

October 13, 2019  
The Grateful Leper



Adult Resource  
Sheet 1

## Focus on Luke 17:11–19

*Semicontinuous*  
*Jer. 29:1, 4–7 Ps.*  
*66:1–12*  
*Complementary 2 Kgs.*  
*5:1–3, 7–15c*  
*Ps. 111*  
*2 Tim. 2:8–15*  
**Luke 17:11–19**

**WHAT is important to know?** —From *“Exegetical Perspective”* by Oliver Larry Yarbrough As the story unfolds, the lepers were “cleansed” on their way to the priests (v. 14). Thus the one who returns does so because he recognizes that he *was* “healed”; he does not return *to be* healed (v. 15). He returns, rather, to give thanks and praise God. This is no small act, especially in

Luke’s eyes. Praising/thanking/blessing/glorifying God is a recurring theme in his writings. It seems, therefore, that Luke recounts this story not to distinguish one leper from the others but to emphasize the proper response to any act of grace: thanks and praise to God.

**WHERE is God in these words?** —From *“Theological Perspective”* by Margit Ernst-Habib Our task is to call attention to the fact that our human response of thanksgiving is not only the appropriate, but also the most joyful thing to do—at least if we take seriously the eucharistic prayer quoted at the beginning. The Great Thanksgiving calls us to lead eucharistic lives. Luke’s account of the healing of the ten lepers grants us a glimpse of what gratitude can look like, and we will have to find out for ourselves what makes our faith a eucharistic one and how it is acted out.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From *“Pastoral Perspective”* by Kimberly  
Bracken Long

One might almost say, in fact, that “faith” and “gratitude” are two words for the same thing: to practice gratitude is to practice faith. If faith is not something we have, but something we do—something we live—then in living we express our complete trust in God. How then can we not practice gratitude, when we know that God, the giver of all good gifts, holds all of life in providential hands? When we practice gratitude, we find that faith is given in abundance, pressed down and overflowing.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From *“Homiletical Perspective”* by  
John M. Buchanan

The basic Christian response to God is gratitude: gratitude for the gift of life, gratitude for the world, gratitude for the dear people God has given us to enrich and grace our lives. The basic Christian experience is gratitude to God for God’s love in Jesus Christ and the accompanying gift of hopeful confidence and wholeness and wellness that comes with it, regardless of the worldly circumstances in which we find ourselves. Writer Anne Lamott says her two favorite prayers are, in the morning, “Help me. Help me. Help me,” and at bedtime, “Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.” For me, it is that and the weekly ritual of standing and singing, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

## A Foreigner from Samaria



In today's text, Jesus refers to a Samaritan as a foreigner (Luke 17:18). This may seem rather puzzling, since Bible maps show Samaria as part of the Holy Land in New Testament times, situated between Galilee and Judea. To understand why Jews designated Samaritans as "foreigners" we must consider the history of the region.

When King Solomon died, the land was divided into two kingdoms, southern and northern. Around 884 BCE King Omri chose the city of Samaria as the capital of the northern kingdom, Israel. In 721 BCE the Assyrians carried many inhabitants of the city of Samaria into exile, and replaced them with other peoples who brought new religious ideas and soon intermarried with the people of Israel who remained in the region.

In 587 BCE, the new power of Babylon carried into exile the leading inhabitants of the southern kingdom, Judah. In a few decades, the Persians overpowered Babylon, and in 538 BCE Cyrus the Persian permitted the people of Judah to return home from exile. The returning exiles were concerned about purity of ethnicity and religion in their homeland. In their eyes, the Samaritans epitomized the opposite of both forms of purity, and therefore they were despised and considered "foreigners."

In turn, the cosmopolitan Samaritans, with their rich agriculture and trading partners, looked down on their more provincial southern neighbors. In the middle of the fifth century BCE the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which they claimed was the true place of worship, as opposed to Jerusalem.

The economic, cultural, and religious differences continued to strain relations between the two groups in Jesus' day. Many Jews avoided going through Samaria, preferring to take the longer route on the eastern side of the Jordan River to get from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus, however, seems to have been in the habit of taking the shorter route through Samaria. In John's Gospel we read that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well and preached to the Samaritans. And in Luke's Gospel, the hero of Jesus' well-known parable is a good Samaritan, not the religious Jews.

The healing of the ten lepers took place on the border area between Samaria and Galilee. Jesus uses the designation "foreigner" to heighten the contrast between the one who was grateful and the nine others, who presumably were conventional religious Jews.