

## **Faith, Grace and Gratitude**

### **Luke 17:11-19**

Our series in Luke's gospel is called 'Meet Jesus.' In this passage we see ten men who did just that and whose lives were transformed as a result. It's a story of grace and gratitude on the one hand and indifference and ingratitude on the other.

#### **Trust and Obey**

Leprosy was a terrible disease: because of its physical and psychological effects on the sufferers; because of the isolation that was necessary to stop its spread; and because people thought those who had it were cursed by God. These ten lepers had banded together in a community of the helpless, the hopeless and the hurting. Jesus has come to rescue humanity from that kind of community and bring us into the new community of His people.

But notice how Jesus brings about that transformation. The men put themselves in Jesus' way and ask for mercy. They want Him to heal them. They know that He has the power to change.

In response Jesus sends them to the priests whose job it was to declare whether or not someone had been healed. And the men did it and it was as they trusted and obeyed Jesus that they were healed, that things came right in their lives. All ten got healed, but only one came back.

#### **Grace and Gratitude**

It is possible to receive God's gifts and be ungrateful. Only one man came back giving praise and thanks to God. He does so because he knows what Jesus has done for him and he understands what that means about Jesus.

Guilt and duty are no motivators for heart-engaged, thankful worship. But grace is. It is as we realize what God has done for us in Jesus that we will worship.

#### **A deeper healing**

Only the one man realizes that what has happened to him deserves a personal, heart-level response to Jesus. The nine just see Jesus as a healer, as a teacher; and the last we see of them is as they make their way to the priests, and to the temple. The one turns back because something dawns on him as to what this power says about Jesus. He falls at Jesus feet and worships Him because he knows he has encountered God.

In response Jesus says, 'your faith has healed you', or more correctly, 'your faith has saved you.' This story is more than about physical healing. Everyone got their skin healed. This man gets his soul healed. Salvation is not just about our physical wellbeing – it's about a wellness of soul.

And through this story, Jesus and Luke are saying to those who listen, are you with the nine who turn away or with the one who turns around and comes to Jesus? The fact that the one who comes back is a foreigner tells us that in Jesus the grace of God is available to all. You just have to believe, and turn and come.