

Wellness
Luke 17:11-19
Preached October 12, 2025

Well, how are you all this morning? Fine, everyone is fine. Anyone here care to admit if they are not so fine? Boy, we must have the finest church in Massachusetts. But honestly, we know that is not the case. Now I am not just talking about our congregational life, but also about our personal lives. We are at the age where almost every day there is an ache or a pain or maybe a significant, life-altering challenge in our life. You and I have both heard, and acknowledged, when things are not fine. That is a key part of our congregational prayers.

Acknowledging your need is wise, and asking for help is courageous. So I think we can readily identify with our gospel story today. Today we hear about 10 desperate men, who were truly suffering, and they knew it. All of them were victims of a dreaded disease, leprosy. All of them were condemned to a life of misery. All of them, whether they wanted to or not, had to acknowledge their suffering. They had to announce their condition to the world by crying out “*Unclean, Unclean*” to anyone within ear-shot. All of them were condemned to live on the edge of society, ostracized from their communities, restricted from entering towns or having any social contact. And all of them were condemned to a life “outside the grace of God.” The whole community, from priests and kings to family and neighbors, would consider anyone so ill as being damned by God.

But these men were courageous and wise. They would not let their condition be the end of the story. And they are willing to go to any extreme necessary. And all of them grabbed the opportunity when it walked by. Is it no wonder that when they saw Jesus out in the middle of nowhere, close to the edge of life they inhabited that they cried out, “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*” It was a cry that acknowledged the desperation of their need, and the strength of their hope.

I wonder what they were anticipating. They must have heard of Jesus compassion and power. They might have learned about Jesus touching another man with leprosy and healing him. Their need and God’s servant now met, so they called out for God’s grace and favor.

And Jesus saw them. He saw their need, saw their suffering and saw their hope. Just by seeing them and not averting his gaze, he acknowledged their suffering and their value. So, when Jesus said to them “*Go show yourselves to the priests.*” I wonder how they reacted. Their hands, their faces, their skin, were not immediately renewed. They were still lepers. But Jesus was telling them to go get a certificate of health.

They must have had enough courage to act. They turned toward the nearest temple and in doing so, acknowledged Jesus’ power and authority. They acted in the hope that they

would be healed. And it happened. On the way to the temple, 10 lepers were cured. They acted in faith, Anticipating, acknowledging, that what God has promised God will deliver.

But there was something more that needed to be acknowledged. The 10 lepers came seeking a cure from their disease. They wanted to be healthy, to return to their families and their communities, and to let life get back to normal. But one of them noticed that life was no longer normal. Something wonderful had happened, and it was more than the miracle of antibiotics. And he had to do more than confirm it with a priest, he had to acknowledge this blessing, and the one who had blessed him. This one stopped dead in his tracks on the way to the priest, did an about-face and ran for Jesus.

This one man saw beyond the cure. He acknowledged the blessing. Even before he got back to Jesus he was shouting his praises to God. And when he met Jesus again, he prostrated himself, as a servant would bow before his master, or a worshiper would kneel before his god. His thanks was more than a word of gratitude; it was a profound acknowledgement, rooted in faith. And Jesus acknowledged the transforming faith of this Samaritan by raising him up and proclaiming, *'your faith has saved you.'*

Jesus word points to the healing behind the cure. Nine made their way to the priest and they were cured, cleansed of a physical disease. But the tenth had discovered he was made whole, body and soul. He had discovered God's salvation a restoration of all of life-physical, mental, social and spiritual. He made the connection between body and soul, God and self. And it is that connection that brought him life.

This is the gift of salvation and the power of faith. And, by God, we are invited, even called, to acknowledge our needs, to pray for the help we need, whether for healing of body or spirit, for family or nations. And we are invited, even called, to acknowledge the blessings we receive, to open our eyes and recognize the gifts we have been granted; not just the miraculous answers to prayer, but the daily blessings we often overlook as we run to our next 'project'. And we are invited, even called, to acknowledge the One who is the giver of all gifts, all blessings, all life.

We are called to acknowledge the One who is our all, with words of thanks and shouts of praise.

Amen.

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