

INI Hymns:  
3rd Sunday in Lent

**Luke 17:11-19**

Sermon 26-17  
3/8/26

*“11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”*

*14 So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” 19 And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”*

### **Dear Fellow Redeemed,**

All the accounts of Jesus healing are really precious. They show us Jesus’ power as the Son of God and His love and compassion for people. When He sees someone suffering He wants to help. He never turned anyone away. Doesn’t that encourage us in our praying for every need? We know He truly cares. Every account of Jesus’ healing also has a lesson to teach. No big surprise, this one is a lesson about Thankfulness. Throughout the Bible, God’s people are told to give thanks. We will use a familiar verse in several Psalms as our theme.

### **Oh, give thanks to the Lord!**

First of all this account of the ten lepers shows us a distinction between joyfulness and thankfulness. They are not the same. A thankful heart is always joyful, but joyful heart is not necessarily always thankful. We see that in the 10 lepers who were cleansed. You can be sure that they were all overjoyed! They were cured of a horrible disease. Leprosy at that time was a sentence to a long, slow, lonely death; ostracized from society and from family as your body slowly rots away. Now, suddenly, they were healed. They could return to their families. There is no way that they were not all bubbling over with joy. Yet only one of them returned to give thanks to the One who gave them that tremendous gift.

How about you, are you just joyful, or are you thankful? God has blessed us with so many reasons for joyfulness. But do you always think about how those things that make you joyful are gracious gifts from God and thank Him joyfully? I’m sure you do remember to thank God for many things, but I’m guessing we could all use the reminder that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights.” James 1:17 If we learn to recognize everything as a gift of God’s grace we will be much more thankful, and that will make us much more joyful. Our joy is greatly diminished when we take God’s blessings for granted. We just expect them and so we aren’t thankful and we find no special joy in them. In fact we may even complain about God’s blessings because they are not what we think they should be. Our joy is also greatly diminished when we focus on the trials and struggles in our lives and become blind to the multitude of blessings God still gives to us every day.

This account of healing the ten lepers especially reminds us of our greatest reason for joyful thanksgiving to God. Leprosy has some things in common with sin and unbelief. One of the main symptoms of Leprosy is a loss of feeling. A person with leprosy doesn’t feel

pain. That sounds great right? Nobody likes pain, but pain is given by God for our protection. It alerts us to the fact that something is wrong. Without pain, we wouldn't notice injuries or take care of them. For lepers, scrapes and cuts go unnoticed. That can lead to infection and tissue damage, and things just get worse and worse.

God describes the unconverted man in a similar way as being "Past feeling." Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 4:17-19, "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, **being past feeling**, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." The unconverted man has no feeling of sin and separation from God. They blindly live in opposition to God and don't realize something is seriously wrong. They feel no pain. Some, are like the Priests and Pharisees, they think that they are good children of God. They have no idea that they are separated from God and under his wrath. Others are so far gone that they even deny the existence of God and are content to live without God in the world. So they are blindly running headlong into the pit of hell.

Jesus has saved us from this dreadful leprosy of sin and unbelief. Jesus has reawakened our spiritual nerve centre, our conscience, with His law so that we see and know the destructiveness of our sins. He awakens our conscience to feel the guilt of our sins and how they have separated us from God. His law shows us the dreadful curse upon our sin. It's not pleasant, but that is the start of our healing. It's that guilt and sorrow that makes us call upon Jesus like the Lepers did, then He gives us His grace and forgiveness and restores our life with God. Oh, we should thank God every day with all our heart that He has healed us from that dreadful leprosy of sin? That is what our worship is, giving thanks to God for His amazing grace.

Think about Jesus' last words to the Samaritan who came back to thank Jesus. "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." What did Jesus mean by that? Did He mean that the Samaritan's faith is the reason he was cured of his leprosy? Jesus literally said, "Your faith has saved you." The Greek word SOZO is used both of our eternal salvation and of saving or delivering from any trouble. You can be saved from your enemies or saved from a disease and you can be saved from death and hell.

Since he was just healed, it might seem like Jesus was talking about his leprosy, but the other nine lepers were all cured too. Was their faith the cause of their cure as well? Jesus only said that about this one. They were all cured because Jesus had compassion and chose to cure them all. That Samaritan's faith saved him from more than his leprosy. It saved him from sin and death. It restored his life with God and gave him eternal life. His faith made him truly well in body and in soul, both physically and spiritually, temporally and eternally.

What was the evidence of his faith? What set him apart from the other nine lepers? Of course it was the fact that he returned to give thanks to Jesus. That was an act of faith. It was an act of worship. Let's take a closer look at the actions of the Samaritan. This was more than just saying thank you.

First of all he RETURNED! They were already well on their way to show themselves to the priests. He returned. He had to go out of his way, delay his plans to go to the priest and be declared clean so he could go home to his family. So our worship begins with setting

aside all other plans and going out of our way to worship God. Worship is not just a matter of convenience that we do if it doesn't interfere with our life. It is an act of putting God first in our life.

Then we read, "And with a loud voice glorified God." Our worship is about glorifying God. That is acknowledging His supreme greatness, holiness, and love, and then honoring, and praising Him with our whole heart and life. It is giving all credit, and honor to God rather than oneself. We often emphasize our need to come to worship to hear God's word and to grow in our faith. That is absolutely our greatest need. That is what keeps our faith alive and well. That's what keeps us rejoicing with thankful hearts. But let's not forget that coming here to worship is also so we can glorify God.

Finally the Samaritan "fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks." Worship is an act of humbling ourselves before God. To fall down on his face was a statement that he was totally indebted to Jesus. He was placing His life in Jesus' service. Worship is submitting our hearts and our lives to Him in thankfulness.

Worship begins here where we return to Jesus and glorify God, but true worship extends far beyond the couple of hours we spend together in church. True worship extends into our daily life. It is living in obedience to His commands and behaving in ways that show His love, mercy, and truth in our own actions toward others. The Apostle Paul urges us in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." It truly is reasonable to give your whole life to serve the one who gave His life for you.

What makes the difference between joyful service to God and that service that becomes a drudgery? Isn't it thankfulness? If we offer some service, whether it is in the congregation or in our family or in our community, if we are moved to do it out of thankfulness to God for all that He has done, then we will find great joy in serving Him. If, on the other hand, we are doing it out of a sense of obligation or seeking some praise and recognition, then your service will be a drudgery and you will resent having to do it. Thankfulness always brings joyfulness, even in the acts of service that we do.

So always remember what Jesus has done for you. He has saved you from a far greater fate than leprosy or any other disease. If that Samaritan fell down on his face to worship Jesus and glorify God for healing him of his leprosy, how much more shouldn't we offer our lives to God in joyful worship and service to Him for saving us from the leprosy of sin and eternal death?

There is a lady in the room right next door to George that I visit. Her name is Bea. She is mostly blind and confined to her bed or wheelchair. The first thing she said to me when I stepped into her room this past Friday and told her who I was, she said, "I can't wait to get to heaven to tell Jesus how thankful I am for all that He has done for me." That's the attitude that leads to joyful worship. It will make us respond with the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." And we will truly serve the Lord with gladness.

Amen.