

• *A connection – people who are duty bound to serve God and show gratitude*

• *Samaritans*

### 1. Self-centred belief without saving faith in Jesus

• *The ten men were confident in Jesus' ability to heal them*

• *Nine of the ten – once healed had no further interest in Him*

• *God wants lives of gratitude and obedience*

There is perhaps a connection between Luke 17:11–21 and the preceding three verses, because the Gospel of Luke goes on to speak about some people who did not regard themselves as duty-bound to serve God.

Jesus is still on His last journey towards Jerusalem<sup>□1</sup>. There was a road that ran along the border between Galilee and Samaria. Somewhere along the way Jesus entered a Samaritan village and healed ten lepers<sup>□2</sup>, who must all have been Samaritans.

1. **It is possible to have a self-centred belief in the supernatural without having saving faith in Jesus.** Are these lepers believers in Jesus Christ? Will we meet them in heaven? They had a belief in the supernatural; and they believed that Jesus could heal them. They depended on Jesus to show special mercy to them<sup>□1</sup>. Jesus told them to follow the legal requirement of the Mosaic law which said that any person who thought he was healed had to have it certified by a priest<sup>□2</sup>. The ten men were sufficiently confident in Jesus' ability to heal them that they did as they were told and were healed.

But there are plenty of people who believe in the supernatural without having faith in Jesus the Saviour. These ten men thought that Jesus would be able to heal them, and they were right. Jesus could and did heal them. Yet they failed to enter fully into the salvation that Jesus was bringing. Nine of them were the opposite of what Jesus had asked for in 17:7–10. They are so self-centred that they feel God owes them something. They have no special gratitude, but are simply (no doubt) pleased to have been so fortunate as to be healed! Once they have got what they want from Jesus they have no further interest in Him.

People often come to Jesus for earthly blessings without wanting to serve God or change their lives in a way that will please Him. Belief in miracles ought to lead on to a higher kind of faith, or (it would be better to say) faith in Jesus as the Saviour and as the One who wants to use us in a life of gratitude and obedience.

### 2. Only one of the ten came to salvation

• *Trouble tends to drive us to God but it does not always drive us to salvation*

• *Lepers were rejected and cut off by society – desperate situation*

2. **Jesus only speaks of one of these ten men coming to salvation<sup>□1</sup>.** One of the ten men knows that he is not 'entitled' to special favour from God. He was a Samaritan, and the Samaritans had always opposed the idea that God would send salvation through something that would happen in Jerusalem.

Trouble tends to drive us to God but it does not always drive us to salvation. Nine of these men were driven to Jesus because they were in trouble. There is nothing wrong with that. God uses the troubles of life to bring us to Himself. Needy people listen to the gospel more eagerly than people living an easy kind of life. In the time of Jesus it was very difficult for anyone with any kind of 'leprosy'. It was not the same as the modern disease. Even a poor skin condition could be called 'leprosy'. Such people were rejected by society. Their life was cut off from other people. Such people were rejected by society. Their life was cut off from other people. The reason why the lepers cried 'from a distance'<sup>□1</sup> was because they were not allowed to come near to other people. So the

□1 17:11

□2 17:12

□1 17:13

□2 17:14

□1 17:19

□1 17:12

situation of the leper was a very miserable and desperate one. 'He shall dwell alone,' said Leviticus 13:46.

- God often hears the cries and pleas of desperate people

**3. Faith shows itself by responding with gratitude to Jesus**

- One man returned – the sign that God had worked in his heart as well as his body

- He wanted continuing contact with Jesus

- 'Your faith has saved you' – in the fullest sense

- A Saviour who was on His way to die for the sins of the world

- Gratitude and a continuing relationship

People in desperate trouble are willing to turn to God. And God often hears the cries and pleas even of people who are not reconciled to Him and have not yet received His Son as the Saviour of the world. When God hears our desperate pleas and cries to Him, it is His way of encouraging us to submit to Him. Yet there are many who want what God has to give but then they forget God altogether.

**3. One way in which faith shows itself is to respond with gratitude to Jesus.** One man of the ten returned to express his gratitude to Jesus. This was the sign that God had worked in his heart as well as in his body.



He was a man who knew he was unworthy. He was a Samaritan! The people of Samaria were the traditional enemies of the people of Israel. This man knew that there was no reason why Jesus should specially have healed him. He knew himself to be unworthy.

Yet he also believed Jesus would accept him despite his unworthiness as a Samaritan. He believed in the mercy of Jesus for him personally. He wanted a continuing contact with Jesus, in addition to the healing of his body. This was what made him different from the others. The others want a blessing from God but they do not specially want continuing contact with Jesus. This man has faith in Jesus' goodness and wants to return to have further dealings with Him.

Jesus says, 'Your faith has saved you.' He must be referring to more than the healing of the body. They had all been healed but this man had something the other nine did not have: salvation in the fullest sense of the word.

Everyone knew that Jesus was going to Jerusalem. He was making it very clear. Samaritans did not like Jerusalem but this Samaritan had faith in a Saviour who was on His way to die in Jerusalem. How much he knew of the message of salvation we cannot say, but he was receiving a Saviour who was on His way to die for the sins of the world.

It is wonderful to have Jesus answer our prayers. It is more wonderful when we show our gratitude to Him and want a continuing relationship with Him.

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