *“Your faith has **SAVED you!**”*

b. **True Faith** always produces worship, gratitude, and surrender. – **FAITH** trusts God’s Word, **SURRENDER** obeys His will, and **GRATTITUDE** returns to glorify Him. **Together**, these reveal the true character of the Kingdom and **the kind of heart God desires** in every disciple... **Kingdom Characteristics**.

CLOSING THOUGHTS: **Gratitude reveals whether we truly recognize the grace we have received.** As **Chuck Smith** once said, *“If you can’t thank God for what you have received, you have not truly recognized grace.”* – **So, the question today is not simply:**

- Have you received from Jesus?
- But have you returned to Him?

Don’t be like “The Nine,” who received the blessing yet walked away unchanged! → Be the one with tried faith, quick to forgive, surrendered in heart, who comes back to Jesus, falls at His feet in gratitude, and leaves not only healed... but made whole!