

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 17: 11-19

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 17 and today we will read verses 11 to 19.

Most Bible commentators agree that there is a gap between Luke 17:10 and 17:11 that Luke does not record. From the beginning of chapter 14—when Jesus was invited to dine at a Pharisee's house—up to 17:10, all these events likely took place within the same afternoon. On that Sabbath day, Jesus delivered many teachings, which conclude with the four key points in 17:1–10.

What may have taken place between 17:10 and 17:11 is recorded in Gospel of John chapter 11: when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He later went to Bethany and raised him from the dead. This seems to be a direct response to what Jesus spoke in Gospel of Luke chapter 16 in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus—indeed, a man named Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet the Jews still did not believe.

After this section, the narrative continues with Luke 17:11, where Jesus cleanses ten lepers. This account is recorded only in Gospel of Luke and is not found in the other three Gospels.

Verse 11-13: “Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!””

Leprosy is a very ancient disease. Those who had leprosy had to be separated from society because it was highly contagious. They had to leave their families and their communities, living in isolation. Whenever others approached, they were required

to cry out loudly, “Unclean! Unclean!” to prevent others from accidentally coming into contact with them and becoming defiled.

In the time of Jesus, there are many accounts of Him cleansing lepers. Here, as He entered a village, ten lepers came to meet Him, standing at a distance. They knew they were not allowed to come near. And they “lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’”. Having been separated from their families and living in loneliness, they longed to return to their loved ones, and so they cried out to Jesus to save them and heal them.

Verse 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.”

In the account of Gospel of Luke, Jesus had previously healed a leper. In the early stage of His ministry, in Luke chapter 5, a man full of leprosy came to Him. In verses 12–13, he said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately the leprosy left him. On that occasion, Jesus personally reached out and touched the leper. According to the law of Israel, if He touched him, He Himself would become unclean. Yet out of compassion, Jesus touched him, and the man was immediately cleansed.

In verse 14, Jesus instructed him to “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded”. According to the law of Moses in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14, after a leper was cleansed, he had to be examined by a priest and offer the prescribed sacrifices. Only then could he return to his family and reenter society.

There, we see Jesus full of compassion, personally reaching out to heal. But in this chapter, we see something different. These ten lepers stood at a distance and cried out to Jesus for mercy. When Jesus saw them, He said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.”

First, Jesus did not stretch out His hand to heal them. Second, He did not even say, “You are cleansed.” He simply told them to go and show themselves to the priests—and as they went, they were cleansed. This shows that although the condition was the same—leprosy—Jesus could heal in many different ways. For each person’s different need, Jesus, as Lord, has the authority to use different methods to bring healing. Therefore, we should not cling to our own experience of healing and assume it applies to everyone.

Jesus is the Lord; He has sovereignty. He could heal one leper by touching him, and heal these ten in another way. This time, He did not touch them, nor did He declare them clean—He simply told them to go to the priests, and as they went, they were cleansed.

The condition for their healing was an action of faith. If they had not gone, they would not have been healed. The moment they responded to Jesus’ word—“go and show yourselves to the priests”—and acted on it, they were cleansed. Of course, we might say that the cost was not too great, especially since they were ten together, supporting one another. Perhaps they discussed it together and then went. And in the process of going, they received their cleansing.

Verse 15-16: “And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.”

Later we find that among these ten men, one was a Samaritan, while the other nine were Jews. This is very remarkable. The Samaritans were of mixed descent—part Jewish and part Gentile—and the Jews generally looked down on them. Under normal circumstances, Jews would not associate with Samaritans at all. Yet this Samaritan, because he suffered from the same leprosy, the same affliction, was accepted by the nine Jewish lepers. These Jewish lepers themselves were no longer accepted by their own people; having experienced the pain of rejection, they were able to accept this Samaritan.

Sometimes, in God's sovereign authority, He allows us to go through suffering—and such suffering has a positive purpose. Through suffering, our inner being is enlarged. It helps us move beyond superficial, racial, and psychological barriers, enabling us to love others more, to be more tolerant, and to accept others more readily.

As a result, these ten lepers were all cleansed simply through one word from Jesus—as they went to show themselves to the priests. Among them, one, when he saw that he was healed, returned immediately, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell down at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks—and this man was a Samaritan.

It is very striking: of the ten who were healed, nine were Jews and one was a Samaritan. The other nine, after being healed, hurried back to their families and reentered Jewish society. Only this Samaritan, filled with gratitude, returned at once, loudly giving glory to God. He knew he was unworthy, yet he had received healing—entirely by God's sovereign grace. Therefore, he gave glory to God and came before Jesus, falling down to give thanks.

Verse 17-18: “So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”

On one hand, His words were deeply earnest; on the other hand, I believe they carried a measure of sorrow. When we are in pain or in need, we earnestly pray to God—asking for help, for healing, for provision. Yet once God answers, once we receive what we asked for, we often forget Him. Only this Samaritan remembered—he returned, gave thanks, and gave glory to God.

Jesus places great importance on thanksgiving. We often say that gratitude is a mark of a Christian, because we deeply realize that everything we have is undeserved—completely the result of grace. The fact that Jesus spoke this way shows how much He values our gratitude.

Thanksgiving certainly gives glory to God, but it is not only for God's glory. It is also for us—the ones who give thanks—so that we may truly understand our condition, truly recognize grace, and truly receive the benefit of grace. The benefit of grace is not merely that our requests are granted, nor only that our bodies are healed. It is that our needs in this present life are met, and through that fulfillment, faith is produced in us—and this faith brings us into eternal life.

God is eternal, and His glory will be fully manifested in eternity. Often, while we are still in this world, God allows various difficulties so that we may recognize our needs. Through these needs, we come before Him and ask; when God answers, the outward satisfaction is secondary. What is more important is that our inner faith in God is strengthened. Through the growth of this faith, we are able to obtain eternal glory. Just like this Samaritan—he not only received healing from leprosy, but he also returned to Jesus, offering thanksgiving and praise, giving glory to God.

Verse 19: “And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.’”

Only this Samaritan not only received healing from his leprosy, but also obtained eternal salvation—he received eternal life within, because his faith saved him.

In God's sovereign authority, He allows us to have many needs in our daily lives. These needs are placed around us so that through them we may come before God and ask of Him. Whether it is financial issues, health concerns, family matters, or work-related problems—when these are resolved, that in itself is secondary. What is more important is that through coming to God and receiving answers, our faith increases. And as our faith increases, that very faith truly saves us—this is the most important matter.

In contrast, the other nine lepers were only healed of their disease, but they did not receive eternal salvation. This one Samaritan, however, not only was cleansed of his leprosy and able to return to his family, but he also received eternal salvation—because his faith saved him.

Let us pray together: Lord, help us to be people who give thanks continually. Through every experience we have of You in our daily lives, may we take the initiative to offer You thanksgiving and praise. For through these experiences in time, You are leading us to receive eternal blessings. In my life today, in every situation I encounter, teach me how to give thanks and praise to You in that very moment. May everything I experience in time increase the eternal life within me. Bless my life. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!