

TEN LEPERS HEALED; ONLY ONE GRATEFUL

Luke 17:11-19

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Ten men with leprosy, the grateful Samaritan, and Jesus

Key-location: Road to Jerusalem, along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

Key-repetitions:

- Samaria: Jesus traveled between Samaria and Galilee (Lk 17:11); Samaritan returned to thank Jesus (Lk 17:15); Jesus asked why the foreigner was the only one to return and praise God (Lk 17:18).
- Praise/thanks: Samaritan praised God (Lk 17:15); knelt at Jesus' feet and thanked him (Lk 17:16); Jesus asked why the foreigner was the only one to praise God (Lk 17:18).

Key-attitudes:

- Desperation of the men with leprosy who cried out to Jesus.
- Ungratefulness of the nine who did not thank Jesus.
- Samaritan man's gratefulness toward Jesus.
- Jesus' astonishment at the nine ungrateful Jewish men who were healed of leprosy.

Initial-situation:

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. Jesus knew that during the Feast he would be arrested and crucified. Ten lepers shouted for Jesus to have mercy on them.

Initial-problem:

Jesus began his trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover by traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

Final-situation:

Jesus told the Samaritan, who had been healed of leprosy, that his faith had made him well.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus made his way toward Jerusalem. He traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Jesus was entering into a village and was met by ten men who had leprosy. They stood at a distance and shouted out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

Jesus looked at the ten men with leprosy and said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." The men with leprosy left. On the way to the priests, they were cleansed.

One of them realized he was healed. He returned to Jesus, praising God in a loud voice. He knelt at Jesus' feet and thanked Jesus. He was a Samaritan, a member of a race that was despised by Jews.

Jesus asked, "Ten men were healed! Where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who returned to give praise to God?" Then Jesus told the healed Samaritan, "Rise up and go; your faith has made you well" (Lk 17:11-19).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the disease of leprosy and how it was treated in Jesus' day?
2. Who are the "lepers" (outcasts) in our community?
3. How was one man different than the other nine?
4. Why is gratitude rarer than faith?
5. How does this incident relate to racial prejudice?
6. How can we express gratitude to God?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The person with faith acts on God's word before he has evidence that God's word will work.** Jesus sent the ten lepers to the priests before they were healed. They responded in faith and went. As they were on the way to the priests, they were healed (Lk 17:14). // The nobleman, whose son was close to death, believed Jesus' promise that his son would live. The nobleman returned home and his son had been healed (Jn 4:3-54).
2. **Gratitude to God is more rare than faith.** Nine ungrateful lepers had faith in Jesus' words (Lk 17:14). People with leprosy were quarantined and required to stay a distance away from others. If a leper were healed, he was required to present himself to a priest who would declare him clean (Leviticus 14). Jesus sent the ten lepers to the priests before they were healed. They responded in faith and went. Only one healed leper, the Samaritan, showed gratitude (Lk 17:15-17).
3. **Physical needs are so deeply felt that people often put their physical need before their spiritual need.** The nine ungrateful lepers were aware only of their

need for a physical cure; they didn't receive spiritual salvation. The Samaritan felt the need to praise God; he was blessed with both a physical cure and spiritual salvation (Lk 17:11-19).

4. **Jesus does not prejudge people because of race or social situation.** Jews prejudged Samaritans as being an inferior race. Jesus honored the person who others prejudged as inferior.
5. **Thankfulness to God expresses faith in God.** Jesus told the Samaritan, who thanked God for his cure, that his faith had made him well (Lk 17:19). // It is God's will for us to give thanks in everything (1 Thes 5:18).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Role-playing Drama:

Invite four volunteers to dramatize characters in the story:

- Have two volunteers dramatize two of the healed lepers. They're criticizing the Samaritan for disobeying Jesus and returning to Jesus instead of going directly to the priests.
- Have two volunteers pretending to be Jesus' disciples. They're expressing their surprise at Jesus for praising a Samaritan, from an inferior race, while criticizing people from his own Jewish race.