

Kirkwall Presbyterian Church

'Did you thank God today?

How about yesterday?'

Luke 5:12-16; Luke 17:11-19

October 11, 2026

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The Scripture reading from Luke 5:12-16, tells us about one man who had the dreaded disease of leprosy. He asked Jesus to *'make him clean,'* or *'make me well again.'* Jesus healed him immediately! Then Jesus instructed him to go and show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded that healed lepers must offer to God. (*The details of this can be found in Leviticus 24.*)

To be brief the summary goes like this:

The cleansed leper could not go to the Tent of Meeting, nor the residence of the priest. He had to wait outside the camp, ask someone to notify the priest and then the priest would come out to check him over. If a strip search found no trace of leprosy, the man was to shave from head to foot. Then, taking two birds with him, he could go to a place of worship and offer the sacrifice. This examination process would be repeated 8 days later. If there was still no evidence of the disease, he would be allowed a gradual integration back into society.

The second story from Luke 17 involves 10 lepers. It takes place as Jesus is making His way towards Jerusalem. He is on the road between Galilee and Samaria. On one side are the Samaritans who did not like Jews; on the other side of the road were the Jews who hated Samaritans because the Samaritans were not pure-bred Jews. Centuries before, some Jews had intermarried with Gentiles, and their children were considered unfit for God's service. Jesus has, in His earthly ministry, already accepted some Samaritans who became believers. His actions caused many Pharisees to criticize Him.

On this day, ten men from a nearby leper colony shouted at Jesus and pleaded for His mercy to heal them; nine were Jewish; one was a Samaritan. Jesus called back, *"Go show yourselves to the priests."* In Luke's account, it is implied that they would follow the instructions as outlined in Leviticus 24. That process would be understood by the men, and off they went. In faith, they obeyed. All were still covered with the awful skin rash; some were without a finger or two – or maybe all; some had no lips; others no toes. But they went because they believed that Jesus, and no other could make them well. On the way, all ten were cleansed. We can only imagine their joy. Think about one – one who had no toes left. As he

hobbled along on his stumps of feet, suddenly there was pain. *“Ouch! Ouch! These bandages on my feet are too tight”* He sat on a stone and began untying the knots holding the bandages with his thumb and baby bobby. *“What goes on? What are you doing getting in my way?”* His eyes, almost blind, could focus. He saw – **he saw** – that 3 other fingers were present on his right hand. He touched them to his tongue and he could feel! The numbness was all gone!

But *“Ouch! Ouch, my foot! Why is this bandage so tight?”*

He unwound it and to his wonder, 5 beautiful pink toes wiggled in glee. He looked around. Not far away his buddies were making similar discoveries – because their leprosy was no more. The Master had healed them all. Nine men began talking all at once. But one sat quietly for a moment. His thoughts were focused on the One who told them to, *“Go, show yourselves to the priest.”* Would He still be on the road?

He jumped up without a word and headed back, running again like he was a teenager. *“Yes. Yes, I think it is Him, with a few others with Him!”*

He began to laugh, and weep at the same time! Unceremoniously, he fell on his knees in front of Jesus and yelled, *“Thank you. Thank you, my Jesus. I thank you.”* Perhaps Jesus laughed too!

Then Jesus straightened and His eyes scanned the horizon. His voice was soft as He asked no one in particular, *“Were not 10 lepers healed? Where are the other 9? Did only this Samaritan return to thank me?”*

There are 3 things to learn from this brief story:

1. Jesus has unlimited power to heal.
2. Jesus is impartial – ancestry, skin colour, and language are of no consequence to Him; He knows us inside and out.
3. God wants to hear our prayers of thankfulness, for He has given us so much.

When should we thank Him? Jesus purchased an open line to God when He died and rose again. We should use it all the time—once a day, every day all day long!! But we’d better mean what we say because He knows our hearts!