

More Than a Miracle

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[0:00] If you found your place there in Luke chapter 17, verse number 11, the Bible says this, As they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet giving thanks, and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, They're not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? They are not found that return to give glory to God save this stranger.

And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. This is the second time in Luke's gospel that Jesus heals some lepers.

First time we see that Jesus actually reaches out and touches a leper, which was an absolute no-no in those days. Because usually if you touch the leopard, you were unclean. But the beautiful thing about Jesus is he's clean, he makes us clean.

[1:22] And we saw that in this text. Now this is a different instance that Jesus doesn't touch them. He just sees these ten men, speaks to them, tells them to go do something, and they're healed. But this text here is more than just a miracle.

It's more than ten men getting healed. It reminds us that it's possible to receive God's blessings without truly knowing Christ as your Savior. And what Jesus does is he's going to leave us with this question, and he's going to challenge us to ask ourselves, do we merely enjoy his gifts, or do we truly treasure who Jesus is?

That's what he wants us to see here this morning. And so before we do that, let's have a word of prayer, and then we're going to jump right in. Father, thank you for this opportunity. Lord, just to gather as a church this morning. Lord, I pray that we can lift our voices to you in song, and we can sing about the cross, and we're reminded of what you did for us on that tree.

Lord, it's because of the fact that you died for our sins, you were buried and rose again, that we have the opportunity to have a life that has purpose and has peace and has joy. Not just here, but eternally.

Lord, I pray if there's somebody here that doesn't know that today, that maybe they've just experienced some blessings from you, but Lord, I pray that before we leave, that every person who walks out of this door knows you as their Savior.

[2:40] Lord, I pray that you would be with me now, that you would just empty me of self. Lord, cleanse me of sin. Lord, give me the words to say, Lord, I need your strength. Lord, I need physical strength today. I pray that you would help me to be a help to these people, and we ask it in Christ's name.

Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. You ever been to a restaurant, and you start giving your order to the waiter, and they're not writing it down?

Yeah, you know what I mean? And you just think to yourself, are you going to write this down? You know, because, you know, if they're like me, if I don't write things down, I'm probably going to forget about it.

Every once in a while, my wife says, hey, I need you to go to the store and get this. And so she starts telling me, and she says, are you going to write that down? I say, no, I'll get that. I can remember that. So I go to the store, and, you know, I'm confident that I'm going to do that.

I'm trying to remember what she told me. I'm not going to call her because then that's just going to confirm what she already knows. So I'm just trying to think about it, and I'm thinking, well, obviously I'm here for cereal and cookies and ice cream, the essentials, a well-balanced diet.

[3:46] So I come home with that and forget the one thing that she sent me there to get. So you know what I do. I get back in the car. I drive back to the store, and I get that.

But it is kind of amazing how easy it is to forget something that we're supposed to remember, something important, one thing that we're supposed to do. And it doesn't just happen on a grocery store run.

I think if you're like me, sometimes it shows up in our spiritual lives. I think that we're quick to ask God for help. You know, when something comes up, when a major life thing happens, when something happens at work, when a family member is sick, when something serious happens, I mean, we're going to call on God real quick.

Hey, Lord, I need you right now. We're quick to pray when life falls apart. We're quick to cry out when we need the mercy and grace of God. And so often God answers, and He provides, and He protects, and He blesses, and He moves in a certain way.

But I find even in my own life that it's surprisingly easy just to keep moving on. It stopped for a minute, and I slowed down, and I asked God for help. But we can just kind of keep moving on in life without really returning to the one who's the giver of all blessings, the one that answered that prayer, the one that provided that situation, the one that did those things for us.

[5:02] And I think that we often, we need to just kind of ask ourselves, when's the last time we just stopped and said, Lord, thank you? I love that little chorus that we sing, thank you, Lord, for saving my soul.

When's the last time, besides maybe just singing that song, that you just stopped and said, Lord, thank you for saving me? Lord, thank you for changing my life. Lord, thank you for answering this prayer. Because we see here in our text this morning that gratitude is a major theme of it.

I don't believe gratitude is the overriding principle, but we come to this story, and it seems that ten men should have been thankful, but only one was.

And we come here, and we see Jesus healing these ten men suffering for leprosy. But I want us just to understand from the outset that if all we're looking at is ten men getting healed and one man saying thank you, that's not what this passage is about.

It's not about healing. It's not even about gratitude primarily. Here's what Jesus wants us to see. He wants us to understand what genuine saving faith really looks like and what genuine faith, how it responds to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6:09] Because Jesus shows us in this text, and he's reminding us that there is a world of difference between receiving his blessings and truly knowing him as Savior.

And that's what he really pulls out of this text. So as we come to the text here in verse number 11, we see that Jesus is on the way towards Jerusalem. Really since chapter 9 of Luke's gospel, really verse number 51, the Bible says that Jesus had set his face towards Jerusalem.

And really from that moment on, really his whole life was about going to the cross, but in his ministries per se, he is making his final journey to Jerusalem. He is on his way.

Every miracle, every conversation, every confrontation that he's had in these last few chapters, every parable, in all of those things, it's moving him closer and closer to the cross.

His disciples don't understand it. The Pharisees don't understand what's going on. But he knows this, that he's traveling towards suffering. That he's traveling towards his own crucifixion.

[7:12] But what really stands out to me is that yet while he's moving towards Calvary, he never stops showing compassion and mercy to people in need. Let me just remind us before we get into this text, Jesus isn't too busy for you.

He knows exactly what's going on. And even in the midst of a difficult thing and knowing what's coming down the road, Jesus is here and he's willing to stop. He's willing, I love the Bible says, and he saw them.

You know, we can see people, we look right past them, we look right through them. No, Jesus saw these men. And on the border of Samaria and Galilee, Jesus encounters these men whose lives have been devastated by leprosy.

But yes, we are going to see the compassion of Jesus, but we also see once again that as Luke has so eloquently done, we see this unmistakable demonstration of divine authority.

Because there were still all these opinions about who Jesus was. Some knew that he was the Messiah, the one they've been looking for. Others thought he was a miracle worker. The Pharisees thought he's just some rogue rabbi.

[8:20] But when Jesus heals these ten lepers, it's very obvious that no physician could have done this. That no physician could have instantly cleansed ten lepers.

That no religious leader could restore them. Only God could. And that's the point. Because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. And as Luke has made it evident from chapter to chapter, Jesus did not come to fill empty bellies, to heal broken bodies, to cure leprosy.

He did those things. But here's why he came. To seek and to save that which was lost. That is why he is marching towards the cross of Calvary. Because he's going to lay his life down.

Why? Because for God so loved the world. He was willing to die for them. So as we come here, we see that the big idea of this text is this.

That saving faith is not just revealed by receiving God's blessings in our life. No, it's really evidenced by returning to worship and treasure Christ himself.

[9:24] That's what we see in this one leper especially. So if you're taking notes, we'll answer this question here this morning. How does genuine saving faith respond to Jesus?

What does it look like? How does it act? The first thing that we see is in verse number 11 through verse 14. A genuine faith, it obeys Christ. Christ. Genuine faith obeys Christ.

When we get to verse number 12, Luke paints this heartbreaking picture. The Bible says, as Jesus entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.

We see in the other parts of the gospel when Jesus shows up in a town and he's there and people know he's coming. I mean, they're lining out on the roads and they see him and they run to him.

And they bring the sick.

And there's been times where they cut a hole in the roof and lowered a man down. They were trying everything they could to get their friends to Jesus. But the unfortunate thing for these men is they weren't allowed to.

[10:24] They can't get near him because they're lepers. The law required it. They would have to stand a certain distance. See, leprosy in the ancient world in first century Israel especially was not a good thing.

A leper would have to stand outside of the city. Once he was infected with leprosy, we would call it Hansen's disease today. It would affect their skin. They would lose all nerve endings.

They would basically just kind of rub their fingers clean off their nose and their ears. Different things like that would happen. And they weren't understanding everything. And they thought, man, this is highly contagious.

It's not as contagious as they thought it was. But a lot of it was ceremonially unclean laws and different things like that. And they would have to stand a certain distance. If anybody was coming, they'd have to yell out, unclean, unclean.

So if you don't want to talk to anybody at Walmart, just do that. They'd be like, what is going on there? So just yell unclean. But it was just kind of a warning. Hey, don't get near me.

[11:24] I have leprosy. There were certain laws, too. If the wind was blowing a certain direction, they couldn't stand downwind. They'd have to stand at least 150 feet from the person, 150 yards, excuse me.

So there's all of these things. And I'm just trying to paint a picture of how miserable these men's life must have been. The only people they could be around was other lepers. Once you were infected, you were kind of kicked out of the city.

You'd have lost your job. You couldn't stay with your family. And they would basically live in these little colonies, these little leper colonies. So not only was this disease painful, it was extremely isolated.

Separated from family and from society and from worship, from anything that he wanted to do. And on top of that, as we've kind of seen in Luke's gospel, that many viewed leprosy or really any sort of physical ailment or disability as evidence of God's judgment upon their life.

That some sin must have caused this. So you can imagine everywhere they went, when people saw him, they'd start whispering. Well, I heard he did this. And I heard this happen. That's probably why he's a leper.

[12:30] So it was just this constant, not only the physical pain and the physical defects of leprosy, but just the societal outcasts that they were. I mean, imagine never hugging your wife or children again or your grandkids.

Never picking them up. Never attending church again. Never just sitting around the dinner table. Never living a normal life again. That's these men. Simply put, these men had lost everything that they had ever known.

And before we run past this, I just want to remind us that leprosy is often a picture of what sin does. Leprosy wasn't their biggest issue. Sin was. You know what sin does in our own life?

It separates us from God. It isolates us spiritually. It leaves us hopeless apart from Christ. We don't know what to do and we feel like there's no cure. But here's the beautiful thing. Jesus is the cure. Jesus is the answer. And before we came to Christ, if you know Him as your Savior, you weren't just sick. You were dead. The Bible says we are dead in our trespasses and sin.

[13:36] You are hopeless just like these ten lepers are. And they didn't look at Jesus when He showed up in this town, when He was kind of entering the village as, hey, maybe this is a good option.

Here's what they realized. He's their only option. He's their only hope. And I just want to remind us today that He still is the only hope. He's the only hope for our world. We can't legislate it.

We can't vote it in. We can't do all these things. Jesus Christ is the answer. That's why He came. That's why He's moving towards the cross. Verse number 13, the Bible says this.

And they lifted up their voices, which would have been difficult. One of the effects of leprosy is it would affect the voice box. And so it's very difficult to raise your voice. So the idea is they're giving it everything they have.

And they said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. This use of Master is only used in the Gospel of Luke. And this is the only time it's used by His really non-followers.

[14:38] But here's what they know. They kind of know who He is. They've heard of this Jesus of Nazareth. And they're thinking, if there's anybody that can help us, it's this man. Now, notice they don't demand healing.

They don't claim that they deserve anything. Here's what they ask for. Mercy. Jesus, have mercy on us. And that's exactly how every sinner must come to Christ.

We don't come to Jesus bargaining. We don't come to Jesus boasting. We don't come to Him with the terms of negotiation. Here's how you come to Christ. Lord, have mercy on us.

That's what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5, 3, as He sets up how the Christian life works, He says this is where it starts. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those that are spiritually bankrupt.

I love this use of the title Master to Christ. Because here's what they recognize. We've heard some stories, and we feel like you're the only person that has the authority to do anything about this.

[15:44] Maybe they knew about the other man that was healed of leprosy. And he kind of came by and said, Hey, there's this guy named Jesus. If you see him, talk to him. I'm clean. We don't know how they heard about him, but they understood he could do something.

They don't understand exactly maybe the authority he possesses, but they believed that he could help them. So verse 13 is kind of really just a cry out. It's a prayer.

But then verse 14, Jesus kind of does something a little different than he normally does. He says something kind of unexpected. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priest.

Maybe they were thinking, Well, that's not how I thought this was going to go. I mean, the last leper he touched. The other people he's healing. He's doing all these things.

He's raising people from the dead. And he tells them, Go show yourselves unto the priest. I mean, what's he doing? I mean, they're still covered with leprosy. Why would we go there?

[16:45] We're not allowed in the temple. We're not allowed to be around people. We're still ceremonially unclean. So why would Jesus tell them to go to the priest? I think there's multiple reasons.

One of the reasons is because, according to Leviticus 14, when you start reading about leprosy in your Bible reading plan, you're thinking, What is going on? Here's what Jesus is doing. Jesus is fulfilling the law.

You look at Matthew 5, verse 17. Jesus says, I didn't come to destroy the law. I came to fulfill the law. So here's what he's doing. In one regard, he's sending them to the religious leaders because they were kind of like the health inspectors of the day.

They were the ones accusing Jesus of not following the law. And Jesus says, I'm going to follow right here. I'm going to send them down there. And they were the ones to inspect and tell the leper, Hey, you're free to return to society.

And so what Jesus is asking them to do, he said, I want you to walk down there. I want you just to obey before you see any evidence of your healing. In other words, he wants them to kind of have this radical obedience, not knowing what's going to happen.

[17:51] That's kind of how faith works in our life, isn't it? You know, sometimes, I don't know about you, but I want the Lord to do something for me. I want him to kind of lay out a five-year plan. I want him to show this.

And if I do that, invest here and go, how's that going to work out for me? If it's going to work out good, I'm all in. I'm the only one? Okay, I didn't think so. But that's not how faith often works. Faith doesn't wait until everything makes sense. Here's what faith does. It trusts the character of God, knowing that he is good, knowing that he does all things well.

Faith obeys the Word of God. Jesus spoke, and Jesus still speaks today, by the way, right here. That we have the Word of God, and we can call on him, we can obey him. Faith moves forward. Why? Because Christ has already spoken. I wonder how many of us here today in this room are waiting for God to explain everything before we're going to move forward. I think I can be guilty of it in my own life.

[18:54] Hey, I'll forgive when this happens, Lord. I'll forgive when they recognize it. I'll give when I have a little more money. I'll serve you a little bit better when life settles down. I'll trust you more when I can see the outcome.

That's not how God calls us to live. That's not how genuine faith responds to Jesus. No, it obeys. I mean, these men could have stood there arguing. They could have said, Hey, what if we go there and nothing happens?

Then we look dumb. What if we go and we get to the priest and we're still lepers? I mean, why can't he just come over here and touch us and make some big magic show and just make it all better? But really, they had nothing to lose. So might as well try this. I mean, their life is counting down. They're a ticking time bomb, so to speak. So instead of just arguing about it, the Bible says they just simply obey.

Notice what the end of verse number 14 says. And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed. Don't miss that little phrase, as they went.

[20:02] Jesus didn't heal them before they obeyed. No, he healed them while they were obeying. That they were walking there and Jesus sends them to the priest, the very priest that would later reject him.

That he sends them there. They're going to have to be unwilling witnesses that Jesus did this. Because nine lepers show up and they're like, Hey, where are you from? Yeah, we were just out there, you know, kind of between Galilee and Samaria.

Jesus, you ever heard of Jesus? You ever heard of that guy? He just showed up and said, Hey, you're healed if you go to the sea. See, the religious leaders, they're thinking, You've got to be kidding me. Because Jesus is reminding them over and over who he is.

They couldn't deny what Jesus had done. See, this wasn't just merely an act of compassion. It was. And these men needed it greatly. Their life was going nowhere.

But Jesus shows up and gives undeniable evidence that he is exactly who he claimed to be. Only God could cleanse ten lepers by just telling him to go somewhere.

[21:04] It shows his divine authority. But here's where the story kind of takes an unexpected turn. See, up to this point, there's no difference in the ten men.

All ten men knew they were lepers. All ten men cried for mercy. All ten men obeyed Christ's command to go show themselves to the priests. And all ten of them, as they went, experienced this miraculous healing that only God could do.

But the true test of faith wasn't what happened on the way to the priest. It's what happened after the miracle. See, because the difference wasn't the miracle they received. It's where they went after they received it.

So how does genuine faith respond to Christ? Number two, it does this. It returns to Jesus with gratitude. It returns to Jesus with gratitude. Verse number 15, the Bible says this, And one of them. Kind of seems shocking. Only one? Only one of these men? It wasn't like he was less of a leper. No, these were leprous men. They were all in the same boat.

[22:12] They were all in the same situation. They all had no hope. And yet all of them, as they went, were healed. But the Bible says, but one of them.

One man stops. One man turns around. One man heads back towards Jesus. And I just want us to see, Luke's not recording some history here. No, he's drawing a contrast.

That ten men received a miracle. But only one of them is going to understand who the miracle worker is. There's a big difference there. And notice what caused him to turn back when he saw that he was healed.

He didn't have a mirror. He didn't know all these situations. They were just simply obeying. And I don't know how it happened, but maybe he's walking and he started looking at his hands thinking, well, that looks different.

And he looked over at Bob and looked over at Joe and man, their face looks different. It's not scabbed over. There's not sores all over their face. And perhaps he began to feel much better and he could maybe just feel it running through his body.

[23:16] I don't know how it happened. But whatever happened, he knew this immediately. Jesus did something that only Jesus could do. He knew exactly where the healing came from.

And what we notice here from this verse number 15, and when he saw that he was healed, he turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his feet, at his feet, giving him thanks.

See, the first thing on his mind wasn't getting to the priest. His first thing on his mind wasn't trying to get back to his family. It wasn't, hey, maybe my boss will hire me back at my job.

It wasn't just returning to normal life. His first thought was this, I've got to get back to Jesus. I've got to talk to him. I've got to tell him, thank you.

And let me just remind you, that's the response of genuine faith. A life that completely changes, a life that was headed for death, but now has life, a life that has been completely turned around, cannot remain indifferent after experiencing God's grace.

[24:23] It can't. The Bible tells us this in 2 Corinthians 5, 17, that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new.

When that happens in a life, you can't say, well, that was cool, going to keep going. But that's exactly what happens in our text here. I mean, it still operates the same way in our culture today. There's a lot of people that gladly would take what Jesus gives. I mean, they want his help. Hey, they probably need some forgiveness in their life every once in a while. I mean, they'd love a better marriage.

They'd love a stronger family. They'd like to be free of the guilt and the shame that they have, but after receiving his blessings, here's what they do. They just keep on walking. Thanks, Jesus, for the help. Appreciate it.

But that wasn't this man. Luke tells us that his gratitude overflowed in three beautiful ways. Number one, he glorified God. We saw earlier in the text in verse number 13 that he gave everything he had.

[25:26] That wasn't a lot. His voice was shot because of this disease and he was crying out and it may have been scratchy and raspy and barely understandable, but he was just saying, Lord, have mercy on me.

But now he comes back in verse 15 with the same voice, but a loud voice. It wasn't like, eh, thank you, Jesus. You know, sometimes, I know we're Baptists and we don't like to get real loud and say a whole lot of things because what are people going to think?

But, you know, I've watched basketball and football games with some of you. I'm ready. Some of you think, what's wrong with you? The doctor said this, I need college football.

It's going to change my life. So, y'all just keep praying and it's coming, so that's going to help me out. But I don't watch football. I don't watch college football on my couch and be like, no, I mean, I'm screaming at it.

I'm jumping up and down. I'm running outside sometimes. I mean, whatever. I let the Spirit lead. I don't know if it's a silly situation, but when's the last time you actually just glorified God?

[26:29] I think we did a good job this morning, to be honest. I love when at the end of that song we sang it, just a cappella. Just reminding of the cross and what it's done for us.

Listen, that's a way we can glorify God. That's why we sing He's worthy of worship. And why was this man just so willing to, he didn't care who was around. No, he turned around, which is repentance, by the way.

Repentance is you're going one direction and you turn the other direction. He turns around, he sees God, and he lifts his voice and says, God, thank you for saving me. You know why he does that?

Because that's what grace does.

When you realize where you were and where you are now, you realize this, it's not me. It's God that did it. And that's why it changes the way, it changes the language of our hearts.

We once cried because we were desperate, but now we can sing because we've been delivered.

That's what God does. He tells us that he found us in the pit in the miry clay and he picks us up and he puts our feet on a rock and he puts a song in our heart.

[27 : 28] Even praise unto our God and we can't help but say, thank you, Lord. Psalm 103 says, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

See, the Christian life should be marked by continual praise. that's what this man is doing. He realizes where his healing came from. Number two, he glorified God like this, he fell at his feet. Listen, this isn't merely gratitude, that's worship. Throughout Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, falling on one's face is a posture of humility and reverence.

He's bowing before Jesus because he knows this, he's worthy of it. That he's worthy of all of that and Jesus accepts that worship. Why? Because he's God.

He understands what is going on because the Old Testament teaches that worship only belongs to God and yet it's happening here because he's here in the flesh and he's showing how God loves and what he does and how he cares and why he came.

[28 : 36] And every miracle that we've seen in the Gospel of Luke, every miracle you see in the ministry of Christ, it answers one question, who is Jesus? The miracle is never about the miracle.

It's not about feeding hungry people. It's not about healing lepers. No, it's about showing that Jesus Christ is who he says he is. And the answer to the question, this miracle once again yells, he is God in the flesh.

He's the Son of God. So he lifts his voice, he falls at his feet, verse number 16, and he gave thanks. He was thankful. I can only speak for my generation, but it feels like we're probably the most ungrateful generation that's ever walked on this planet.

And it shouldn't surprise us, by the way, because the Bible tells us the closer Christ comes to coming back, it's just going to get worse and worse and worse. You know, sometimes you say thank you to somebody and they're like, what's wrong with you?

[29 : 40] Well, I'm supposed to or my mom's going to spank me, you know. My dad's going to show up. I'm like, I'm 40, leave me alone. And he's like, where's your manners, boy? Listen, giving thanks is something that should be in our heart.

If we know Christ is our Savior, we should want to thank Him. We should be thankful people. We should be able to look at our life and realize that everything that we have is from Him. And this man in particular was thankful because he received God's mercy and it came to him through Jesus Christ.

He said, listen, thank you. I had nothing. My life was over and you showed up. And we don't come to God and merely thank Him in some vague, general sense.

No, we need to come and we need to thank Him because of what Jesus did for us. Every blessing and every mercy and every answer to prayer and every spiritual blessing in our life, it's from Him. We talked about it in Sunday school this morning that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

Listen, anything good in your life right now, anything that you should be thankful for, you think, well, I went to work for it. No, God gave it to you. No, everything is from God.

[30 : 51] Paul says this, we need to be, thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. What's His unspeakable gift? It's Jesus Christ that He willingly came, that He willingly was marching towards the cross of Calvary for us, the greatest gift God has ever given isn't health or provision or finances or protection, it's Jesus Christ.

But notice the very end of verse number 16. It kind of feels like, oh, I'm going to throw this in here. And He was a Samaritan. See, to the Jewish audience listening to this, seeing this, being a part of it, that would have been startling.

I think Brother Garrett preached from John chapter 4 when I was gone and explained probably a little bit of it. But here's the crux of the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans. They had no dealings.

That's what it says, John 4, 9. They despised each other. Samaria would have been right in the middle of Israel, Israel down here, up here. Instead of just going, they would go around Samaria just

to not deal with the Samaritan.

Even when Jesus asked the woman at the well for a drink, she said, yeah, that doesn't happen between us. I'm not sure if you know this. Jews and Samaritans, we don't like each other. She was willing to let him die of thirst than actually help him until they began to have the conversation.

[32:14] See, centuries of hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans. Jews viewed Samaritans as half-breeds. They had a Jewish lineage, but they had intermarried, and there was all kinds of racial and religious things going on there.

But yet we see that the least expected man becomes the greatest example of faith. And I think this just goes along with Luke's theme throughout his gospel. Over and over again, Luke has showed us that the gospel, here's what it does, it takes outsiders and makes them insiders.

It takes people that have no hope and no chance and brings them into the family and gives them a seat at the table. Salvation has never been about heritage or nationality or religious pedigree.

No, it has nothing to do with who your grandma and your grandpa was. No, saving faith is available because of Jesus Christ. That's where it comes from. And before we move on, I love this one implication.

This man, he was so willing to get back to Jesus that the priest could wait, that the ceremony could wait, that normal life could wait, but here's what could not wait, worship. He had to stop right where he was, clear off a spot, and worship the Lord.

[33:25] That's a good thing that we need to do in our life sometimes too. I mean, just think about it. When God answers a prayer, what's your first response? Do you immediately just move to the next request?

Or you intentionally pause and just worship the Lord for it? I mean, sometimes it is easy just to move right on. But that's not what genuine faith looks like. No, we realize where the answer came from.

Sometimes we become so focused on God's next blessing that we fail to thank Him for the one that He just gave us. But the Samaritan teaches us something we all need to make sure is real in our life, that He stops, He turns around, and He worships.

And as we close out our text this morning, Jesus asked this man, this Samaritan, He asked him three questions. Not because He needs information, many of them are rhetorical questions, but here's what He's doing.

He wants us to examine our heart, to see where we are. And He wants to show us that genuine faith responds by treasuring Christ.

[34:29] That's what it does. Look at verse number 17. And Jesus answering said, were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? I don't know if you feel it, but I just almost feel the sadness in His voice.

He knows where they're at. And they would have said, well, we're just doing what He told us. But Jesus isn't surprised. He knows what's going on. And He shows us what grieves Him.

It's not that the nine men forgot to say thank you. Here's what hurts His heart. Here's what grieves His soul. That the nine men that experienced His power, they experienced it without ever truly coming back and acknowledging Him.

And trusting Him. And placing their faith in Him. In verse number 18, Luke intentionally reminds us once again that this man was a Samaritan. They are not found, Jesus said, that returned to give glory to God.

Save this stranger. This foreigner. He's reiterating that point that the least likely person to respond in faith was the only one who truly did.

[35:38] While those, these nine Jews that should have seen and recognized God's work, here's what they do. They just kept walking. They said, hey, we got what we need out of this situation.

Thanks. See you later. Verse 19 is just a beautiful verse. It really, the climax of the account. And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.

You say, well, He's already healed. No, I know you love Greek, but the original word and whole is this, sozo, salvation. He said, your faith has saved you.

That's what Jesus is saying. Hey, these ten men, they were all cleansed. Their leprosy had disappeared. Their bodies were restored. But Jesus is using different language. He's saying, listen, this is more than physical healing.

This is spiritual healing. This is what you really need. This is why I did the miracle. I was pointing you to a greater need in your life. Every one of the ten men had a restored body, but one of them had a restored soul.

[36 : 47] One of them, their life completely changed. I love the way one pastor said it. He said, ten men received new skin. One man received a new heart. That's the heart of this story.

And that's always the greater miracle. Because you know what? He's healthy, but his body's going to grow older one day. He's going to die. He's not here anymore. You know where he is? He's with the Lord. And sometimes we need those miracles. We need that healing. We have many on our prayer list and some answered prayer sitting in this room right now and we were praying that God would touch your body and heal you and he did.

And that's a wonderful, beautiful thing. But even miracles, they're eventually going to fade into memories. But salvation lasts forever. That's why he came. That's why this miracle took place. So here's the question. What made this Samaritan different? Was he more polite? Was he more thankful? Was he more emotional?

[37 : 46] I don't think that's what Luke's trying to get across. Here's the difference. Is that he treasured Christ more than he treasured the miracle. That Jesus was more important to him than having new skin.

The nine were satisfied with restored lives, but the Samaritan wasn't satisfied until he was just at Jesus' feet. That's where he wanted to be.

The nine were content with the gift, but the Samaritan, he wanted the giver. And that's what saving faith does. It doesn't simply rejoice in what Christ can give you. No, it treasures Christ himself.

Listen, that should be the goal and the aim of your life. Why do you follow Jesus? Is it because of what he gives? Or is it because of who he is?

Would you still worship him if that promotion never came? If your health never improved? If life got harder instead of easier? If the answer to your prayer was not yet or no? Would you still serve him?

[38 : 49] Would you still worship him? Would you still say, thank you, Lord? They're difficult questions, but they're important ones. Because genuine faith doesn't merely seek God's blessings.

It seeks himself. It seeks after Jesus. The apostle Paul understood this in Philippians 3. He said this, Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

A couple verses later, he said, here's what my life is all about, that I may know him. And the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, and being made conformable into his death.

Paul said, listen, my life can be horrible, but as long as I know Jesus, that's all I need to have.

That's the heart. That's what genuine saving faith looks like. Paul didn't just treasure heaven and blessings and notoriety and answer prayers.

He wanted Jesus. That's what the Samaritan wanted. And that's what we need to make sure we want in our life. Because it's real easy to fall into the thing saying, well, I just want some blessings.

[39 : 51] I think every one of us can find ourselves in this story. Maybe you spent years asking God for help, praying for his provision, maybe some healing, maybe wisdom and protection.

Maybe God has answered those prayers over and over again. Maybe you didn't even pray for him and he still gave it to you. There's a thing in the theologians called common grace. We all experience it.

That God is good. And many times he does those things for us because he's trying to draw you to himself. See, the question isn't has God blessed you? You're sitting here today, you're blessed, you're alive, you're breathing.

No, the question is this, what have his blessings led you to love the most? The blessings or him? There's a big difference there.

That was the difference between these men. See, the difference wasn't in the miracle they received, it was the Savior they returned to. The nine hurried on to their life. And the one ran back to Jesus.

[40 : 52] We need to come back to Jesus. Charles Spurgeon once was sharing the gospel with a woman and she was beginning to understand it and she said, Sir, Mr. Spurgeon, if Christ saves me, he'll never hear the end of it.

That's the point. It's not a one-time thing and you move on. Don't ever get over it. Don't ever run past it. That was the heart of the Samaritan.

He simply couldn't keep on walking. He couldn't get back to life as usual because his life wasn't usual anymore. It was completely different. He had to get back to Jesus.

And may that be true of us. May we never become so busy enjoying God's blessings that we forget the God who gave them. May we never become so occupied with his gifts that we just neglect him. Give, give, give and keep moving. May we never lose the wonder of what Christ has done for us. I'll leave you with this thought.

[41 : 52] Saving faith doesn't stop with God's gifts. It continually treasures him. Don't simply thank him for what he's done. That's a good thing.

But here's what we need to do. Worship him because of who he is. He came to change a life. You say, well, I need healing. You do. You might.

But you need Jesus. Jesus is what's going to make the difference. Jesus is what's going to carry you through. Because his life was changed but guess what? He's going to run into difficulty next week and next month and next year and he did.

But you know what he had on his side? Jesus. And he kept returning to him and returning to him and returning to him. May that be what our life looks like. Would you stand with your heads bowed away away away away