

Where are the Others?

Sunday Morning, November 27, 2016

One day a woman was rushing home from a doctor's appointment. The doctor had been somewhat delayed at the hospital, and the lab work took a little longer than usual, so by the time she left the clinic she was running quite a bit behind schedule. She still had to pick up her prescription, pick up the children from the baby-sitter, and get home and make supper, all in time to make it to the prayer meeting at her church that evening. As she began to circle the busy Wal-Mart parking lot, looking for a space, the windows of heaven were opened, as it says in Genesis, and a downpour began. While she wasn't usually the type to bother God with small problems, she began to pray as she turned down the row closest to the front door. "Lord, you know what kind of a day I've had, and there's still an awful lot to do. Could you please grant me a parking space right away, oh, and close to the building so I don't get soaked." The words weren't even completely out of her mouth when she saw the backup lights of a car come on at the end of the row. It was the best space in the whole parking lot, right next to the handicap spots and straight out from the front door. She made straight for it and as she pulled in, she said, "never mind God, something just opened up." Isn't that the way it seems to be now a days, You know, "the God I need you right up until, oh never mind I can take it from here, mentality." What a sad illustration, the word thank you most of the time, seems to never be said enough publicly or privately, to the one we call on so frequently to help us in our time of need.

Some of the most unlikely people are the ones who say "Thank you" to God. We find this to be true in the account of the ten lepers. Let's look at **(Luke 17: 11-13)**:

11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

From a distance, the Leper's cried for mercy from God. (Note: Leprosy affects the larynx – it was difficult to cry out to Jesus.) Many people cry for mercy from God, but at a distance, they don't want to get close and feel intimidated or threatened. They fail to understand God's love for them!

You can draw near to God

(James 4:8a)

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Like the Lepers, no matter what condition you are in or that you may be ashamed of, you can know God is available and accessible to you when you have a sincere heart and approach Him.

Now let's read some more about the Lepers story in **(Luke 17:14)**

So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

Jesus honored their plea for His healing mercy on them.

Going to the Priests was a step of faith, as they went their bodies were healed. You can be assured that Jesus healed them completely. For these to go to the Priests, they had to have known that they had been cured of leprosy. The Priest declared them clean and physically whole. They would then be allowed to enter the Temple, or Synagogue, their city, community and homes.

What a joy to greet their family, wives, children and friends! In the midst of such joy and privilege, one of these lepers set his priority right. His top priority was to go and thank Jesus!

If there is one sin that most prevalent today, it is the sin of ingratitude. God does so much for us. Our indebtedness to him is enormous and yet we rarely or at least infrequently offer thanks for what he has done. In fact, most professing Christians don't even offer thanks over their meals much less offer thanks over all that God does in their lives. We are much like the little boy who was given an orange by a man. The boy's mother asked, "What do you say to the nice man?" The little boy thought and handed the orange back and said, "Peel it."

For Christians thankfulness to God is not confined to a day or a season, but every day we should be mindful to be thankful and thank Jesus.

This one man, healed from Leprosy, had the right attitude. Let's read some more of his story in **(Luke 17:15-16)**
15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,
16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

As soon as he was healed he ran back to Jesus, setting everyone and everything aside to thank Jesus with a loud voice! His body had not only been healed of Leprosy, but because he believed Jesus had to be God his soul was saved! This man fell at the feet of Jesus and worshipped Him.

Note: The other nine were "cleansed", legally and ceremonially. One was physical & the other was spiritual.

Jesus reflected His disappointment in the nine men who did not come to thank Him! God knew they would not have grateful and thankful hearts towards Him, but He still blessed them because He loved them!

Sometimes we are merciful, nice, generous, and loving towards others, without any "Thanks" in return, but we're to have the character of Christ and endure the pain of unthankfulness out of our love for them.

God may choose to physically heal from a distance, but spiritual healing comes from those who fall, at the feet of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Such as did this thankful man. The act of gratitude completed his healing. As he worshipped, he was made whole.

A thankful heart makes a healing heart of praise!

The truth about gratitude is this: You are either the one leper or you are the nine. All of us fit into one of these categories. Are you grateful, or ungrateful? Do you take the time to thank God, or just go about your day?

As believers in Christ, we have every reason to be thankful.