

Heavenly Father, as we open Your Word this morning, speak to our hearts.

Teach us what it means to live with gratitude, to walk in faith and to return to you with praise.

May your Spirit guide us into truth and may our lives reflect your mercy; In Jesus' name. Amen.

It is a short story, yet it reveals deep truths about gratitude, faith and what it really means to be made whole.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. The cross awaits him. Yet even on this sacred journey, he stops to help the broken. Ten men with leprosy cry out to him from a distance. Now Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by bacteria with a very long name. . It primarily affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, the eyes, and lining of the nose. Permanent damage of the nerves causes muscle weakness and paralysis. The skin becomes discoloured with numb patches leading to a loss of sensation and feeling causing other skin lesions and lumps. Disfigurement of hands face and feet is common.

So these men are desperate. They are outcasts, forced to live apart from family, community, forbidden to enter the town and denied worship. But they had heard of Jesus, the one who heals, the one who touches the untouchables. And they still had voices. They used their voices to cry out to the one who hears.

Each one of us in some way has stood where those lepers stood, spiritually distant, in need of cleansing, calling out to God for help; and like them we find that Jesus hears us, even when others may not.

Poor and desperate as they were they did not ask for healing, they asked for mercy. That is significant. Mercy is deeper than healing, its compassion, restoration, undeserved kindness.

When we come to God, do we come with demands or with dependence? Do we ask for outcomes or his presence?

These men recognise Jesus, not just as a healer but as master. That's faith. That is surrender.

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Jesus doesn't heal them immediately on the spot, but tells them "Go and show yourselves to the priests." That was the law's requirement for someone who had been healed of leprosy. It was only when they went that they were cleansed, healing of their affliction came as they obeyed his word... Faith often works like that; we obey before we see the result... They didn't wait for proof, they trusted his word. And as they walked in obedience the miracle took place. Their skin was restored and their lives were renewed.

Sometimes God asks us to move before we see the miracle.
Faith is not just belief, its action. It's trusting in him enough to walk even when the path isn't clear

But then came the twist, Ten were healed only one came back to say thank you and he was a Samaritan
Nine went on with their lives- restored yes, but silent
One came back shouting praise, overflowing with gratitude.
Are we among the nine who received and move on? Or are we the one who returns, who worships, and who lives in gratitude.

Gratitude is not just a feeling, it is a response. It's worship. It is relationship.

The nine receive healing, but the one who returns receives wholeness.

Jesus says to Him "Rise and Go; your faith has made you well". The word used here translates to more than physical healing. It means salvation, restoration and wholeness.

This man's gratitude opened his heart to something deeper; he encountered the saving grace of Jesus.
Do we want just the gift, or do we want the Giver. Do we settle for healing or do we seek wholeness?

To sum up the first part of my sermon, I believe that,

Firstly, like lepers we must come to Jesus as we are – unclean, broken, and needy and we need to cry out for mercy.

Secondly, we must walk in obedience even when we don't yet see the outcome. Faith is often a journey.

Thirdly, when blessings come we must return and give thanks: Because gratitude transforms us: It shifts our focus from what we lack to what God has done.

It deepens our faith, it glorifies God and it reminds us that every healing, every provision, every new day is a gift of grace

And I was reflecting on this passage I realised how many things I have just taken for granted.

From when I first woke up from sleep this morning, I should have thanked God that I am Alive. I peeped through the curtains, to see green grass flowers and trees: thankyou God for your creation. I go to the bathroom, I have running water.

Pure clean water .Many people throughout the world do not have this luxury. They have to walk miles to contaminated pools and streams carrying heavy containers back to their meagre homes.

I clean my teeth with brush and toothpaste. Only a few years ago we filled Shoe boxes at Christmas and the main contents were soap, flannel toothbrush and toothpaste, some people still don't have just basics they n have to share,

I opened my wardrobe to decide what I should wear. Clean fresh clothed ready for me to put on, I thought of others in rags and those sleeping rough outside. God has been good to me. At breakfast I also had a choice of what to eat and drink. God is good. Yet I can turn on the TV and see pictures of young children in Gaza scraping up individual grains of rice from the dusty earth to keep themselves alive. Whilst Lorries are blocked from getting aid to them, only a few miles away and the food is there rotting. Are we not truly blessed?

I need to take medication but there is no charge for it, it is free and brought to my home., I sometimes moan about taking injections every day but then I realise that without them I wouldn't be here at all.

I leave to catch the bus, that is also free to me and the stop is less than only 2 mins from my house. It arrived on time, got me safely here. I remembered to thank the driver but did I thank God. No I just took him for granted, All these good thing come from the grace of God. It may be I cannot help some situations but I can offer my thanks, and my gratitude to God for all that he has done for me ; It's still only morning and I have received at least 10 blessings. I am alive, I can see, I can hear, I can move and I can pray. I have a voice. I have clothes to wear, I have food to eat, I have medication and I am provided with transport; Wow I am blessed.

From now on I am going to be the one who comes back to praise and thank God every day for I am truly in his debt, I owe Him my gratitude.

I'd like to set you a challenge for the rest of the day. Just to note down what God has done and is still doing for you. Count your blessings. Enjoy your lunch, perhaps a relative or friend will visit, or a telephone call that makes you smile or better still you can make that call to someone else perhaps you will hear a kind word as you leave here or maybe you will just go home and watch your favourite TV programme Whatever you do just be sure to say thank you to God

You see, this story isn't just about lepers, it's about us. We have all been touched by mercy. We've all received grace.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus we thank you for your mercy.

Thank you for healing us, restoring us and calling us to walk by faith. Help us to be the one who returns – not just with words but with lives full of gratitude. May our faith not only cleanse us but make us whole. Amen