

Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History & Context Guide

Luke 17:11-19

History, Culture, & Context

This section of Luke is known as the story of the “Grateful Samaritan.” In this story, Jesus was continuing His journey to Jerusalem and stopped at a village near the border of Galilee and Samaria to heal a group of lepers. This is the second time in Luke that Jesus heals lepers (see Luke 5:12-16). In both stories, Jesus instructs those that He has healed to show themselves to the priests to demonstrate that have been healed and cleansed.



Verses 11-13 begins with, “Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered the village there (in the border area), ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, crying out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

Verse 14 continues, “When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.” In antiquity, if you had leprosy and thought you were healed, you had to appear before the priests who would then declare that you were clean/healed or not (see Leviticus 14: 1-32).

Verses 15-16 conclude with, “One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.” Some scholars believe that the Samaritan represents those who are outside of Israel that responded to Jesus’ message, while the other nine represent the Jews that rejected Jesus. Luke is once again pointing out that God’s grace is for everybody who will put their faith in Christ.

Questions to Consider

1. In this story, we see that the ten lepers did as Jesus told them and went to the priest. They were not yet healed but responded out of faith. When have you demonstrated such faith that you acted upon something before seeing evidence that it would work?
2. Why does Luke point out that the lepers were not healed until they obeyed Jesus’ command (see v. 14)?
3. What can we learn about the gratitude that the Samaritan demonstrated, and the blessings that it can bring?
4. Make it a point to count your blessings this week (rather than recounting your problems)! How can you show incorporate gratitude into your life? What do you think this will do?