

A Lesson from the Nine

**And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?
There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.**

Luke 17:17,18

So, who were the nine and what lessons can they teach us? The one definite from the text is that there were ten lepers. The common bond that brought them together was the feared disease of leprosy. Leprosy is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system, skin, and nasal passages and is characterized by ulcerations, and loss of sensation that leads to traumatic tissue damage. People afflicted with it were cast out from the general population and often congregated with fellow lepers. Hence, in this account, the lepers stood afar off and cried out for Jesus to have mercy. How they came to know to call out to Jesus, assuredly was the result of the reputation the Lord earned from previous healings he had performed. With their common bond of affliction, they jointly called out to Jesus, asking Him to have mercy on their condition. Seeing the lepers in their affliction, the Lord told them to show themselves to the priest, who had the authority to declare them cleansed. Upon discovering their healing, only one of the ten interrupted his journey to the priest so he could return to thank Jesus. The Lord then specifically notes that the one who returned was a Samaritan, which would seem to indicate that the other nine were Jews. The outcast Samaritan did show himself to the highest priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing with him a worshipful offering of thanks. The nine on that day had the same encounter with the Master but chose a different path than the stranger.

Why did the nine not return to give thanks? Were they so overjoyed with their new lease on life that they just ran to their families, or did they dutifully go directly to show themselves to the priest? Possibly, they just saw Jesus as one who had the power to perform miracles, and not as the Messiah. Were they so enthused that fellowship with other people was now possible, they forgot the One who made them well. They could return to what their life was before they contracted leprosy, but they missed the opportunity to find true eternal life that is only found in Jesus. If they were leprosy-free for the rest of their lives on this earth, they missed the greater blessing of falling at the feet of the Lord and finding spiritual healing.

As believers, there will be many times when we will have opportunities to be like the nine, or will we be like the Samaritan? In those times when God does something for us in a powerful way, will we, like the nine, go our way, or will we fall at the feet of Jesus and give Him thanks? Today is another day the Lord has given us. Take time to fall at His feet and give Him thanks. ~J. Ekis