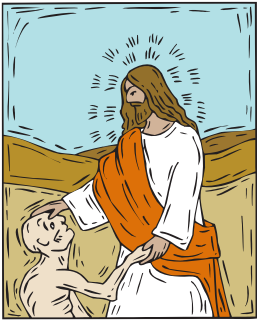




## Jesus Heals the Ten Lepers

Luke 17:11-19



In His mercy, Jesus healed ten men who had a terrible skin disease. Only one of the ten returned to praise God and thank Jesus. We should follow the example of the one and live our lives in gratitude to our Savior.

## Day #1: Cast Out

Do you remember the last time you were sick with a fever? Your mom or dad told you that you couldn't go to school or play with your friends until your fever was gone. Everyone in your house was probably careful not to touch anything after you, so they would not catch your germs. This might have made you feel a bit lonely. But, a fever usually lasts just a couple days, and then you were able to go back to your normal way of life - playing with friends, and eating with your family. Today we will read about ten men who had a very serious disease. Without a miracle, they were destined to live out the rest of their lives in isolation.

Leprosy is a terrible skin disease. Leprosy causes bumps and sores on the skin. It also affects the nerves. It can cause numbness in the hands, arms, feet, and legs. Leprosy can cause muscle weakness and even blindness. Before there was any treatment, leprosy would eventually make a person look disfigured.

Leprosy was a common disease a long time ago. Today, it is not common, but there are still people in some parts of the world with the disease. Leprosy is an infectious disease. That means it is very easy to "catch" leprosy. Back before any medications were created, people with leprosy had to leave their homes and live outside of the community. They had to yell out a warning when they came near other people so those who were well would stay far away from those who were contagious.

*The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp. - Leviticus 13:45-46 (NIV)*

One day, Jesus came across a group of men with the disease.

*Now on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As He was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" - Luke 17:11-13 (NIV)*

These ten men were together because they were not allowed to go near anyone else. Notice, these ten men stood at a distance from Jesus. These men were desperate to be healed. They called out to the right person. They called out to Jesus because they believed He had the ability to heal them. And they called Him, "Master." By using this term, they showed that they believed He had the authority to heal them. A person only calls someone else "Master" when he is willing to place himself under the control of that person. Tomorrow, we will see that Jesus did have the ability and authority to heal these men.

### Day #1 continued:



Jesus wants us to understand the concept of authority. We are to put ourselves under the control of Jesus by following His commands. Just as the leprosy men asked Jesus to take control of their illness, we are to submit every part of our life to Jesus' control.

## Day #2: The Faith to "Go"

As we learned yesterday, having leprosy not only harmed the person's body, but it also crushed the person's spirit. Once a person caught the disease, he could no longer live with his family and friends. He had to live alone, or with other people who had leprosy. He could not go to a job to earn a living. He had to depend on the charity of others just to have food to eat. The religious leaders of the day thought that anyone with leprosy was spiritually unclean. They could no longer go to worship God in the temple (2 Chronicles 26:21).

The ten men called out to Jesus for healing. Jesus responded:



*He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. - Luke 17:14 (NLT)*

Jesus could have cured them on the spot, but instead, He told them to go to the priests. According to the law given to Moses, each person with a skin disease had to be examined by a priest. The priest had specific instructions written in the law that outlined when a person's illness was infectious. The priest would look the person over very carefully. Then the priest would announce if the person was "clean" or "unclean" (Leviticus 13:1-46). The last time these men had seen the priest, the priest had pronounced them **unclean**. It would take great faith for them to go back - especially *before* they were healed! Luke 17:14 tells us that, "as they went, they were cleansed."

What do you think they thought when they saw their skin returning to normal? Suddenly, their numbness left. For the first time, possibly in years, they could feel the rocky ground beneath their feet as they ran down the road. The town in the distance became clear in their sight as the disease left their eyes. They looked forward to hugging their loved ones once again because their bodies were restored.

It was the **faith** of the ten lepers that enabled them to go before they saw results. They had not yet been healed, but they believed in Jesus' word. They did not fear being laughed at by returning to the priests before they were healed. Jesus said to go. They LISTENED and OBEYED because of their faith.



Ask God for faith that will enable you to trust Him - even *before* you see results.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. - Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)*

## Day #3: Gratitude of One

Think back to the last time you gave a gift to someone. How did the person respond? Were they grateful? Did they thank you? If you have ever given a gift or done a favor for someone who was ungrateful, you know it is

### Day #3 continued:

a very disappointing feeling. We naturally feel that the bigger the gift or favor, the more grateful the recipient should be.

After the ten diseased men realized they were completely healed, what do you think their response was?

*One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him - and he was a Samaritan.*

*Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then He said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." - Luke 17:15-19 (NIV)*

Only one man returned to thank Jesus! This man had a completely correct response. He poured out his genuine gratitude for the One who could do what no one else could do. This man's life was given back to him. His pain was relieved. His grotesque appearance was gone. And, perhaps best of all, his isolation was over. He praised God in a loud voice! He threw himself at Jesus' feet in thankfulness. But where were the other nine men? They did not return to Jesus.

We are even told that the one grateful man was a Samaritan. Because Jesus calls this one a foreigner, we can assume the others were Jews. The Jewish people were God's chosen people. They, above all others, should have recognized God's hand in their healing. How was it that God's chosen people, who knew God's power and promises, did not take the time to praise God? Yet, the outsider, who knew very little about who God was, fell to his knees in worship.

Are you most like the nine, or the one? We must not only feel gratitude inwardly, but we must show it **outwardly**. When we show our gratitude to God, others will learn of His greatness.

*Give thanks to the Lord, and proclaim His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done. - Psalm 105:1 (NLT)*

## Day #4: Touching Lepers

We may wonder how the ten lepers even knew about Jesus. How did they know to call out to Him in the first place? The first time we see Jesus interact with a person who was infected with leprosy was shortly after He called Peter and the other fishermen to follow Him.

*While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged Him, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*

*Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. - Luke 5:12-13 (NIV)*

Word of Jesus' healing power began to spread (Luke 5:15). Imagine what amazing news this would have been to all those who had been plagued with leprosy!

The gospel of Mark gives us a wonderful insight into the heart of Jesus when He healed this man. Mark 1:40 says Jesus was, "Filled with compassion." What a beautiful phrase that describes our Savior! Compassion means, "A deep awareness of and sympathy for another's suffering, coupled with the deep desire to relieve it." The Bible tells of Jesus' compassion time and time again (Matthew 14:14; 20:34; Luke 7:13).

Consider this man with leprosy. He had been cast out of his home. Everyone knew his body was unclean, and they thought he was spiritually unclean. It was even written in the law that no one could go near him. No one had touched him in years. And yet, the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, reached out and **touched him**. Jesus touched the

### Day #4 continued:

UNTOUCHABLE! What a blessing even Jesus' touch was to this man.

We must remember how those around us need a touch from Jesus. Today, Jesus uses Christian believers to reach out to those in our world who are hurting. Read the verse below and discuss *why* God comforts us.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV)*

## Day #5: What About Us?

Take a moment to imagine you were one of the ten men with leprosy. Imagine your despair when, in the midst of your worst physical suffering, you would have been thrown out of your own town. People would have had nothing to do with you. When you came near, people would have scurried far from you. When anyone saw you, they would point and yell, "Unclean!" How would it feel? Now imagine one day, this exceptional man, Jesus, simply spoke, and you were made clean.

As ugly and painful as leprosy is, we live in a condition that is much worse. We live in the condition of sin. The Bible tells us we have all chosen to sin (Romans 3:23). In a way, our story this week is a picture of our sin disease and Jesus' restoration of us.

The ten men knew without a doubt that they had a terrible problem. They were physically sick, and their sickness caused them to be separated from all those who were "clean." They could do nothing to help themselves. They recognized the power and authority of Jesus to heal them of their illness. They submitted themselves to Him by calling Him Master. They called out to Him for cleansing. By faith, they received His saving gift. They did not earn it. They simply received it and were healed. Their bodies were made new, fresh, clean, and whole. And, they were able to return to the presence of those who were clean.

The Bible tells us that **we are just like these ten diseased men**:

*All of us have become like someone who is "unclean." All of the good things we do are like polluted rags to You. - Isaiah 64:6a*

We were each born with a sin nature, and not one of us is without sin. The awesome news is, the Bible also tells us that there is ONE way for us to be made new.

Each of us must recognize he is a sinner (Roman 3:9). Our sin separates us from God, because He is perfect (Isaiah 59:2). We can do nothing to help ourselves. There is no amount of good things we can do to undo the sins we have committed (Isaiah 64:6a). We must each recognize the power and authority of Jesus to take away our sins (John 1:29). We must submit ourselves to Him by confessing He is Lord (Romans 10:9). By faith, we must trust that when Jesus died on the cross, His blood fulfilled God's requirement for the forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:7). We cannot earn this free gift (Ephesians 2:8). When we believe this, we are a new creation. Our old nature is gone; we have a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are then reconciled to God because our sins are forgiven (2 Corinthians 5:18). We will one day enter heaven to live with God forever (John 6:40).

We can clearly see how wrong it was for the nine lepers not to pause and thank Jesus for their deliverance. Yet, they were saved from physical disease that is *temporary*. We, who believe in Jesus, are saved from spiritual disease that is *eternal*. Therefore, live a life of gratitude to the Savior.

*I will give thanks to the Lord because He does what is right. I will sing praise to the Lord Most High. - Psalm 7:17*