



Thinking of Thanksgiving

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Even the nicest, most sacrificial people need to hear a “thank you” on occasion. Including Jesus. But before looking at the passage at hand, a famous “thank you” scene, there is some needed background to cover. A spirited rivalry grew between Jews and Samaritans dating back to when the nation split into the Northern Kingdom (Israel, with Samaria as its capitol) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah, with Jerusalem as its capitol). Not only did the split itself create bad blood, but the cultural inculcation that happened to each kingdom during their respective captivities exacerbated this rivalry. This created the New Testament background situation of Jews and Samaritans having no respect for each other and taking great measures to not even interact with each other. With that being said, let’s dive into Luke 17:11-19. Oh, one more thing: due to the contagiousness of leprosy, those with the disease were treated as outcasts. Okay, now let’s dive in.

Ingest

As you read Luke 17:11-19 below, ingest the passage by highlighting every mention of Jesus (Where was He? What was He doing?) and every detail you see about anyone with whom He interacted.

Luke 17:11-19 (NIV)

¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Apply:

What are the big points that God is making in this scene?

What are the big points that God is making to you in this scene?

What do you need to do with these big points?

Can you list three or four things that Jesus has done in your life for which you’d like to throw yourself at His feet and thank Him? And if you want to take it one step further in applying this scene, is there an actual place you can “come back” to where you can offer your thanks, a physical place where you experienced Jesus and He did an amazing thing in your life? That might be a cool personal retreat.

Just a Thought:

The manner in which Luke points out that the returning leper was a Samaritan gives a hint that this may be the big point in the passage. This man represented two reasons for people to not interact with him based on the cultural norms of the day: his disease and his national background. Not only did Jesus interact with him with compassion, but this person is lifted up to us as an example of how to respond to Jesus' work in our lives.

I find myself wanting to scour my faith journey, and chart like data points, the places where Jesus revealed Himself in palpable ways: the rescue of salvation, the comfort in grief, wisdom in decision-making, and of course, the places where I experienced the presence of His grace when I didn't follow His wisdom in decision-making.

Finally, this passage draws my heart to think about the people around me who are not like me politically, economically, socially. When I live out of gratitude for Jesus' work in my life, those differences fade.

Who are the people who are not like us? Politically? Economically? Socially? What does this passage call us to do when confronted with differences?

