

*Too Blessed to Bless*  
Luke 17:11-19  
Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Bethany Baptist Church  
November 24, 2019

*...pray...*

Is there something you *want* (or need) that is so *wonderful*, so *desirable*, that getting would make you *crazy with joy*?

But does your “*dream blessing*” seen so far beyond reach you can hardly *imagine* ever *possessing* it?

How would you act if someone (God?) *answered* your prayers beyond your *wildest* expectations?

Beyond all you can *ask* or even *think*...

**Turn with me in your NT to the Gospel of Luke 17:11-19.**

This Lord’s Day we are thinking about Thanksgiving...*gratitude*.

This is actually a story about disappointing *in*gratitude...*unthankfulness*.

Kind of an *anti-gratitude expose*...

But **not** *completely*!

In fact, for the *thankful*, and the *faithful*, the blessings can be even *better* than they *asked* or even *imagined*!

**Are you thankful for *your* blessings?**

- 1. *Everyone* comes to God when they *want* a blessing (vv.11-14).**
- 2. *Who* comes *back* to God when they *get* their blessing (vv.15-19)?**

**They wanted to be *healed...and you would too.***

1. But to begin with, **Passover** was approaching. It would be Jesus' *final* Passover, and Luke spends a lot of ink *documenting* His journey.
  - a. So what was the Lord *doing*, heading north, *away* from Jerusalem and through the land of the *despised Samaritans*?
    - i. *Samaritans* were a mixed race of *Jewish* and *Gentile* peoples, who emerged out of the years of *Exile*.
    - ii. And they practiced their own brand of *religion*. (Perhaps you remember the Samaritan *woman at the well* (John 4) who asked Jesus *which people* were *worshipping* at the *right place*.)
  - b. Now Jesus had raised His friend **Lazarus** from grave, *days earlier*, just outside **Jerusalem**, in the village of **Bethany**.
  - c. He then *avoided* the Jewish authorities, who sought to *kill* him, by going from **Bethany** to the city of **Ephraim** (*north* of Jerusalem, *near* Samaria).
  - d. From **Ephraim**, the Lord traveled north through **Samaria** towards **Galilee**.
  - e. In **Galilee**, He planned to *intercept* family and friends making the *annual Passover pilgrimage* back south through **Jericho**, and from there on up to **Jerusalem**.
  - f. *Along the way*, Jesus approached this *unnamed village* near the border between *Samaria* and *Galilee*.

2. And as Jesus *approached* the village, our story *begins*... One thing they all had in *common*: *leprosy*. Surely you've heard the saying: "*Misery loves company*." The **ten men** were *bonded together* by a *common misery*.
  - a. *Leprosy* describes a variety of *skin diseases* that have been widely known since ancient times. The most prominent, perhaps, is *Hansen's Disease*.
    - i. *Leprosy* is caused by *bacterium*, communicable by *touch* and *breath*.
    - ii. It attacks *skin*, *mucus membrane*, and *nerves* (esp. *hands* and *feet*).
    - iii. The resulting *loss of feeling* leads to other problems that cause damage to *face*, *hands* and *feet* (from *cuts*, *burns*, *falls*).
    - iv. Thus lepers were often *disfigured* and *disabled*.
  - b. But in **First Century Judaism**, leprosy was not just a *health* issue; fundamentally it was *religious* issue.
    - i. The **Levitical Law** labelled lepers ceremonially *unclean*.
    - ii. There were special places for lepers in the *synagogue*, and thus these men could no longer fully enter into the *spiritual life* of the *community*.
    - iii. A leper had to stay at least **six feet** away from his neighbor (wife & children), but if the neighbor was *downwind*, then the leper had to move off at least **150 feet**!
    - iv. And leprosy was held to be **God's judgment**. So lepers were *social outcasts*.

3. Now **one thing** the **ten** all had in *common* was their dreaded *leprosy*, but **one thing** was different: one man was a *Samaritan*.
4. And one thing they all *cried* for...and *received*! **Healing!** “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*”
  - a. **All ten** kept their distance; **all ten** raised their desperate voices.
  - b. They didn’t even say *have mercy on ... what*. Who could *mistake* their need!?!?
  - c. Jesus **didn’t** touch them. He didn’t even *comment* on their *condition*.
  - d. He simply commanded them to *go* and *present* themselves to the priests. That was to *confirm* their *cleansing*, an elaborate process that took **eight days**.
  - e. The **ten** took the Master at His word, and left together. Even the despised Samaritan – an *outcast* among *outcasts*!
  - f. **V.14.b** – *And as they were going, they were healed!*
5. Jesus healed *with a word*. **Not just one leper, but all ten!**
  - a. Who *creates* galaxies, *calms* storms, *multiplies* loaves, *forgives* sins, *heals* lepers...with *just His word*?
  - b. Who has *pity* on the outcast? Who dares *love* the foreigner? Who *heals* even the ungrateful? ... *Who is the friend of sinners?*
  - c. **God!** God *among* us! *And Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!*
  - d. **Who** *heals* lepers? His name is **Jesus**.

**But how easily we forget. Who goes back to God when *all their dreams come true*?**

1. Yet **one** returned. **Read vv.15-16a.** You have to *wonder* if the *solo* Samaritan in the *chorus* of Jews felt *awkward* being sent to their priests.
  - a. But he never had to *cross that bridge*...
  - b. Because *as he went*, he *looked* at his *hands* (strong)...he *touch*ed his *face* (clear)...he *felt* the *ground* (steady beneath his rapidly moving feet)! *He was cleansed... the leprosy was gone!*
  - c. And as the **nine** continued on, the **one** stopped. Then he *turned around*. He *went back* to Jesus: a *healed* man and a **new** man! A man of *faith*.
  - d. Do you see the **four** evidences of his *faith*? He *returned*, he *shouted*, he *worshipped*, he *thanked*.
    - i. He *turned back* to Jesus (while the **ten** went on)!
    - ii. He *glorified* God - he “*used his outdoor voice*”! His “*all the way up volume*” was evidence of *great, spontaneous emotion*.
      1. Leprosy sometimes attacks the *vocal chords*; perhaps this was the *first time* in a *long time* this man could **shout**!
      2. Just minutes earlier we heard a united, desperate *choir of ten*, now there’s a *solo performance*. A one man *Halleluiahs Chorus*!
    - iii. He *fell on his face at the feet of Jesus*.
      1. When *men* bow before *angels*, angels *rebuke* them.
      2. After all, the **Ten Commandments** admonish us to worship **none** but God.
      3. Yet Jesus *accepted* the Samaritan’s worship – *what does that tell us about Jesus*? He’s **God**, and He *knows* it!

2. *And he was a Samaritan.* Does that seem just *tacked on* to the end of **v.16**?

- a. **AT Robertson** says this simple statement is **no** *afterthought*. The leper's surprising identity makes its point about *gratitude, faith, ... and Christ*.
- b. Who would have expected a **Samaritan** to *get it right*...?
- c. And over and against his *wonderfully shocking grateful faith...where* were the *nine*?

3. That's **Jesus'** question! In fact, He asked it **three** ways!

- a. "*Were there not **ten** cleansed?*" That would have made His *point*...
- b. "*But the **nine** – they are **where**?*" That's the *literal* translation.
- c. "*Was **no one** found who returned to give glory to God, except this **foreigner**?*" He's **not** *dissing* the Samaritan, but **where** are the *Sons of Abraham*?
- d. **Three** questions, except, I doubt it's simply a set of *questions*.
  - i. Jesus *knew* when He sent them away that He had *healed* all **ten**.
  - ii. Jesus *knew* when He sent them away that only **one** would *return*.
  - iii. Jesus *knew* when He sent them away that the **one** would be the **Samaritan**.
  - iv. After all, the Lord who *heals* us and the Lord who *saves* us is the Lord who *knows* us! ... He knows *everything*!
- e. I believe Jesus' *staccato trifecta of questions* was a lesson to His disciples and friends about *thankfulness, worship, and saving faith*.
  - i. **No** *religious heritage* and **no** *temporal blessing*, alone, can **extract** *thankfulness* and *saving faith* from a soul **won't** see any further than *this life's problems ... and this life's blessings*.
  - ii. But **that's** the **nine**, and they'd already *left* the Master in the *rear-view mirror*.

4. And so they missed the *best blessing of all* (19): “*Stand up and go; your faith has saved you!*”
- a. But does **your translation** read: “*your faith has made you well?*”
  - b. That rendering *robs* Jesus’ words of their *power* and real *meaning*.
  - c. Up to **v.19** we’ve seen **two** words used almost *synonymously*: “*cleansed*” (14, 17) and “*healed*” (15).
  - d. But as Jesus speaks to the Samaritan (19) He introduces a completely *new word* – but **not new** at all to the **Gospel!** It’s the common Gr verb **σωζω** – *rescue, deliver, ... save*.
    - i. “**Saved**” as in “*saved from God’s judgment by forgiveness of sins.*”
    - ii. “**Saved**” as in **John 3:17** – *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him;* and **Eph 2:8,9** – *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
  - e. The surprising Samaritan had cried out to Jesus: “*Master, have mercy on me!*” And *seeing* his faith, the **Great Physician** (*by whose stripes we are healed*) *lifted* his leprosy, *accepted* his worship, and *saved* his soul!
    - i. Beloved, God is *able to do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all that we ask or think!*
    - ii. And this morning, that’s *still* our Jesus! “*Hallelujah! What a Savior!*”

## Some lessons about gratitude, worship, and faith.

The Word of God *documents* this encounter to teach us **two** truths:

That *saving faith* is evidenced by *genuine worship*, no matter *who* the *worshiper* is. Jesus is the *Friend of Sinners*.

But in **contrast**, *religious privilege* and even this life's *apparent blessings*, are **no** *guarantee* of eternal life.

The **nine** Jews *cried to Jesus, were healed by Jesus, ... and quickly forgot Jesus*.

- Kind of a *fox-hole faith*.

The **Samaritan** *cried to Jesus, trusted Jesus, ran back to Jesus, thanked Jesus, humbled himself before Jesus, ... and was saved by Jesus*.

**Citizens** of the *richest nation on the planet...*

**Children** of the *Bible Belt...*

**Where** are *you* this morning...?

Moving on to *accumulate* next year's blessings?

Or *bowing in gratitude* at Jesus' feet?

I pray each of us would hear Him say this morning: "*Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.*"

*...pray...*