**Luke 17:11-19 11On another occasion, as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12When he entered a certain village, ten men with leprosy met him. Standing at a distance, 13they called out loudly, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” 14When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they went away they were cleansed. 15One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. 16He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan. 17Jesus responded, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18Was no one found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?” 19Then he said to him, “Get up and go your way. Your faith has saved you.”**

Why Christians Give Thanks

Can you imagine what this scene was like? It was a fairly common occurrence. You are walking into a city and there are people wanting to get aid from the people coming in similar to how you might see people asking for help as you drive into a store’s parking lot. **as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12When he entered a certain village, ten men with leprosy met him. Standing at a distance, 13they called out loudly, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”**

It was actually quite serious. These men truly needed help. First, they had leprosy. That doesn’t just go away if you pop an ibuprofen and get some rest. The disease gets worse by attacking the nerve ending, pain would turn into numbness, the skin would lose its original color becoming thick, glossy, and scaly. Sores and ulcers would open up especially around the eyes and ears. The skin would bunch with deep lines between the swelling so the face would look similar to that of a lion. The voice would become hoarse and grating. If you had the signs of this disease and were declared unclean, you no longer lived in your community. You became homeless without the support of your family and friends. People stayed away from you more than they would avoid a herd of zombies. You were considered to be cursed by God. If anyone came near, you were lawfully to tear your clothes, cover your upper lip, and cry “Unclean, unclean.”

**When he [Jesus] saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.”** That too was part of the law. That specific, Biblical procedure was necessary in order to be declared clean. **As they went away they were cleansed.** They were healed. No more of the awful disease and separation. Depending on how serious their form of leprosy was, maybe they were even freed from death.

Now you know why Luke wasn’t afraid to waste his precious ink to give all the details about how they turned back the moment they saw they were clean, praising Jesus with loud voices, saying, “Thank you, thank you!” as they fell at his feet. What? That’s not what happened? Luke doesn’t write that because it didn’t happen. Only one of the lepers turned back to praise and thank his God, Jesus. He was the unlikely one too, the Samaritan. He was an outsider before his leprosy. All ten were cleansed. Their physical flesh was restored. They could once again get back to life as normal and participate in their community. House and home, spouse and children returned to them. Basically, Jesus gave them all they needed for body and life in this one miracle. Yet, only one turned back to thanks and praise, to serve and obey God. The one who did turn back even fell at his feet.

Dear Christian family, Jesus asks us through the words he had Luke write today, “Where is the rest of your congregation, your Christian family? Were not all cleansed by my death and resurrection? Why are not all giving thanks?” He even says to you who are here, “Has your heart always been filled with thanks and praise towards me?”

Jesus knows he made you and all creatures. He gave you your body and soul, eyes, ears, and all your members, your mind and all your abilities. He still provides for you. He gives you clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all you own. He richly and daily provides all you need for your body and life. He defends you against all danger and protects you from all evil.

He has redeemed you a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won you from all sin, from death, and from the power of the Devil; not with gold of silver, but with his holy precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that you should live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from the dead and lives and rule eternally.

He has called you by the Gospel, enlightened you with his gifts, sanctified and kept you in the one true faith. He has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church, he daily and fully forgives all sins, yours and those of every believer. He will raise you and all the dead. He will give eternal life to you and all believers in Christ on the Last Day.

All of this is why we can relate to those lepers of Jesus’ day. And why we speak the same words as they did, **Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!** He does and he answers. Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God that he is merciful and patient and loving towards us even though we clearly show that we forget to give our thanks and praise, serve and obey to him. Thanks be to God that Jesus willingly went to the cross, dying, and rising for us. Our certain death has been taken by Jesus. Our sins forgiven. And the Devil has no power over us. Thanks be to God that he continues to prepare our hearts through the Means of Grace so that we will get to be apart of the whole company in heaven. Thanks be to God that Jesus also says to us **Get up and go your way. Your faith has saved you.** We have been cleansed and saved because of Jesus.

We have many reasons to say, “Thank you, thank you!” To be like the one leper who turned back to praise Jesus. The ultimate reason we Christians give thanks and praise our living God is that he has accomplished our salvation—enabling us now and forevermore to confess personally, “Jesus is also Lord of my life.” Now, dear Christian family, that’s truly a happy Thanksgiving. In the life-saving name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.