

# Luke 17:11-37

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[ 0 : 00 ] I was 14 years old when Andre Crouch released his sixth album in 1975.

The cover pictured Andre and the disciples standing in front of a simple, unadorned country church. It was a great period cover for anything on vinyl. Grainy black and white. On a slope they stood. Simple white clapboard church unmarked behind them. The men in flared pants. The only kind we wore. And it was the day of big hair. They took the song, Take Me Back, as the title track for that album.

[ 1 : 10 ] And I remember singing it often. Take me back. Take me back, dear Lord. To the place where I first received.

Take me back. Take me back, dear Lord. Where I first believed. And then the verse, I must confess. Lord, I've been blessed. But yet my soul's not satisfied. And then the voices rise. Renew my faith. Restore my joy. Pastor Jay's got it down. And dry my weeping eyes. Today for my text. I'm taking the idea. Of being taken back.

[ 2 : 14 ] In two ways. The first scene, of course. The healing of the ten lepers. We find these words. In verse 15. And then one of them.

When he saw that he was healed. Turned back. Praising God with a loud voice. And yet. The identical word. Used in a very. Different way. In the second narrative. On the. Coming of the kingdom.

The very end there. Of verse 31. And likewise. The one who is in the field. May he not. Turn. Back. There's a time. To look back. And evidently.

[ 3 : 10 ] There's a time. Not to. The time to turn back. Verses 11 to 19. On the way to Jerusalem.

He is passing. Between Samaria. And Galilee. On that. Decided. Journey. To death. That began. In chapter 9.

Verse 51. And we have been. On the road. With him. And now. He is getting closer. And yet. On that. Road. He does. Wonderful things. And in verse 12. He enters a village. And he is met. By ten. Lepers. Who stood. At a distance.

They had good reason. To stand at a distance. When one remembers. In Jewish literature. In Leviticus. Chapter 13 and 14. The place. Of the leper. In the community.

[ 4 : 08 ] Of faith. Was to be outside. The city gate. Without access. To the holy of holies. And in particular. No social interaction.

With those who were well. This. Infectious. Skin disease. Which took. Root. Needing to be cleansed.

And therefore. Quarantined. Or isolated. To be a leper. Was. To be an outcast. In every respect. Contact. Both from the people of God. And. From God himself. For the holy. God of Israel. Would not. Come in contact. With the unholy.

To clean. With the unclean. And therefore. Even in that ancient day. Of Israel's history. When the leper. Saw those.

[ 5 : 05 ] Near them. The instruction. From Leviticus. Is clear. They were to stand. At a distance. And cry out. With a loud voice. Unclean.

Unclean. Lest. Anyone else. Come close enough. To be infected. And on this day. There. They stood. Ten of them. In number.

Probably dwelling. In a. A cave. Or a. A hole. Outside. The village. They lifted up. Their voices. And when one expects.

Them to say. Unclean. Unclean. Verse 13. We hear these words. Jesus. Master. Have.

Mercy on us. Indeed. They must have heard something. Of this. Wonder. Working. Itinerant.

[ 6 : 05 ] Minister. For when he came into contact. With unclean. He saved.

Simply. He. Made them well. God. And so. They. Cry out. From a distance. Asking. For the mercy. Of Jesus. And when he saw them. Look. He simply said to them. Go. And show yourself. To the priests. For indeed.

When one reads. Leviticus. 13 and 14. The priest. Was the one. Who would declare. One clean. Or not. The priest. Had two roles. In the community. Of faith.

One. To make provision. For the sins. Of the people. And even. As I have been reminded. This week. By one of our own. In the Oriental Institute. Not only.

[ 7 : 02 ] To make provision. For the sins. Of the people. To protect. The sanctuary. From the people. For indeed. Even the altar.

The altar. The altar. Was sprinkled. With blood. Lest the altar. Be unclean. And so the priest. Was the one. That admitted. Your relationship. To God. And it is. One that kept. God. Holy. And separate. And away.

From you. And so Jesus. Is simply. Instructing them. To be on your way. For the priest himself. Would declare you clean.

He hasn't touched them. He hasn't anointed them. He hasn't drawn near them. He simply. Spoke a word. To them. And off they went.

[ 7 : 58 ] And while they were going. They were made clean. They were made clean. This is unlike any.

Thing you and I will see today. White spots. Suddenly. Disappearing. Not age spots.

That we spend our time hiding. These are leprosy. Infectious diseases. Suddenly. Immediately. At the sound of a word.

Gone. Gone. And wellness. Returned. They. The text says. Were.

Cleansed. They were. Made clean. Through the ministry of Jesus. And then our. Thought for the day.

[ 8 : 56 ] Then one of them. When he saw that he was healed. Turned. Back. He. He. He simply. Went. Back. To the place. Where Jesus.

Was. He left off. From going to see the priest. In his mind. There was no need for a priest. There wasn't need for a priest. To declare him clean.

The only need he felt. In his heart. Was for praise. For having been made clean. And he knew. Through whom that came.

God above. And the ministry of Jesus. So he. Turned back. To the place. Where he first received. He. Turned back. To see. And fall. At the face of Jesus. And give thanks. For the work that had been done. In his own life.

[ 9 : 55 ] It says he was praising God. With a loud voice. And falling on his face. At Jesus feet. Giving him. Thanks.

We've seen this in Luke. Jesus. Receives. The thanksgiving. That we would normally think. Is reserved.

For God on high. He's praising God. With a loud voice. And giving thanks. To Jesus. Now he was a Samaritan.

That is. He was one. That wasn't even. Within the people. Of God. In the true. Religious. Pure line. As it were. Jesus sees him coming.

In verse 17. And says. We're not. Ten. Cleansed. No indication here. That the other nine. Received their leprosy again. For not coming. For indeed.

[ 10 : 53 ] They were. Made well. Two. But Jesus. Makes the point of it. Where are the nine? Was no one. Found to return.

And give praise. To God. Except this foreigner. Here again. Jesus. Just as we have seen. In chapter 8. In verse 39.

And other places. The praise. That is due God. Is given. To Jesus. And he said to him.

Rise. Go on your way. Your faith. Has made you well. Or your faith. Has. Saved you. He saved his life.

That day. There is a time. I said at the outset. To turn back.

[ 11 : 51 ] And a time not to. And in this first vignette. The teaching is clear. That in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have one. Unlike. Any. Other. Has he done.  
Anything. For you. Has he spoken. A word. In the past year.  
To you. Has he accomplished. A work. Of grace. In you. Then.  
There is a time. To turn back. With a loud voice. Praising God. By giving thanks.  
[12:48] To him. For all that he has done. For you. Oh. On this. The first Sunday. Of a new year.  
For. How appropriate.

It is. To look back. To turn back. Take me back.  
And give thanks to God. He is working. In the lives of many. May. But only a few.  
Take the concerted. Delivered opportunity. To give him thanks. Don't hear me wrong. This is not  
one of. Aesop's. Fables. Where we have this.  
Untrue story. Put forward in scripture. With a moral point. Behind it. Concerning. Thanksgiving.  
Aesop.

[13:50] Of course. Probably. Sixth century. Or so. B.C. There are over. Six hundred. Stories.  
Attributed.

To him. Where. Untrue. Stories. Are put forward. For a truth. To be told. That's not what Luke.  
Is doing. Luke. Luke. Is indicating. From the very first. Verses. Of his narrative. That he is speaking.  
About the things. That were accomplished.

Or fulfilled. Among us. Through eyewitnesses. That have spoken. To us. Concerning. Jesus. And  
his reign. In the world.

His reign. Over all. It isn't as if. The moral of the story. Is give thanks. Although giving thanks.

[14:47] Is what we ought to do. The significance. Of the story. Is that. In Jesus. You have one.  
That heals. That delivers.

That saves. That strengthens. That reverses. The fall. That has victory. Over disease. Sickness.  
And as we'll continue to read. Even death. Death. Death. And he is the one. To whom every  
Christian. Ought to come. And to fall on their feet.

Face. At his feet. And give praise. And so I simply say to you this morning. Have you turned back.  
Are you speaking.

Thanksgiving. In his name. In praise to God. If you haven't done it for a while. You ought to try it on  
your way out today.

[15:43] Before you hit the sidewalk. Tell someone. In praise to God. What Jesus. Has done for  
you. There is a time.

To turn back. And a time not to. The verses that follow.

In verses 20. Through the end of the chapter. Have a particular emphasis. It's the emphasis that I'm  
picking up. Likewise. Let one who is in the field. Not.

Turn. Back. The emphasis of the text. Had its origins. In a question posed by the Pharisees.

Concerning the kingdom of God. You'll see it right there. In verse 20.

Being asked by the Pharisees. When the kingdom of God would come. He. Answered them. And  
the answer that Jesus gives. Concerning the coming. Of the kingdom of God. Is.

[16:39] Is manifold. It's. It comes in. Varied ways. He doesn't just give a single answer.

He gives. In our text. At least. Three responses. To the coming of the kingdom of God. And the last  
of which. Will press you. Not to turn back.

But to press on. Forward. The first answer. He's going to give. Is to the Pharisees. In verses 20 and  
21. He's going to answer. To them. The kingdom. You need to know.

It's already here. You just don't get it. But then. He's going to turn to his disciples. And you'll see the  
shift. There in verse 22. To those who are following him.

And he won't merely say. It's already here. But you don't get it. He'll say. The day is coming. When  
it won't be here. And you'll desire it. And then he seems to balloon out.

[17:35] And manifold glory. To almost a universal answer. Beyond the time of his own disciples.  
To speak about the apocalyptic return. The revealing and manifestation.

Of the Son of Man at the end of time. And concerning that day. It isn't that it's already here. And you  
don't get it. It isn't that the day will come. When it's not here.

And you'll desire it. It's that when that day appears. It will be death. For those who are not ready for  
it. Even those. Who have been warned.

And yet turned back. The kingdom of God. He says. In verse 21. Is not coming.

In ways that can be observed. Nor will they say. Look here it is. Or there. There was an expectation.

[ 18 : 35 ] The Pharisees had. For the coming of the kingdom. Certainly that expectation. Is rooted in 2 Samuel 7. Where David is promised. A kingdom that will. Go forever. A house.

A dynasty. Daniel. Chapter 7. speaks of the son of man. Receiving a kingdom. That is without end. And the expectation. For the Pharisees.

And the religious of that time. Is when will the kingdom of God. Actually come. When will this. Everlasting. Ruler. And rule. Take place. Jesus response is.

Well it's already here. It's in the midst of you. But you don't get it. The words that Jesus.

Brought to John the Baptist. Tell John that the blind. See. Tell John that the lepers. Are clean. Tell him that the lame. Walk.

[ 19 : 41 ] The kingdom of course. Is already here. Luke has been pointing to that. From the very. Opening chapter. Even in regard to the birth narrative. Of Jesus. In chapter 1.

Where in verse 33. Of chapter 1. In regard to the. Announcement given to Mary. Her son. It says. Will reign over the house of Jacob.

Forever. And of his kingdom. There will be no end. From the very outset. Luke has been identifying. The birth of Jesus. With the king. Or the ruler. Through whom. An everlasting kingdom comes.

And so Jesus says. You want to know when the kingdom of God is coming? It's already here. But you don't get it.

He turns into his disciples. And he says. Well let me. Let me answer it another way. It's not always going to be here. And oh. When that day comes.

[ 20 : 42 ] He'll desire it. He said to his disciples. The days are coming. When you will desire to see. One of the days of the son of man. And you will not see it. And they will say.

Do you look there. Or look here. Don't go out. Don't follow them. For as lightning flashes. And lights up the sky. From one side to the other. So will the son of man be in his day. But first. He must suffer many things.

And be rejected by this generation. He's speaking of his own death. On the way to Jerusalem. Which will extinguish. For a moment in time. The king.

From his reign. Won't always be here. And oh. When that day comes. You will long for even one day. When you are with me.

Among three years of journeying. Just give me one day. With the Lord. Yes. The kingdom is here.

[ 21 : 37 ] And some don't get it. The kingdom will not always be here. And oh. When that day comes. You will desire it. And then he seems to move. From there.

Very quickly. To this. End of the age. Illustration. Brought about. By these cosmic events.

Relayed in the time. Of Noah. And of Lot. And he says. Beginning in verse 26. Just as it was. In the days of Noah. So it will be.

In the days of the son of man. They were eating. And drinking. Marrying. And being given in marriage. Until the day. When Noah entered the ark. And the flood came. And destroyed them all. Yes.

There will be a day. When the son of man. Is revealed. People will be going to weddings. And planning them. People will be going to parties.

[ 22 : 40 ] They'll be caught unaware. There. The kingdom's here. You don't get it. It won't be here.

You'll desire it. It will come again. And it will be so. Catastrophic.

That you'll wonder. Whether you ever wanted it. Likewise. Just as it was.

In the days of Lot. For they were eating. And drinking. Buying. And selling. Planting. And building. He moves out of the. Marriage motifs. Into the motifs. Of business.

They'll be buying. And selling. In that day. Just as they were. In the days of Lot. They'll be heading downtown. On the number six. Or the metro electric.

[ 23 : 36 ] Be getting off at Jackson. Or Randolph. Working your way west. Into the loop. Under the L. And. Near the board of trade. It'll all be going on.

And that's all coming down. Such will be the catastrophe. Of that day. When the kingdom comes. In all of its glory.

Don't think. That the world. In which you and I live. Will forever. Stand on its hinges. And be turned. For indeed. According to Jesus.

It won't be that way. You'll be buying. And selling. And. If you go further west. Maybe even out to DeKalb. There might even be some farmland there. They'll be planting. They'll be building.

But on the day. When Lot went out from Sodom. Fire. And sulfur. Rain from heaven. And destroyed them all. So will it be. On the day. When the son of man. Is revealed. And when that day comes. [ 24 : 43 ] Don't. Turn. Back. It's an interesting lesson. I know there's much to be made. At the end of the narrative today.

About. One who is taken. And the other is left. We could think about the left behind series. And the. The convoluted thinking of.

The Christian who. Believes. We're all going to be taken. Or. Evaporated out. Before anything bad happens. As if we wanted to be.

Taken. Rather than left. But. The whole text. Indicates that. You want to be left. Behind. For the flood came. And swept them all away. And the fires came.

And took them all away. And the only ones that were left. Were Noah. And those in the boat. And Lot. And his family. Save his wife. Who turned back.

[ 25 : 43 ] Where were they taken? Where will they go. When the kingdom of God comes? Well.

The Lord picks up on the verse. From Job 39. Says. Well. Where the corpse is. There. The vultures. Will gather. They'll be taken away.

To the place of the dead. And to judgment. There's a day to. Turn back. Give thanks to God.

For what he's done in Christ. If you have done that. Then don't. Turn. Back. Having set out.

For the kingdom. In longing. For this world. Augustine. Seems to. Take. The section.

[ 26 : 39 ] In. Lot. That way. Where he says. But these events. Were a sample. Of the divine judgment. To come. For why were those. Who were being delivered. By the angels.

Forbidden to look back. If not. As a warning. To us. That if we hope. To evade. The final judgment.

We must not return. In thought. To the old life.

Which is shed. When a man is reborn. By grace. Again. Lot's wife. Turned to salt. In the place. Where she had looked back.

And thereby. Supplied the faithful. With a seasoning. Of wisdom. As it were. So that they might. Beware.

Of her example. I want to tell you. How close. I am. To being like. Lot's wife. And how close.

[ 27 : 34 ] We all are. Having set out. With the king of kings. On the road. To Jerusalem. Wanting to.

Bring a bit. Of the world. With me. Wanting to. Be home.

Be home. Be home. Here. Here. Wanting to.

Return. To the way of the world. The desires. Of the heart. That are.

Difficult. With difficulty. Being released. By grace. To seek the Lord. Likewise.

[ 28 : 38 ] With the one. Who is in the field. Not turn back. If you have set out. With. Jesus.

Relinquish. Your hold. On the world. If you have begun. With. Jesus. Allow your eyes.

To be front facing. Ever forward. And up. Not in the rear view mirror. If he saved you.

From these things. He saved you. To. Something else. And so. On this. First. Sunday. Of the new year. When you.

Like me. Look at your. New calendar. And you can't believe. All. The white space. In the year ahead. Beforeward facing.

[ 29 : 45 ] Your salvation. Depends on it. Our heavenly father. As we.

Look at. This little text. At the beginning. Of the year. May we. May we be. Like. The one. In ten.

Lepers. Who's not afraid.

To turn back. And to find our way to you. And to give thanks. And may we be. Like your faithful followers. Who never.

Allow ourselves. A fixed gaze. Back upon the world. Which you saved us from. May we.

Instead. Be waiting. Hoping. Longing. Longing. For your. Increased rule. In our hearts. This year. In Christ's name. Amen.

[ 30 : 41 ] Let's stand. And sing our. New year's prayer. To the Lord. Longing.! Thank you.