

LESSON 5

JULY 4, 2021

UNIT I. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT FAITH EXPRESSING THANKS

DEVOTIONAL READING: Isaiah 56:1-8

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Leviticus 13–14; Luke 5:12-16; 17:11-19

PRINT PASSAGES: Leviticus 13:45-46; Luke 17:11-19

KEY VERSE

One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.
(Luke 17:15, KJV)

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One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. (Luke 17:15, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Explore reasons why only one of ten healed lepers turned back to Jesus in thanksgiving.
- Sense the need in your life for increased expressions of gratitude to God.
- Develop a plan for showing thanksgiving to God and others on a daily basis.

KEY TERMS

Compassion (Luke 17:13)—Greek: *eleeó* (el-eh-eh'-o): “pity” (NIV) or “mercy” (KJV).

Lepers (Luke 17:12)—Greek: *lepros* (lep-ros'): persons afflicted with leprosy (a skin disease); “men who had leprosy” (NIV).

Lifted (Luke 17:13 [KJV only])—Greek: *airó* (ah'-ee-ro): to raise, take up, lift—in this case the voice.

Met (Luke 17:12)—Greek: *apantaó* (ap-an-tah'-o): to have gone to meet; encountered.

Show (Luke 17:14)—Greek: *epideiknumi* (ep-ee-dike'-noo-mee): to show; to prove; display; “shew” (KJV).

Unclean (Leviticus 13:45)—Hebrew: *tame* (taw-may'): impure; contaminated.

INTRODUCTION

The phrase “much obliged” simply means “to be indebted or grateful.” This expression of gratitude was commonly used in previous generations but is seldom heard today. Its synonym, a simple “thank you,” seems to be dwindling in circulation as well. We live in a day and time when many feel a sense of entitlement to whatever is given or offered to them. In public, persons are not as gracious in verbally acknowledging gifts and routine or random acts of kindness. This cannot be the way of the Christian. Our expressions of gratitude should extend to anyone who has blessed us with kindness. The same spirit of gratitude that we lift to God for what He has done should extend, in some degree, to others. As we grow in faith, we should also grow in gratitude to God for His continual blessings—seen and unseen, known and unknown. We can even be “much obliged” for the ups and downs, the twists and turns, and the open doors and the closed ones. Because we are assured of God’s love for us, we can trust that whatever God allows is only that

which serves our long-term or eternal best interest. A grateful heart transforms one's perspective on every experience of life, moving us to thank God even for the things that He has blocked or spared us from enduring. In difficult times, we can rejoice because God has allowed the opportunity for us to fellowship with Him in His sufferings.

THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Jesus had just concluded teaching lessons on living a godly life through parables. He spoke to the disciples about the things that cause people to stumble, with a particular focus on forgiveness. The disciples responded by asking the Lord to “increase their faith” (17:1-5). Jesus gave a brief lesson on faith, using the example of a mustard seed (verses 6-10). As they continued sharing, they came upon a gathering of ten lepers who pleaded to Jesus for mercy. According to the Levitical Law, those who were stricken with leprosy were required to live outside the city in camps, so as not to defile anyone, spiritually or medically (see Leviticus 13:46b—part of today's lesson). The lepers' shared misery brought them together despite their religious and ethnic differences. The plight of leprosy overrode all other social and religious distinctions. While most people shunned and avoided lepers, Jesus showed no reservation regarding His proximity to the ceremonially unclean men that begged Him for mercy. Jesus demonstrates a measure of compassion that we should extend to those who have been rejected by society.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A Cry of Unclean Grief (*Leviticus 13:45-46*)

KJV

45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, *Unclean*, unclean.

46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

NIV

45 “Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, ‘*Unclean!* *Unclean!*’

46 “As long as they have the disease they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.”

Our lesson for today begins with a reference to the Levitical Law regarding the disease of leprosy and the issue of cleanliness. In accordance with the Law, a person who has been diagnosed as having leprosy must identify himself or herself by wearing clothes that are torn with a completely shaved head (verse 45). The practice helped to identify lepers from a distance. Additionally, the person with the disease was required to cover the lower part of his or her face and yell, “Unclean! Unclean!” when they entered a town (verse 45). The covering of the lower part of the face served the same function as the medical masks commonly seen in public. The chanting of “Unclean!” was a warning for others to keep their distance so they would not be infected or declared ceremonially unclean according to the Law. According to the Law, lepers were required to remain separated from the general society, living alone or with others who shared the same affliction (verse 46). Lepers were forced to live in social isolation, away from family,

friends, and all that was familiar. Often the social consequences of leprosy were more devastating than the medical ones.

What do you think?

What are the pros and cons of labeling people and isolating them as outcasts? Name some groups who have received such treatment. How can the church minister to them?

A Cry for Unexplainable Grace (Luke 17:11-14)

KJV

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there *met* him ten men that were *lepers*, which stood afar off:

13 And they *lifted* up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have *mercy* on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go *shew* yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

NIV

11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. **12** As he was going into a village, ten *men who had leprosy* met him. They stood at a distance

13 and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have *pity* on us!”

14 When he saw them, he said, “Go, *show* yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

Our lesson shifts from the Law to the lepers’ encounter with the Lord. Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem and traveled a path that took Him between the borders of Samaria and Galilee (verse 11). Jews and Samaritans had a long-standing scornful relationship toward each other. Jews detested Samaritans as a lower-class people of mixed breed and mixed religion; the Samaritans hated the Jews for their mistreatment and theological differences. Do you have such groups within your church or community? The text states that Jesus was headed toward a village when ten men came toward Him, stopping at a distance from Him (verse 12). This shows that despite their urgent need, they had the proper respect for the current legal system. From a distance, they cried in unison, with a loud and passionate plea, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (verse 13). Their cry drew Jesus’ attention to them and their needs. He looked at them and, seeing their needs, instructed them to go and show themselves to the priest (verse 14a). As was required by Law, after one was healed from a disease, that person was to go and show himself or herself to the priest as an official certification of cleanliness. In obedience, the ten men headed to see the priest while still diseased. But, while they were on their way, something happened. The lepers who left sick and unclean were healed as they walked by faith (verse 14b). Their cries to Jesus led to a miraculous display of God’s grace.

What do you think?

What obstacles keep people from trusting God and taking the appropriate steps of faith? Why do you think some wait until they are utterly desperate before calling on the Lord for help?

A Cry of Uncontrollable Gratitude (*Luke 17:15-19*)

KJV

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, 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 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

NIV

15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.

16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

18 "Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

As the lepers walked to see the priest, they noticed their healing and release from the disease. Overwhelmed with gratitude, one of them turned back to find Jesus and thank Him for the miracle (verse 15). This lone worshipper ran back to Jesus and began praising Him as he fell at Jesus' feet and thanked Him for the healing (verse 16). The leper replaced his cries of "Lord, have mercy" and "Unclean, unclean" (Leviticus 13:45) with a joyful cry of praise ending with heartfelt worship. The grateful leper was not a Jew but a Samaritan (verse 16). Knowing that all ten had received the same healing, Jesus asked the Samaritan where the others were (verse 17). If one could return to thank Him, why not the others? Given the magnitude of the miracle, how could they withhold their gratitude? Jesus openly noted that the only one who returned to give God glory for his blessing was the Samaritan, one who was socially regarded as an outsider of the house of God (verse 18). Jesus then told the man to get up and continue on his journey; his faith had made him completely well (verse 19). He had no need to be proclaimed clean by a priest—for whom the Son has set free is free indeed (see John 8:36).

What do you think?

Is there a proper way to thank God for His goodness and grace?

A CLOSING THOUGHT

This unit dealt with Jesus' teaching about faith. We have seen examples of incredible faith in the midst of hatred, discrimination, and pressure. God is able to work great miracles of release and relief if we can trust Him. Our future deliverance and breakthrough are connected to our faith.

YOUR LIFE

This week, consider your personal level of faith and boldness. Are you willing to give God glory even when others are silent or absent?

YOUR WORLD!

This week, share your personal reflection with a fellow believer and develop a plan to hold each other accountable for doing better at attending Sunday services, attending Bible study, becoming more active in a ministry, and so forth.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, help us to turn to You when we are in need. Take away our hesitation to offer well-deserved gratitude to You and to others who have touched us with kindness. We humbly submit ourselves to Your will. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

CONCLUSION (Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

While reading the background Scripture, consider this thought: "What gift could strengthen you?"

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

The Power of The Gospel *(July 5-11, 2021)*

MONDAY, July 5:	"Apollos and Paul, Builders"	(1 Corinthians 3:1-11)
TUESDAY, July 6:	"Entrusted to Take Gospel to Gentiles"	(Galatians 2:1-10)
WEDNESDAY, July 7:	"Grace and Peace to All"	(Romans 1:1-7)
THURSDAY, July 8:	"God's Righteous Wrath"	(Romans 1:18-23)
FRIDAY, July 9:	"God's Actions Are Fair and Just"	(Romans 1:24-32)
SATURDAY, July 10:	"God's Righteous Actions for Saints, Sinners"	(2 Peter 2:4-9)
SUNDAY, July 11:	"The Gospel Changes Jews and Gentiles"	(Romans 1:8-17)