

A DAY OF THANKSGIVING

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Marcus Baikie



LUKE 17:11-19 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused Luke the physician to write the words of this Gospel around AD 55-60. This takes place during Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, which began in Luke 9:51 ("When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.") Because of the great example of thanks on the part of Samaritan, this Gospel is the assigned text for a Day of Thanksgiving.

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.

- See above. Jesus was in the middle of His journey to the Cross.

¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance

- These men stood at a distance to fulfill what was commanded of them in the Law of Moses: "[The leprous person] shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp." (Leviticus 13:46)
- Their condition had cut them off from both other people and God. In the same way our sins cut us off from God and our neighbor.

¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

- However, with this they break the Law. According to Leviticus they were to cry out "Unclean, unclean." (13:45). Their desperate need moved them to cry out to the Lord, who had already shown His willingness to touch what was unclean in order to bring life and healing (see the raising of the widow's son at Nain in Luke 7:11-17).
- "Master" – This word is only used in the Gospel of Luke to address Jesus. In the other Gospels, he is usually called "Lord" (in Greek, *kyrios*). In Luke, however, the disciples often address him as "Master" (Luke 5:5, 8:24, 8:45, 9:33, 9:49).
- "Have mercy on us" – in Greek, *eleison*. This is the same petition we offer towards the beginning of the Divine Service: "Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us." (LSB p. 186)

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

- Jesus heard and answered their prayer immediately.

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

- Jesus heard and answered their prayer immediately.

- Because leprosy rendered these men ritually unclean and unable to enter the Temple, they were instructed to see the priests. This fulfills the command of Leviticus 13:49, “And it shall be shown to the priest.”
- Jesus commands the same thing when He healed a leper previously (Luke 5:12-14, also in Matthew 8:2-4 and Mark 1:40-44). There He says that it will serve as a “proof to them.”
- The ten men depart when they heard the command of Christ, and it is only as they go that they are cleansed. Thus they all demonstrate faith in Jesus and His Word. In the same way we walk by faith and not by sight, trusting in his Word of forgiveness.

¹⁵ **Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;**

- This one, who is a Samaritan, shows the same faith as Namaan, another Gentile who had been miraculously cleansed by God (2 Kings 5:15).

¹⁶ **and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.**

- Note that he praised God and fell at Jesus’ feet. By this worship he confesses his faith in Jesus Christ as more than a miracle-worker, but rather as God and Lord Himself.
- As Christians, we too are called to “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17) We have a double reason to do so: first, for God’s gift of daily bread, which includes our physical health and healing; second, for God’s gift of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Because this man was a Samaritan, he was doubly unclean: both as a leper and as a Gentile. Even though he had been healed of his leprosy he still would not have been considered ritually clean.

¹⁷ **Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?”**

- Jesus expects the honor and praise due His Name as true God. See the explanations to the First Commandment (“We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”) and the First Article of the Creed (“For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.”).

¹⁸ **Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”**

- The others had faith for a time, but as soon as their need was met, that faith vanished.

¹⁹ **And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”**

- Jesus also says this to the woman healed from a discharge of blood (Matthew 9:22), to Bartimaeus, whose sight was restored (Mark 10:52), and to the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet with her tears (Luke 7:50).
- “Made you well” – literally, “saved.” “Faith is that which freely obtains God’s mercy because of God’s Word.” (Apology to the Augsburg Confession V:32).



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