

Faith and Thanks

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[0 : 00] Well, morning. I'm very sorry I can't be with you in person this morning, particularly for our Thanksgiving Sunday today.

As you've heard, I've tested positive to COVID. And so for your sake, it's best that I don't join you in person. And for those using the lectern after me, don't worry, it will be sprayed with the COVID killer.

And so it will all be sanitized and safe for you later. Well, let's get started. If you could open your Bibles back to Luke chapter 17, please.

And there's an outline in your bulletins you might find helpful. Well, I think I've mentioned that in our family of five, we now have five who are driving.

Those two are on their learners. And one of those on their learners asked me recently, dad, do you think I'm doing okay? You know, that is driving.

[1 : 03] To which I replied, you're a great driver. And then they said, well, can I drive your car? I feel like I was just set up, right? But I replied, well, mom's car is way better.

And I gave them the keys to Michelle's car. But the point is, my actions exposed my level of faith in their driving ability, didn't they? And today we'll see the actions of some lepers, those who don't give thanks and one who does, which exposed the level of their faith in Jesus.

But first, we see Jesus's actions. Point one, verse one. Now, on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

Here we are reminded that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. Back in chapter nine, this was the turning point in Luke's gospel, where it says at that time, as the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Why did he do that? Well, to die. It says, as the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven. That is to go and die on a cross, rise and ascend.

[2 : 29] You see, it's by dying in Jerusalem that he would save us from our sins, that he would be our savior. Now, remember an angel announced at his birth, back in chapter two, verse 11, that Jesus is our savior.

And this savior would be the Messiah, the Christ, the King or Lord. In other words, Jesus is King and Savior.

And he would save us from the judgment our sins deserve by taking that judgment in our place on the cross. That's why he was on his way to Jerusalem.

But he doesn't take the direct route to Jerusalem. Here is a map. A direct route would have been just heading straight south through Samaria down to Jerusalem in the south.

In fact, back in chapter 10, he's actually already been to Bethany, which is right next door to Jerusalem. So it's like he's setting out for Melbourne City, then he travels to Richmond, and then he comes back out to Croydon, and then goes down to Wollongong, all on his way to the city.

[3 : 47] It's a rather roundabout way, isn't it? Why does he do this? Well, because he wants to preach in as many towns as possible.

And that's what we're told earlier in the gospel. He says in chapter 4 that he must proclaim the good news to other towns also. And then after that turning point in chapter 9, where he's resolutely set out for Jerusalem, and we're told in chapter 13 that Jesus went through the towns and villages teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

You see, for Jesus' death to be effective for people, they need to hear the good news of the kingdom, that he is the king, the Messiah, and have faith in him.

That's why he's taking the long way around, so that he can preach to as many towns as possible on the way, that as many people might hear of him along the way, and put their faith in him.

For it's only by faith in Jesus that his death becomes effective for us, that we are saved from sin's judgment.

[5 : 03] And that's what the actions of the lepers now show. Point 2, verse 12. Here Jesus is seen by 10 men with leprosy.

And it's no surprise we meet people like this on the fringes of society. You know, on the border between Galilee and Samaria.

Because that's what sickness does, doesn't it? A sickness isolates you from society. I mean, if we're sick, we stay at home, don't we? Or we have to pre-record a sermon like this, don't we?

We withdraw ourselves from society. Although for the Jews, the law demanded it. And so the Old Testament law said, He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease.

He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp. And so, I'd be unclean.

[6 : 19] Now the Old Testament law was given for the good of the community. It helped make sure leprosy didn't spread. But it also reminded the Jews that God was so pure that anything impure could not come near to him.

Not people who had been touched by the effects of a sinful world like disease and death. And certainly not people who were sinful themselves.

Unless they are cleansed and forgiven. And so this law explains why these ten lepers lived on the fringes of society, on the border.

Away from their community and away from God. And it explains why they didn't come near to Jesus, but cried out to Jesus from a distance. It seems they had heard of him healing others, and they believed Jesus could heal them.

And so they cried out for pity or literally mercy from him. They're desperate, aren't they? Desperate to be healed so they can have life again.

[7 : 29] Life in community and life with God. And God wants this for them. Which is why Jesus gives it to them. See verse 14.

When he saw them, he said, go. Go show yourselves to the priests. And as they went, they were cleansed. Jesus sends them off to the priests.

And as they go, they are cleansed. No more unclean. By the way, the law also said in Leviticus that the priests were the ones who had to declare them clean and free to enter life with, you know, in their community and life with God.

But notice it was on their way that they were cleansed. And so they obeyed Jesus even before they were healed by Jesus.

In other words, their actions showed they did have some faith in Jesus, didn't they? Indeed, they even called him master.

[8 : 39] But it seems their faith in Jesus was only as a master of healing. Like, you know, how today we have a professor of cardiology or something like that.

An expert in their field. They don't seem to believe or have faith that he is the Messiah or king who saves. It seems to be a superficial faith rather than a saving faith.

How do we know? Well, because their lack of any further action is now contrasted with the Samaritan. Point three, verse 15.

Here, one of the ten turns back praising God because he recognizes that Jesus is the one whom God has used to heal him.

Such that he can now come near to Jesus, did you notice? No longer standing at a distance. But he does more than that, doesn't he? He then falls at Jesus' feet and thanks Jesus.

[10 : 00] These actions show he believes Jesus is much more than a master of leprosy. More than a professor of leprosy, if you like. But that he is the Messiah or the king who saves.

And Luke adds that this man was a Samaritan, which would have shocked Luke's Jewish readers. You see, remember Galilee is in the north and that was occupied by Jews, was Jewish.

Judea is in the south and that was Jewish as well. But Samaria is in the middle. And then it was made up of Jews who intermarried with other nationalities. And so they became half-Jews or half-breeds in the Jews' eyes.

And so for many Jews, they were despised. It's kind of like, think Queensland and Victoria as the pure. And then New South Wales in the middle as the half-breeds.

Half-breeds, I can say this because I'm from New South Wales. It's okay. But the point is, this mention of the Samaritan at the end of verse 16 would have shocked Luke's Jewish readers.

[11:10] Perhaps to provoke them not to be outdone by this Samaritan. To realise if this Samaritan did this, then how much more so should they? For this Samaritan is our model to follow.

And Jesus confirms it in verse 17. Jesus asks, We're not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?

Then he said to him, Rise and go. Your faith has made you well. You see, by saying, where are the other nine? Jesus is saying that this one got it right.

He is the model to follow. But Jesus says even more than that. For this Samaritan's actions expose not a superficial faith, but a saving faith.

In verse 19, Jesus literally says, Rise and go. Your faith has saved. You. You see, the Samaritan has a saving faith.

[12:23] Such that he is not just cleansed from leprosy, but saved from something more serious. Saved from sin. He's able to rise.

Forgiven. And right with God. For his actions of falling at Jesus' feet and thanking Jesus. And not just the right response to Jesus, but a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah who saves.

In other words, his actions show his faith in Jesus as King and Savior sent by God. It's a bit like when my son Tim was little.

He would jump from a step into my arms without any hesitation. That I would, you know, not catch him. He would, if he was on a swing set or on a balcony or something like that, he would just kind of leap into my arms.

No hesitation. Now that he's 20, he doesn't do that anymore. I'm glad. But the point of the story is his actions showed his faith in me as someone strong enough to catch him.

[13:39] And this Samaritan's actions show his faith in Jesus as the Messiah who is strong enough to save him. This is what Jesus affirms by saying, your faith has saved you.

Interestingly, Jesus calls him not Samaritan, but foreigner. Perhaps to show that he's saving faith. That is, this saving faith is possible, not just for Jews and Samaritans, but for all people.

Foreigners even like us here in Melbourne. And so the question for us is, are we like the Samaritan? At one level we already are, aren't we?

Because we all need not cleansing from leprosy, but saving from sin. Which, as I said, is much more serious. Because it leads us into eternal judgment.

Hell. But we know more than the Samaritan. We know that Jesus did make it to Jerusalem. He did die on the cross. He did take the punishment for our sins.

[14:46] And so by his blood, we can be forgiven and saved. We can spiritually rise and be right with God. Join part of the community of God.

If we rightly recognize Jesus for who he is. And so, do you? Have you, like the Samaritan, rightly recognized Jesus as the king?

The one God sent to pay for your sins at the cross? And simply put, do you have faith in Jesus as your king and saviour? And for us who do, then, secondly, are we rightly responding to Jesus like the Samaritan?

And by falling at his feet. Not literally, we can't do that, but metaphorically in our lives. You know, following him as our king in life.

Living his way and following his commands. Like loving one another. Like living his way and following his commands. I was almost there.

[16:06] I think I can pick it up from... Okay, all right.

Yeah, yeah, sure. Okay. Okay. And for us who already do, then, are we like the Samaritan and rightly responding to Jesus?

I'm pretty sure I paused for a while on the first point. Because I was conscious of the guy opening the gate and knew he'd close it loudly. All right.

And for us who already do, then, are we like the Samaritan? And are we rightly responding to Jesus like he did?

By falling at his feet. Not literally, of course, but metaphorically in our lives. By following him as our king. King of our whole lives.

[17:22] And living his way and following his commands. Like loving one another. Like meeting each Sunday together. Like pleasing him above all others.

Are we responding like the Samaritan by falling at his feet in life? And are we responding like the Samaritan who praised God and thanked Jesus for life?

Do we thank Jesus for being born into this messed up world for us? For dying on a cross and suffering hell for us? For sticking through life's ups and downs with us? And are we praising God for Jesus and everything else he's given us? Will we thank God today even?

And so will we be like the Samaritan who rightly responds to Jesus falling at his feet in life? And thanking him for life.

[18 : 30] In fact, the order of events in this passage highlights how our actions expose the kind of faith we have. Doesn't it? Remember, the Samaritan fell at Jesus' feet and thanked him first.

Then, based on those actions, Jesus declared his faith and saved him. You see, this passage highlights how actions expose the kind of faith we have.

And so, another way to put it is, what do our actions show about our faith? My actions, when with one of my kids who was wanting to drive my car, exposed the level of faith in their driving ability. But I still gave them the keys to Michelle's car. So, I still had some level of faith in their ability. But if I had complete faith in their driving ability, a saving faith, so to speak, I would have given them the keys to my car, wouldn't I?

Well, in a similar way, do our actions suggest our faith is superficial? Like the other nine. Do we perhaps only give Jesus the keys to parts of our life and not our whole life?

[19 : 48] Or do we perhaps thank God on Sundays, but forget God all the other days? Or do our actions show that we have a saving faith like the Samaritan, where we fall at Jesus' feet, giving him the keys to our whole life and continuing to thank him for life?

Well, let's pray that we show our saving faith by doing both. Let's pray. Our gracious Father, we do thank you for this reminder this morning.

About both recognizing Jesus for who he is and rightly responding to Jesus in life. Help us, we pray, as those who have rightly recognized him already, to keep responding to him by falling at his feet in life and by continuing to thank him for life.

We ask it in his name. Amen. We're going to sing again. I love you.

We're going to sing again. I leave it for your time. I love you. I have to sing again. I love you. I love you.

[21 : 11] I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Folks, Wife, which points us to your son, the Lord Jesus, and how we might respond to him in thanks and praise.

[23 : 24] And so help us as we look at your word this morning to understand it and to live our lives in light of it. We ask it in his name. Amen. Well, I think I've mentioned to you before that in our family of five, we now have five drivers, although two of them are just on their learners.

And the other day, one of the learners said to me, Dad, how do you think I'm going at driving? To which I replied, I think you're doing great. You're a great driver.

To which they then responded, well, can I have a go at driving your car? I felt like I was just set up. I responded, though, by saying, well, mum's car is way better.

And I gave her the keys to Michelle's car. And the point is, my actions expose my level of faith in their driving ability.

And today we'll see the actions of some lepers, one who thanks and one who does not thank, which expose the level of faith they have in Jesus.

[24 : 31] But first, we see Jesus' actions. So at point one in your outlines and verse one in your Bibles or on the screen. Now, on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

Here we're reminded that Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem. Back in chapter nine, verse 51, it says, Now, this is the turning point in Luke's gospel where the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven.

That is, to die, rise and ascend. That's why he's on his way to Jerusalem. In other words, he's on his way to die on the cross.

Because that is how he would be our saviour. We heard he's our saviour as early as chapter two, verse 11, which we'll probably hear at Christmas time.

The angel said today in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Christ, the King, the Lord. In other words, Jesus is King and saviour.

[25 : 53] And the way he would be our saviour is by dying on the cross to pay for our sins by taking our judgment in our place.

That's why he was on his way to Jerusalem. But he doesn't take the direct route. Here is a map. Galilee is in the top.

He's probably south of Galilee along the border of Samaria. Now, the quickest route down to Jerusalem in the south is to, well, head directly south, isn't it? But instead, he goes east along the border of Samaria and Galilee.

In fact, he's actually already been to Bethany down right down the south, right next door to Jerusalem back in chapter 10. So it's like he's setting out for the city, Melbourne City, and then he travels to Richmond.

But then he goes back up to Croydon and then along the kind of edge down to Wantirna, all on his way back to the city. I mean, it's a rather roundabout route, isn't it?

[27 : 00] Why is he doing this? Well, it's because he wanted to preach as many towns as possible along the way. And that's what we heard earlier in the gospel, like in chapter 4, where he says he must proclaim the good news in other towns also.

And then even in chapter 13, after he sets out to Jerusalem, we're told Jesus went through the towns and villages teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

You see, for Jesus' death to be effective for people, they needed to hear the good news and have faith in Jesus.

And so that's why he's going teaching and preaching and proclaiming so that people might hear the good news and have faith in him. Because it's only by faith that we are saved from sin's judgment. And that's what the actions of the lepers now show us. Here, Jesus is seen by 10 men with leprosy.

[28 : 24] And it's no surprise that we meet them on the border of Samaria and Galilee, on the fringes of society. Because that's what sickness does, doesn't it?

It isolates you from society. I mean, if we are sick, we have to stay home and withdraw, or we have to do a pre-recorded sermon like today.

We have to withdraw ourselves from society, don't we? Though for the Jews, the law demanded this as well. And so in Leviticus, it says that whoever has a kind of skin disease like leprosy shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease.

He is unclean. He shall live alone. And his dwelling shall be outside the camp. And so if I was a Jew back then, I would be unclean.

And I have to live alone, outside of community, outside the temple and life with God. Now, the Old Testament law was given for the good of the community.

[29 : 32] It actually helped to make sure those with leprosy didn't spread it. But it also reminded the Jews that God is so pure that anything impure could not approach him.

Anything impure, like people who had been touched by the effects of a sinful world, like with disease and death, could not come near him.

And certainly not people who themselves were sinful, unless they were cleansed and forgiven. So this law explains why these ten lepers lived on the fringe of society, on the border, away from their community and away from God.

And it explains why they didn't come near to Jesus, but stood at a distance from Jesus and shouted to him. It seems they had heard of him healing others and believed Jesus could heal them.

And so they cry out for pity or mercy. For they're desperate, aren't they? I mean, we would be too, wouldn't we? Desperate to be healed so they can have life again, life with their community and with God.

[30 : 49] And God wants this for them too. Which is why Jesus gives it to them. Do you see verse 14? When he saw them, he said, go show yourselves to the priests.

And as they went, they were cleansed. Jesus sends them to the priests. And on their way, they are cleansed. No more unclean, but cleansed.

Fit for life again in their community and with God. And he sends them to the priests because the Old Testament law also said that the priests were the ones who could declare a person clean or not.

But notice it was on their way that they were cleansed. So they obeyed Jesus even before they were healed by Jesus.

Do you notice? And so their actions showed they did have some faith in Jesus. Indeed, they even called him master.

[31 : 56] But it seems their faith in Jesus was only as a master of healing. Like a professor of cardiology that we have today. You know, an expert in that field.

Not faith in Jesus as the Messiah or King who saves. It was like a superficial faith rather than a saving faith.

How do we know this? Well, because their lack of action is now contrasted with the further actions of the Samaritan.

So point three, verse 15. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him.

And he was a Samaritan. Here, one of the ten returns, praising God as he came back. In other words, he recognizes that Jesus is the one whom God had used to heal him.

[33 : 00] Such that he can now come near to Jesus rather than having to stand at a distance. But he does more than that, doesn't he? When he comes back, he falls at Jesus' feet.

And he thanks Jesus, doesn't he? These actions show he believes Jesus is much more than just a master of healing. More than a professor of leprosy.

But he's the Messiah or King who saves. And Luke adds, this man was a Samaritan, which would have shocked his Jewish readers.

You see, Galilee in the north on the map there was Jewish. And Judah in the south was Jewish. And Samaria in the middle. Well, that was made off of people who used to be Jews.

But they'd intermarried over the centuries. And they become half-Jews or half-breeds. And they were despised by the Jews. So in our times, think, you know, Queensland in the north, Victoria in the south, pure.

[34 : 04] New South Wales, half-breeds. I can say that because I'm from New South Wales. It's all right. I'm just stirring. But the point is, the mention of the Samaritan at the end of verse 16 would have shocked Luke's readers, his Jewish readers.

Perhaps to provoke them not to be outdone by this Samaritan. Yet to realize if this Samaritan did this, then how much more so should they? For this Samaritan is the model we're to follow.

Jesus' words now confirm this. Do you see verse 17 and following? Jesus asked, Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?

Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner? Then he said to him, Rise and go. Your faith has made you well. You see, by saying, Where are the other nine?

Jesus is saying that this one got it right. He is the model for us to follow. But Jesus actually says more than that. For this Samaritan's actions expose not a superficial faith, but actually a saving faith.

[35 : 19] Verse 19, Jesus literally says, Rise and go. Your faith has saved you. You see, the Samaritan has a saving faith.

Such that he is not just cleansed from leprosy, but saved from sin. He's able to rise, forgiven and right with God.

For his actions of falling at Jesus' feet and thanking Jesus are not just a right response to Jesus. They are also a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, the King who saves.

It's a bit like when my son Tim was little. He would often jump into my arms from a height, whether it was from a bunk bed or a high step or a trampoline or whatever it was.

And he would jump into my arms without any hesitation, convinced or having faith in me that I would catch him. His actions demonstrated that I was...

[36 : 32] Okay.

Okay. Okay.

Yeah, sure. Thanks. Yep. My nose is starting... Top of page seven...

From... No. Sorry, you go. You do it. Yep.

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. Wet's last look. Yep.

[38 : 23] Yep. Yep.

Okay. All right. You see, by saying, where are the other nine, Jesus...

All right. Just verse 19, because I actually read 17 to 19. Okay. Okay.

All right. Jesus asked, were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner? Then he said to them, said to him, rise and go.

Your faith has made you well. You see, by saying, where are the other nine, Jesus is saying that one got it right. He is the model for us to follow.

[39 : 29] But Jesus says more than that. For this Samaritan's actions expose not a superficial faith, but a saving faith. Because the end of verse 19 literally says, rise and go.

Your faith has saved you. You see, the Samaritan has a saving faith such that he's not just cleansed from leprosy, but saved from sin.

He's able to rise, forgiven and right with God. For his actions of falling at Jesus' feet and thanking Jesus are not just the right response to Jesus, but also a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, the King who saves.

You see, his actions show faith in Jesus as the King who saves. It's a bit like when my son was little, he would jump from a step or the trampoline or bunk bed, whatever it is, into my arms without any hesitation.

And I would catch him. And now that he's 20 years old, it's a different story. The point is, his actions showed faith in me as someone who was strong enough to save him.

[40 : 46] Also, also, this Samaritan's actions show his faith in Jesus as the Messiah who is strong enough to save him. This is what Jesus affirms by saying, your faith has saved you.

Interestingly, though, Jesus also calls him a foreigner, doesn't he? Perhaps to show that this saving faith is possible, not just for Jews or Samaritans, but all people like us here in Melbourne.

And so the question for us this morning is, are we like the Samaritan? At one level, we already are, because we all need not cleansing from leprosy, but saving from sin, which is so much more serious, isn't it?

At least to eternal judgment or hell. And we all need this. Saving from eternal judgment caused by our sin. But we know more than the Samaritan.

We know he did make it to Jerusalem. He did die on the cross. He did take the judgment for our sins in our place. And so by his blood, we can be forgiven, saved.

[42 : 02] We can spiritually rise and be right with God and part of the community of God. If we rightly recognize Jesus for who he is.

And so, have you rightly recognized Jesus? Like the Samaritan. That he is the one God sent.

The king who died to pay for your sin. The one who can save you from judgment. And for us who have already recognized him as our king and savior, then are we like the Samaritan?

And are we rightly responding to Jesus? By falling at his feet. And not literally, but metaphorically in our lives. You know, by following him as the king of our lives.

Like living his way and following his commands. Such as loving one another. Meeting each Sunday together. Putting him above all others.

[43 : 07] Are we responding like the Samaritan by falling at his feet in life? And are we responding like the Samaritan who praise God and thank Jesus for life?

A restored life with God. Do we thank Jesus for being born into this messy, messed up world for us? For dying on the cross and suffering hell for us?

For sticking through life's ups and downs with us? Are we praising God for Jesus? And everything else God has given us?

Will we thank God today? So will we be like the Samaritan who rightly responds to Jesus by falling at his feet in life?

And thanking him for life. In fact, the order of events in this passage highlights how our actions expose the kind of faith we have.

[44 : 14] Remember the Samaritan fell at Jesus' feet and thanked Jesus first, didn't he? And then, based on those actions, Jesus declared his faith has saved him.

You see, this passage highlights how our actions expose our faith. The kind of faith we have. And so another way to put it is, on the screen, what do our actions show about our faith?

My actions with one of my kids wanting to drive my car exposed the level of my faith in their driving ability. I didn't it? I still gave them the keys to Michelle's car, so I still had some level of faith in their ability.

But if I had complete faith, saving faith, so to speak, then I would have given them the keys to my car, wouldn't I?

Well, in a similar way, do our actions suggest our faith is superficial, like the other nine? Do we perhaps only give Jesus the keys to part of our life?

[45 : 23] Or do we perhaps thank God on Sundays and forget God all the other days? Or do our actions show that we have a saving faith like the Samaritan, where we fall at Jesus' feet, giving him the keys to our whole life, and continuing to thank Jesus for life?

Let's pray that we would show our saving faith by doing both. Let's pray. Our gracious Father, we do thank you for this reminder this morning of who Jesus is and how we are to respond to him. Help us, we pray, to keep recognizing him as the king who saves, and like the Samaritan responding to him by falling at his feet in life and by continuing to thank you for him and for life. We ask it in his name. Amen.