

Gratitude

I grumbled- either to myself or out loud, about how long it was taking us to get back home Friday most of the way. There were construction zones with reduced speeds that went for miles with little to no actual work being done, complete stops where we sat motionless for several minutes while waiting to use the “one lane road ahead,” and several detours where you drove five or six miles only to do U-turn and come back to pretty much where you were before proceeding. Then it rained... hard; so hard you could hardly see the car/truck in front of you, and we all slowed to a crawl. And to top it all off, Google Maps told me that the “scenic” route would only be about 1.5 hours longer than the way we went before, but with all the delays, it wound up being more like 4 hours. I was not pleased with any of this, nor did I hide it well either. But as we neared Indianapolis, all of that changed. Now dark, we could see many sets of emergency lights flashing on the northbound side of the Interstate. There had been an accident, and the traffic on that side was at a complete standstill... for miles and miles... and I felt about knee-high to grasshopper. Despite the delays, we had traveled all day safely, dryly, in a well-appointed and extremely comfortable auto, through some extraordinary scenery, coming home from a very nice vacation... and I had *complained*- internally or externally, most of the way... instead of being *grateful* for all we have, all we had been able to do, and that we had been brought safely through to “home.” Gratitude.

All of that to get to Luke 17:11-19. Let’s read it together. Now note a few of the particulars from the text:

- V.11, being “*between Samaria and Galilee*” explains the “mixed” company of the ten men who, under different circumstances, would have had little to do with one another, cf. John 4:9; but **debilitating deadly disease is a great equalizer**- it reduces humanity to a common denominator of “life”... a miserable one, but a *common* one nonetheless;
- V.12, it is designated only as “*a certain village*” because the specific location doesn’t really matter; *lepers*, having to be isolated from society, tended to band together; they were required to maintain (real *social!*) *distance*, and *warn* others who approached of their condition, which was hapless, helpless, and hopeless;
- V.13, note carefully that they: 1) **recognized** Jesus- either they *knew* or had *heard* of Him, cf. 7:22; 2) **acknowledged** His *position* and *power*- otherwise, why make the request; and, 3) **begged Him for mercy**- not *justice* or *fairness*;
- V.14, **Jesus sees our pain and offers healing**, but we have to do our part; “*Go and show yourselves to the priests*” was required for *cleansed* lepers according to the Law, cf. 5:14; since they were not yet cleansed at this point, *active, obedient faith* was required (they weren’t *cleansed* until “*they were going*”), cf.v.19b;

- Vv.15-19a, one of the ten, the “*foreigner*” *Samaritan*, immediately returned to **give thanks** and **glorify God**; he was told to “*Rise and go your way*,” but we are not told the short-term or long-term fate of *the nine*.

Things to Consider / Think About from our text and beyond:

1. **Sin is like spiritual leprosy in that:**

- a. We usually become infected by excessive exposure to *carriers*, 2Cor.6:14-18;
- b. It destroys *connective* and *cushioning* ‘*cartilage*’ between our spiritual *bodies* causing *weakness*, *debilitating pain*, loss of *body parts*, and ultimately *death* (which like leprosy is a slow and agonizing process), cf. Heb.12:12-13; and,
- c. There is *no cure* short of a *miracle*, Rom.6:23!

2. **Ingratitude** comes, most often, from:

- a. **Affluence**- if we’ve been truly destitute, we tend to be more grateful even with little, cf. Phil.4:12;
- b. **Entitlement**, cf. 1Tim.6:6-8; and,
- c. **Self-Centeredness**, cf. 2Cor.8:1-5.

Gratitude therefore usually stems from:

- d. **Contentment** whether there is much or little, Heb.13:5-6;
- e. true **Humility** instead of the *false front* kind, Jas.4:6,10; and,
- f. the **Selflessness** to be aware that even when things seem “bad,” we are still *blessed* in so many ways, Acts 14:17; 2Cor.4:16-18.

3. **Ingratitude** leads us to focus on what we want, while **Gratitude** sees of what have. **Ingratitude** dwells on what we’ve *lost*, while **Gratitude** remembers and is thankful for all we’ve *had*, and *still have*. **Ingratitude** centers everything on *self*, while **Gratitude** is more concerned with how to use what “I” have to help and benefit *others*.

Conclusions:

- Do you need *cleansing* from the “leprosy” of sin? Jesus can and will provide it if you will *obey* Him in *faith*, cf. Acts 22:16.
- If you’ve been *cleansed* from the “leprosy” of sin, **NEVER** forget it and always be *grateful* and *go* and *grow* accordingly, cf. 2Pet.1:5-9.
- When we choose to focus on our *blessings* instead of our *desires*, gratitude always prevails.