

“The Evil of Ingratitude”

(Luke 17:11-19)

Introduction

➤ I originally planned on preaching this sermon on the Sunday following Thanksgiving (to take advantage of the thanksgiving theme). For many reasons, I am glad this message was delayed. One reason is that it is all too easy for us to (quickly) move on from the spirit of thanksgiving – the once-a-year obligation to “stop and give thanks.” And, after our Thanksgiving celebration is over, we resume our all-too-natural disposition of complaining, grumbling, and criticizing.

Since Thanksgiving is now a “distant memory” – and all the tryptophan has worn off – my hope and prayer is that this message will serve as a timely and sobering reminder of the evil of ingratitude.

➤ To many in America today, and throughout the world, Thanksgiving is little more than a secular holiday (which is ironic because the word “holiday” come from the Old English compound “holy day”). No one can seriously argue against the fact that our annual celebration of Thanksgiving originated with religious – even Christian – roots.

But concept of being thankful was not invented in the 17th century. In fact, it did not originate with man at all. The very essence and expression of thanksgiving comes from God. For without Him, and without all that He has done for us, we would have nothing for which to be grateful. Everything we have, and everything we are, we owe to God who is the Creator of all things and the Savior of all who worship Him (see Acts 17:28).

Therefore, for this reason alone, to be ungrateful to God – to fail or refuse to give Him thanks for who He is and what He has done – is at best an act of disobedience, and at worst an act of rebellion against Him. This truth is reflected in the fact that throughout the Bible, the various words that are translated “give thanks” or “thanksgiving” could also be translated “praise”, and are often combined with expressions of worship.

➤ Before we delve into our passage this morning, to help us have a biblical frame of mind, I want to quickly highlight some biblical truths concerning the topic of thankfulness.

Four biblical truths concerning true thankfulness:

1) **We are commanded to be thankful.**

It is important to note, and to be reminded of regularly, that thankfulness is a command from God. Being thankful is not an elective that we can choose or ignore. It is not something we do one only “when we feel like it”, or only when we think we have something for which to be thankful. As with all of God’s commands, we are to unconditionally obey His command to be thankful.

Eph 5:4 ~ “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”

Col 1:11-12 ~ “May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Col 2:6-7 ~ “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

Col 3:15-17 ~ “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

2) We are commanded to be thankful in and for everything.

It has been said that Christians are called to be thankful in all circumstances, but they are not called to be thankful for all things. While this sentiment can be reassuring, it is ultimately unbiblical. We are not only to be thankful in good times and in bad times (i.e., on the ‘mountaintop’ and in the ‘valley’, in times of triumph and times of trials), but also thankful for “good” things and bad things (i.e., in prosperity and in poverty). We are always to be thankful to God.

Eph 5:18-21 ~ “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always [*pantote*; at all times] and for everything [*hyper pas*; for all things] to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Phil 4:6 ~ “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything [*en pas*] by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

1 Thess 5:18 ~ “give thanks in all circumstances [*en pas*]; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Ps 119:71 ~ “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.” (see Ps.119:67, 75; Jms.1:2)

This is not a call to spiritual masochism (deriving pleasure from pain), but an exhortation to remember that God is sovereign over everything and that everything we experience, whether perceivably good or bad, has been ordained by God.

This does not mean that Christians are never to experience pain, sorrow, or anger – we are not commanded to be always chipper or smiling (see Rom.12:15; 1Thess.4:13). We are to be thankful for what God is doing, and will do, in and through the various circumstances we face in this life.

✓**Illust:** “I dare say the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of sickness ... If some men, that I know of could only be favoured with a month of rheumatism, it would, by God's grace mellow them marvelously” (Charles Spurgeon; *An All Round Ministry*; 384).

3) True thankfulness finds its ultimate expression in praise to God.

Ingratitude toward God is a failure to worship God. We cannot truly be praising God and ungrateful to God at the same time. We cannot simultaneously trust God and doubt God. While thankfulness and worship are distinct, they are also inseparable. True thankfulness finds its ultimate expression in praise to God, and true praise is rooted in thankfulness to God.

Luke 17:18 ~ “Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”

Heb 12:28-29 ~ “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 ~ “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 ~ “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: ¹¹whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

4) Ingratitude toward God characterizes unbelievers.

This may be a bit surprising, but it is related to each of the previous points. Out of all the sins that characterize unbelievers, you may not expect to find “ungrateful” or “unthankful” to be listed among them. Typically, when we think of the “grievous sins” that are indicative of those who are unsaved, or of our lives before we were saved, we think of sins that seem to be much more serious or heinous. But the Bible unapologetically lists the sin of ingratitude as one of the sins that characterize those who have totally rejected God and are consequently facing His eternal wrath:

2 Tim 3:1-5 ~ “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

Rom 1:18-21 ~ “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

Christians ought to be the most thankful, appreciative and grateful people on the planet. And, when you stop to think about it, what really (ultimately or eternally) do unbelievers have to be thankful for and who do atheists really give thanks to? However, more to the point, it is not so much that unbelievers are simply ungrateful people, but that they fail to give thanks to God or glorify Him as God!

➤ Such verses, and many more like them, give us the “Who?”, “What?”, “When?”, “Why?”, “How?”, and “To whom?” of thanksgiving”

- ◆ **Who is to give thanks?**
Everyone.
- ◆ **For what are we to give thanks?**
Everything.
- ◆ **When are we to give thanks?**
Always.
- ◆ **Why are we to give thanks?**
It is God’s will for us.
- ◆ **How are we to give thanks?**
In the name of the Lord Jesus.
- ◆ **To whom are we to give thanks?**
To God the Father.

**True thankfulness comes as a direct result of humbly recognizing
and revering God for who He is (in and of Himself),
and what He has done (to and for us).**

➤ One of the greatest illustrations of the evil of ingratitude is found in the Gospel of Luke. Chronologically, Luke 17 brings us to the final months of Jesus' three-year public ministry (see Lk.9:51; 13:22). He was on His final journey to Jerusalem, going through Samaria and Galilee from Perea. The intensity and hostility surrounding Jesus was palpable. Having recently raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn.11:43-44), the intensity and hostility from the religious leaders toward Jesus had never been higher. They had already tried to kill Him several times, but now they were more determined than ever (Jn.11:53). Consequently, Jesus no longer walked openly on the main roads (Jn.11:54).

Luke 17:11-19 ~ "On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, 'Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' ¹⁹And he said to him, 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.'"

➤ While Luke (the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts) was not an apostle, he was a close companion of the apostle Paul and a physician (Col.4:14). It comes as no surprise then that Luke's Gospel contain many stories of Jesus miraculously healing people. In fact, as we turn to Luke 17:11-19 we find a story that is unique to Luke's Gospel alone. In this story, we can identify six truths that serve to give us a biblical perspective on being thankful.

i. All ten lepers were desperately in need of healing (vs.11-12)

➤ The opening verses of this passage set the scene: "*On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance*" (vs.11-12). As I mentioned, Jesus was ultimately heading to Jerusalem with full knowledge that there He would be arrested, tortured, and crucified. On His way, however, He went north to "*a village*" (vs.12) located "*between Samaria and Galilee*" (vs.11).

The name and exact location of this village is not as important as the "*distance*" (*porrōthen*) these ten lepers stood from Jesus (vs.12). While this word offers no specific measurement, it strictly refers to a distance far away [it's only other use in the New Testament is in Hebrews 11:13 describing the distance between physical and spiritual realities which can only be seen by the eyes of faith]. Why were these men so far from Jesus? Because they were lepers, who were exiled from public/populated places and forced to live on the outskirts of society.

There they stood at a considerable distance from Jesus with the sound of their words "*Unclean, unclean!*" perhaps still echoing in the air:

Lev 13:45-46 ~ "The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' ⁴⁶He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp" (see Num.5:2; 12:10-12).

➤ Leprosy was the most feared disease in the ancient world. Most often, contracting leprosy was to face an inevitably slow, horrible, and certain death. To have leprosy was, in effect, "to die in slow motion." Contrary to conventional thinking, "Leprosy does not deteriorate or eat at the flesh but rather desensitizes the nerves. Unprotected by the warning signals of pain, the leper wears down his extremities or suffers cuts, burns, and infections without knowing he is being injured" (MacArthur, J. *The*

MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans).

In Biblical times, the physical disease of leprosy was not only extremely deadly but also highly contagious. Thus, the lepers were quarantined into isolated, and infected, colonies where they would literally die together – isolated from the rest of the population – in relative obscurity infamy (cf. Lev.13:45-46). The life of the leper was utterly hopeless and helpless as they watched their bodies slowly erode into death.

✓**Illust:** In his book *Unclean! Unclean!* L. S. Huizenga describes some of the horrors of leprosy. “The disease which we today call leprosy generally begins with pain in certain areas of the body. Numbness follows. Soon the skin in such spots loses its original color. It gets to be thick, glossy, and scaly. ... As the sickness progresses, the thickened spots become dirty sores and ulcers due to poor blood supply. The skin, especially around the eyes and ears, begins to bunch, with deep furrows between the swellings, so that the face of the afflicted individual begins to resemble that of a lion. Fingers drop off or are absorbed; toes are affected similarly. Eyebrows and eyelashes drop out. By this time one can see the person in this pitiable condition is a leper. By a touch of the finger one can also feel it. One can even smell it, for the leper emits a very unpleasant odor. Moreover, in view of the fact that the disease-producing agent frequently also attacks the larynx, the leper’s voice acquires a grating quality. His throat becomes hoarse, and you can now not only see, feel, and smell the leper, but you can hear his rasping voice. And if you stay with him for some time, you can even imagine a peculiar taste in your mouth, probably due to the odor” (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1927, p. 149; cited in William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p.388; and taken from *The MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary: Matthew 8-15*, by John MacArthur).

➤ We do not know how long these ten men had leprosy, or how the severity of their individual stages, but we can be assured that each one knew their condition was desperate. They were certainly aware that they could not make themselves well. In fact, they believed no one could make them well – no one but maybe this man named Jesus.

2. All ten lepers were earnestly wanting to be healed (vs.13)

➤ In a cry of desperation, having seen Jesus unexpectedly come to the outskirts of their village, shouted “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*” (vs.13). Even though their voices may have been impaired by their disease, they desperately wanted Jesus to hear them in the distance.

But they were not just shouting noise to be heard. They cry to Jesus was respectful and to the point: “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*” (vs.13). What all they knew about Jesus is unknown, but they certainly knew enough about Him to think that He could heal them. They even called Him “*Master*” (*epistatēs*) which was a specific designation given to a person of notable authority or power. This does not mean that they believed in Jesus as the Son (the Messiah) of God, but that they knew He had the power to heal them.

Notice that their cry was not a demand for justice but a plea for “*mercy*” (*eleeō*; vs.13). They had no ultimatums, and nothing to bargain with. They simply wanted Jesus to grant to them the miracle of healing, the blessing of being physically and socially restored.

➤ Contracting the disease of leprosy would not only affect (and infect) the individual physically, but also socially as well. Therefore, the life of the person who became leprous would be immediately, radically, completely and, most likely, permanently changed – changed for the worse. They were isolated from the rest of civilization, quarantined from their family, shunned by most of society and banished from the life they knew and used to live. To contract leprosy was, in effect, to be given an immediate death sentence.

✓**Illust:** “Weeks could drag into months and months into years. Quarantined persons became social outcasts, living outside the Israelite camp. They fended for themselves as best they could. Some perhaps received occasional supplies from relatives, but most were reduced to begging. Those who actually had the dreaded disease slowly wasted away. As the disease took away sensation, they easily injured themselves without feeling pain, leading to deformity and “half-eaten flesh” (Num. 12:12) and, eventually, death” (*What does the Bible say about...: The ultimate A to Z resource fully illustrated*, Thomas Nelson: Nashville, Tenn).

- ✓Illust: “If a leper even stuck his head inside a house, the house was pronounced unclean. It was illegal to greet a leper. Lepers had to remain at least 100 cubits away if they were upwind, and four cubits if they were downwind. Josephus, the Jewish historian, summed it up by saying that lepers were treated ‘as if they were, in effect, dead men’ – dead men walking. Indeed, to the rabbis the cure of the leper was as difficult as raising a person from the dead” (R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: Luke v.1*, p.167).
- In addition, leprosy was not only considered to be highly contagious and deadly, in Biblical times, but having the disease was also believed to be a divine punishment for sin. To have leprosy was to become a social and religious outcast. Unfortunately, people assumed that leprosy – along with almost every other “serious” disease (see Job 8:4-6; Lk.13:1-4; Jn.9:1-3,34) – was a sign of God’s judgment, and while God indeed used leprosy as a punishment for sin (e.g. “Miriam” Num.12:6-10; “Gahazi” 2Kgs.5:25-27; “Uzziah” 2Chron.26:19) it was erroneous to conclude that leper was stricken so by God because of some great personal sin. Nonetheless, the people in Jesus’ day drew this horrible and hurtful conclusion. Thus, the leper was considered to be physically, socially, and spiritually “unclean.”
- Lepers were social and religious outcasts. In reality, they had no life. Outside of the leper colony they were rebuffed, rejected, and repulsed. They were walking dead men, with no apparent hope of cure from their disease and no hope of forgiveness for their sin. It was a wretched, miserable, and desperate life. This was the state of the leper recorded in Luke 5:12 (also Matt.8:2; Mk.1:40), and the leprous man understood his hopeless condition and his desperate need for Jesus’ mercy. He had no doubt heard of Jesus’ miraculous works and desperately desired Jesus’ compassionate and cleansing touch.

3. All ten lepers were miraculously healed by Christ (vs.14)

- What Jesus did next was subtly amazing: “*When [Jesus] saw them he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests’*” (vs.14). At first glance, this is hardly impressive. In fact, it appears as though Jesus really did not do anything. He did not touch them and say, “*be clean*” as He earlier had done to a leper who approached Him (Matt.8:3; Mk.1:41; Lk.5:13). He did not “*spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva*” to anoint them as He did with the man who was born blind (Jn.9:6). Initially, Jesus did not even indicate that they were healed (as He so often did, and would soon do again). He simply told them – presumably shouting back in the distance – “*Go and show yourselves to the priests*” (vs.14). But the only reason why they would show themselves to the priests is so the priests could affirm that they were physically healed and allow them to rejoin society once again (after an 8-day process, as per Levitical law; Lev.13-14).

Luke 5:13-14 ~ “And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he charged him to tell no one, but ‘go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.’”

- It appears as though the miraculous healing did not actually occur until they began to obey Jesus’ command (“*Go and show yourselves to the priests*”, vs.14). For we read: “*And as they went they were cleansed*” (vs.14). Once they obeyed, they were healed. What a dramatic scene that must have been! Were they gradually healed as they journeyed to the priests, or were they instantly healed on the way?

One moment they were isolated together as a small pitiable, helpless, leprous colony. Now, as they began their long journey to the priests, they were simultaneously and supernaturally healed. All open sores and visible lesions had vanished. All pains were relieved. Every unsightly and odorous manifestation of the disease was gone. Every missing piece and deformity of the body was fully restored. Weakness gave way to strength. Feebleness gave way to vitality. A life once destined for pain and isolation, now pain-free and liberated.

4. All ten lepers were presumably thankful to be healed

➤ To say that a leper would be grateful to be healed, is like saying that Elon Musk is kind of rich. To be cured of leprosy was literally to be saved from a horrifying death. There can be no doubt that all ten lepers appreciated being healed. For just moments earlier, they were pleading for Jesus to heal them. It is what they wanted. Most likely, in fact, what they wanted most of all. Their problem lies not in the fact that most of them were not *truly* thankful.

✓ Illust: Not too long ago, I was watching the reality television gameshow *Alone*. For those who do not know, the contestants are stranded in an unpopulated area when they try to survive on their own for as long as possible. With limited gear, they are to build their own shelters and hunt/fish for their own food. On this one particular episode, a contestant had not eaten any meat/protein for many days. He was extremely hungry, and risked being removed from the game (for medical reasons). In this desperate condition, he went bowhunting. After a few hours, he shot and killed a squirrel. To say he was happy would be a severe understatement. He was gushing with gratitude, but it appeared to me that he did not know who to thank. Emotionally overwhelmed, he first thanked the squirrel for “sacrificing” his life (which was hilarious to me, because the squirrel really had no say in the sacrifice; technically, he was murdered). Later, the man thanked Mother Earth for providing him food. Then he repeatedly said “thank you” to apparently no one (I think, at one point, he may have even thanked his bow). I thought: “How tragic! This man is bursting with thanksgiving but refuses to express his thanks to God.” This is the plight of every non-Christian.

Rom 1:20-23 ~ “... they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”

➤ To be sure, each leper was glad to be healed. But only one knew who to thank. The others were perhaps eagerly wanting to begin the eight-day process of being pronounced clean by the priests. Perhaps they could not wait to share the news with their family and friends. Whatever the reason, nine men who were cured by Jesus of leprosy did not thank Jesus or praise God.

Can you even imagine? Well, actually, we probably all can imagine. For we see it all the time in the world, and have most likely witnessed it in our own lives.

5. Only one leper was truly thankful (vs.15-18)

➤ Beginning in verse fifteen we read: “*Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan*” (vs.15-16). All ten lepers saw that they were healed. In fact, it’s possible (if they stayed together) that all ten lepers saw that one another were healed. And yet, shockingly, scandalously, only one of the ten “*turned back, praising God with a loud voice*” (vs.15).

He immediately left the procession to the priests, in a resolute determination to shout praises to [“*praising*”; *doxazō*, to extol or glorify] God. He knew exactly who to thank, and nothing would stop him from loudly [“*loud voice*”; *megas phōnē*] expressing his gratitude to God. Uninhibited, unhindered praise.

When he reached Jesus, he “*fell on his face at Jesus’ feet*” (vs.16), in a posture of worship and humility, and “[*gave*] *Him thanks*” (*eucharisteō*; vs.16). This is a clear indication that – even though he was a Samaritan (vs.16) – this man believed Jesus to be God. For, as Jesus’ words would make clear (vs.18), this man associated Jesus’ healing as an act of God, and he responded by worshipping at His feet. Even though he was a Samaritan, he knew that such a posture constituted worship – worship which was to be reserved for God alone!

A. He alone recognized Jesus as God

B. He alone revered Jesus as God

➤ Jesus underscored the evil of ingratitude with three rhetorical questions: *“Then Jesus answered, ‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’”* (vs.17-18). This is an inglorious picture of the evil of ingratitude.

The truth is, Jesus was quickly discarded by the other nine as soon as they got what they wanted. As the saying goes, “In times of crisis, God hears many strange voices.” Such voices are not strange because God does not know them, but because they only come to Him in time of need. Their “belief” in God is superficial and self-serving. They have no real desire to worship God; no real sense of their need for God; no humility toward God; no fear of God.

To them, God is like a cosmic Santa Clause who is supposed to lavish them with good things. They pray only to get things from God. They attend church only when its convenient or when they want something from God. They read their Bibles only in search of encouragement or wisdom. They plead for His mercy but never praise Him; they receive His blessings but never thank Him.

➤ This is what distinguished the one from the other nine.

6. Only one leper was truly saved (vs.19)

➤ Then Jesus turned to the Samaritan whom He had healed, who was worshiping at His feet, and said to him: *“Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well”* (vs.19). At first glance, this is a bit perplexing. Why would Jesus pronounce this man well? All ten lepers were already made well. They all had experienced a complete healing from Jesus. Why would Jesus tell this one man that he is now made well?

The answer is somewhat obscured in our English translation. In saying *“your faith has made you well”* (vs.19), Jesus was not referring to his “cleansing” (*katharizō*; vs.14, 17), or his “healing” (*iaomai*; vs.15) – both of which had already occurred for all ten lepers. More specifically, Jesus told this one man – the man who returned to worship Jesus and give praise to God – that his faith had “saved” him (*sōzō*; *“made him well”*, vs.19; see Lk.7:50; 8:48; 18:42).

➤ The other nine lepers regained their physical health, but only the one who turned and worshiped Christ gained spiritual life.

Conclusion

➤ In the Bible, leprosy is more than a horrific physical disease. It is also a spiritual picture of the horrors of sin. Sin is a spiritual leprosy of the soul (Jer.17:9; Rom.3:10-12, 23; 6:23). Whereas leprosy destroys the body, sin damns the soul. Just as leprosy can only be cured by God, so sin finds its only cure in God.

✓ Illust: “We are by nature lepers, and the God of all mercy and grace, through His beloved Son, has made us clean if we are in Christ Jesus. We all ought to shout our thanksgiving to Him and fall at His feet in honor, adoration, and worship. We’ve been made clean, and we come to give praise and thanks” (R.C. Sproul; *Luke: An Expository Commentary*; p.444).

➤ Apart from a saving faith in – and the saving grace of – Jesus Christ, the sinner is doomed to spend their life on earth separated from God’s love and mercy, and destined to spend eternity in hell enduring God’s wrath and judgment. Sin is a spiritual leprosy of the soul, and the sinner finds their only hope, cure, and life in Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:1-5 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved”