

Grateful Hearts: Living in the Overflow 4

The Grateful Life

Luke 17:11–19

Gratitude is the mark of a life transformed by Jesus.

Introduction: We instinctively expect people to say, “thank you.” Unexpressed gratitude often feels like ingratitude. Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to say thanks (Luke 17:17). This story shows us that God notices our gratitude. True transformation leads to expressed thanksgiving. Let’s learn how to be “the one who returned.”

I. Recognize God’s mercy – we all receive grace (vv. 11–14)

A. **Jesus meets ten lepers**—outcasts living in isolation due to disease.

1. They “stood afar off” and cried, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (vv. 12–13)
2. Jesus tells them to show themselves to the priests; they are healed as they go (v.14)
3. Miserable outcasts—Jews and Samaritans normally would not dwell together—receive miraculous healing

B. **Leprosy: a picture of sin**—disfiguring, isolating, hopeless

1. Leviticus 13:45–46 required lepers to live outside and declare “Unclean!”
2. Jesus showed mercy to all ten, none of whom deserved healing

C. **In a sense , we are all spiritual lepers**

1. Romans 3:23 – All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
2. James 1:17 – Every good and perfect gift is from above
3. Psalm 107 – His mercy endures forever

Gratitude in us begins when we recognize our need and God’s undeserved mercy.

II. Return to give thanks – gratitude in action (vv. 15–16)

A. **Only one of ten returns to thank Jesus**—he glorifies God “with a loud voice”

1. He falls at Jesus’ feet, giving thanks (v. 16)
2. He is a Samaritan—a “foreigner,” the least likely to return

B. **Gratitude is more than a feeling**—it’s action:

1. Public, wholehearted thanksgiving glorifies God (Romans 1:21)
2. Reverence and humility shown by falling at Jesus’ feet

3. Expressing thanks honors God and blesses others

Like the elderly teacher who received one note of thanks after 50 years

4. The power of one thank-you in changing a heart

C. **Choose gratitude**

1. Express appreciation daily to God and others
2. Cultivate a habit of praise—even in public, without being showy

James Merritt: “Be humbly grateful or grumbly hateful”

III. Receive the greater blessing – gratitude reveals true faith (vv. 17–19)

A. **Jesus asks:** “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?”

1. Only one returned to give glory to God—he hears: “*Your faith has made you well*” (v.19)
2. Greek meaning: “Your faith has saved you”

B. **All ten were healed physically;** only one was saved spiritually

1. Gratitude revealed a transformed heart and saving faith
2. John Piper: “One wanted the Healer more than the healing”

C. **Gratitude leads to deeper relationship with God**

1. Matthew 7:14 – “Narrow is the way... few find it”
2. Matthew 13:12 – “Whoever has [gratitude], more will be given”
3. Psalm 92:1 – “It is good to give thanks to the LORD”

Like an engagement ring analogy—don’t love the gift more than the Giver

D. **Gratitude is an expression of true faith**

1. A grateful heart draws close to God
2. Ephesians 5:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 – Give thanks in all things

Like Adrian Rogers’ four levels of gratitude—aim for the highest: giving thanks always

Conclusion:

- Be the One Who Returns: Turn back in worship and thanks each day
 - Express Thanks to Others: Speak gratitude to spouses, family, mentors
 - Thank God in All Things: Trust Romans 8:28 even in trials
 - A grateful heart is spiritually healthy and deeply joyful
 - 2 Corinthians 9:15 – “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift”
- Jesus asks: “Where are the nine?” Will you be the one?