

The Ten, the One and the Nine

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm number 100, that's the traditional version of the psalm, Psalm 100, and we're going to sing the whole of the psalm, that's on page 362, page 362.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth, praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed, without our aid he did us make. We are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.

The whole of Psalm 100, on page 362, all people that on earth do dwell. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.

[1 : 2 1] O that the Lord is God indeed, without our aid he did us make.

We are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gaze with praise, approach with joy his court sum to.

His name always, for it is simply so to you.

For why the Lord our God is good, his mercy is forever sure.

[2 : 5 0] His truth at all times firmly stood, and shall from age to age and to learn.

We are going to pray together. Our Father in heaven, the words that we have been singing remind us of the worldwide church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not confined to any one place or any one people. If it was, we would have expected it to be confined to Jerusalem. Indeed, at the very beginning, we wonder whether the intention of the disciples was ever to go outside of Jerusalem until they were forced to do so by persecution and by circumstances.

And now today, we are here because they were willing to face all kinds of trouble. They were willing to be put to death because of the Lord Jesus.

And because you have blessed that persecuted work, we are here this evening with our lives having been changed and transformed, and with our sins having been forgiven in the name of Jesus.

[4 : 1 9] Our Father, we thank you for the joy that lies within our hearts, and that we can enter into his gates with praise, and we can approach your courts with joy, and we can praise, Lord, and bless his name always, because you are worthy of our praise.

We love you, Lord, because you first loved us and gave the Lord Jesus into the world to be our Savior. Give us to focus our eyes upon him, upon who he was, and his condescension into this world, his willingness to become an infant, a helpless baby, in order for him as our representative, on our behalf, to remove our sins by his own death as a sacrifice for them.

Our Father in heaven, we bless you today for what you've done for us, and we bless you for the joy that you've put in our hearts. And we pray that what we have, others will have as well.

And we pray never to come to you without remembering those who as yet do not have you as their personal Savior. And we pray that that time will come when those who we are praying for will come to know you and to the place where they follow Jesus with all the way they love you with their whole heart.

And our Father in heaven, we pray that you'll reveal to us this evening your word and your work and the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that we might see more of him.

[5 : 50] We pray that we will understand him more and that we will be drawn closer to him and that we will be shown what faith is. And pray that you will strengthen our faith and give us obedience that will live for you and that will live because in the light of what you've done for us.

We pray, Lord, that you will change our lives and continue to change our lives. We thank you for the change that has taken place. And we're so conscious that it's still in progress, that the work is still going on.

The Holy Spirit has begun a good work. And yet, Lord, we know that he will bring it to a conclusion. So we pray for a willingness. Keep us from stubbornness.

Keep us from disobedience and pride. Keep us from putting ourselves before anything else and anyone else. Keep us, Lord, from thinking about ourselves too much.

Perhaps there is reason for us to think about ourselves. Perhaps there are some this evening who are worried about events that are taking place in their lives. Our Father in heaven, we know how things can change and turn for the worse.

[7 : 03] Perhaps ill health can come upon us. And perhaps someone in our family can suffer. Or there are areas and decisions and events and circumstances that we find perplexing.

And we tend to focus in on ourselves. And we tend to become obsessed with what is happening in us. But, Lord, we ask that this hour of worship, that during this hour of worship, that we will be drawn, perhaps aside for a few moments' time, and that we will be drawn to focus our attention upon Jesus.

in such a way that we might discover afresh that Jesus knows our needs before we ask. He knows everything that is taking place. And we ask, Lord, that you will reveal that very truth to us and give us to cast our cares upon him because we are assured that you care for us.

Our Father, we pray, Lord, that you will, though, give us to focus on the glory of Jesus and give us to concentrate on why he came into the world, on the meaning of his death, and the fact that this world is passing away.

And that keep us, Lord, from concentrating upon our lives in the world to the extent where we fail to see that you are preparing us for the next world.

[8 : 23] Lord God, we pray that you will remind us that a day is coming when we will be taken from this earth and that we will spend eternity with you. Our Father, we pray, Lord, that you will give us to live in the light of eternity and give us not to be so tied up with what we can get from this world, that we become bogged down and we become so earthly-minded that we never see beyond.

Our Father in heaven, we pray, Lord, for your people then. We pray that we might become more like Jesus and that we might become poor in spirit and that we might mourn because Jesus said, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Give us pure hearts. Give us to be peacemakers. Lord, give us to hunger and thirst after righteousness. We pray that these will be the daily principles that govern our thinking and our choices and our behavior, our conduct.

We ask, Lord, that we will be witnesses to you and we pray that through our witness and through our obedience to you, we pray that we might radiate the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and the reality of the change and the transformation that he brings in.

So, Lord, we pray that you will bless our time together. Give us to repent before you for any wrong that we're conscious of. Make us conscious of that which we are not conscious of this evening.

[9 : 50] Bless the church worldwide. We ask, Lord, once again that you'll continue to build up your kingdom. Bless each church that we represent and each church that we know of and that we are thinking of and praying for.

And we pray, Lord, that your kingdom will be strengthened and built up day by day. We pray that we might not be discouraged by a day of small things when we see so much to discourage us.

We pray that we will keep on and continue and persevere in the Lord, knowing that this is not our work, it's the Lord's work. The battle is the Lord's. And keep us, Lord, from despairing and becoming insular and closing ranks.

And keep us, Lord, from retreating from the challenges that this world brings to us. Our Father in heaven, we pray that you will strengthen us, fill us with your Spirit. We pray that you'll bless those who are not with us this evening.

Keep them and guide them where they are. We pray for our families and our individuals. We ask, Lord, for those who have gone out with the gospel in various places in the world.

[10 : 58] We ask, Lord, that you will pray for governments and rulers and emperors and kingdoms. Lord, we pray for where there is corruption and where there is injustice in the world.

We pray that through the gospel that men and women will be influenced so that the world becomes a just and a place where corruption is put away.

Father, Lord, we pray that you will reach into the hearts of men and women and bring them to Jesus because then alone we're able to see why we're here and what we can find if we find and discover Jesus.

For we ask these things in his name. Amen. We're going to turn now to page 134 in Sing Psalms and sing Psalm 102.

That's the Sing Psalms version of Psalm number 102. The tune is St. John. I'm going to sing from verse 16 down to verse 22.

[12 : 08] Psalm 102. That's the Sing Psalms version and it's on page 134 and verse 16. For God will yet appear in glorious might to reign.

The Lord in grace will build Jerusalem again. The prayers of the poor he'll heed. He will not spurn their cry of need. Let this be written down to teach a future race so people yet unborn may magnify his grace that from his holy place above the Lord look down in tender love.

We're praying for Jerusalem, that God will build Jerusalem. And of course, Jerusalem was the dwelling place in the Old Testament, God's dwelling place, the place where his people would gather.

And we believe that when we're singing about Jerusalem, we're singing about how God is continuing to build up his church throughout every age, adding people by faith to come to see Jesus and to worship him and to follow him.

So that's what we're praying for as we're singing this psalm. Psalm 102, verse 16. For God will yet appear in glorious might to reign. For God will yet appear in glorious might to reign.

[13 : 32] the Lord in Christ at least■■■■ Castro, He will not spurn the cry of need.

Let this be written down to teach a future race, so people yet unborn may magnify his grace.

That from his holy place above the Lord looked out tenderly, from whom he could the earth, observing all mankind, to hear the groans of those in prison cells confined, and to deliver from on high a multitude condemned to die.

Zion will be praised, the Lord's exalted name. His praises will be sung within Jerusalem.

When peoples and their kingdoms strong serve the Lord with cheer, O song.

[15 : 36] Turn with me to the Old Testament and to the book of Leviticus chapter 13. That's on page 108, Leviticus chapter 13.

Leviticus chapter 13.

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a case of leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.

And the priest shall examine the diseased area on the skin of the body. And if the hair in the diseased area has turned white, and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a case of leprous disease.

When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him unclean. But if the spot is white in the skin of his body and appears no deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest shall shut up the diseased person for seven days.

[16 : 58] And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. And if in his eyes the disease is checked, and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up for another seven days.

And the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day. And if the diseased area has faded, and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. It is only an eruption.

And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. But if the eruption spreads in the skin, after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again before the priest.

And the priest shall look. And if the eruption has spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous disease. When a man is afflicted with leprous disease, he shall be brought to the priest.

And the priest shall look. And if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white, and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, it is a chronic leprous disease in the skin of his body.

[17 : 57] And the priest shall pronounce him unclean. And he shall not shut him up, for he is unclean. And if the leprous disease breaks out in the skin, so that the leprous disease covers all the skin of the diseased person from the head to the foot, so far as the priest shall see, then the priest shall look.

And if the leprous disease has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean of the disease. It has all turned white, and he is clean. And we're going to read in the next chapter, chapter 14, some verses from the beginning of the chapter, page 110.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look.

Then, if the case of leprous disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two live, clean birds, and cedarwood, and scarlet yarn, and hyssop.

And the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh water. He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn, and hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water.

- [19 : 16] And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field.

And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean. And after that he may come into the camp, but shall live outside his tent for seven days.

And on the seventh day he shall shave off all his hair from his head, his beard, and his eyebrows. He shall shave off all his hair, and then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean.

And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb, a year old without blemish, and a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah, a fine flour mixed with oil, and one log of oil.

And the priest who cleanses him shall set the man who is to be cleansed, and these things before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and so on.

- [20 : 13] We're going to sing now in Psalm number 86 on page 341. That's the traditional version of Psalm 86 from verse 9, verse 9 to verse 12, four stanzas, and the tune is Ayrshire.

Psalm 86, page 341, verse 9, All nations whom thou made shall come, and worship reverently before thy face, and they, O Lord, thy name shall glorify.

Because thou art exceeding great, and works by thee are done, which are to be admired, and thou art God thyself alone. Psalm 86, verse 9 to 12, and we're going to stand to sing.

Amen. Psalm 86, verse 9, verse 10, For they shall soon, and they shall come, and worship reverently before thy face, because thou art exceeding great, and works by thee are done, and with thy voice as soon, and we're going to thee are done, and with thy father shall come.

Amen. Thank God. 1 And verse 10, verse 10, Baby, thank you. Amen. Amen.

- [22 : 44] Amen. Amen. I'd like us now to read from the New Testament and from Luke's Gospel, chapter 17.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 17, page 1056 in the ESV Bible and reading from verse 11. Luke's Gospel, chapter 17, verse 11.

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was passing along between Samaria and Galilee, and as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

When he saw them, he said to them, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And as they went, they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.

Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return? Give praise to God except this foreigner.

- [24 : 26] And he said to him, Rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well. Jesus answered in verse 17, Were not ten cleansed?

Where are the nine? There's one feature that stands out in the human world today.

It's that we live with separation. And the word discrimination has become a very unpopular word, a very contentious word in our world.

Where society is divided into one kind or the other. And of course, we want to avoid, we are told that discrimination, one of the great evils of the day, when one is separated from another person by one way or another.

And we are the great, of course, the great moral overriding principle today, in today's world, is equality. Quite what equality is, of course, is another question.

[25 : 42] But the Bible is where we have to go to get true equality. Whether it's neither Jew nor Greek or male or female, we are born under God.

And it's God who gives dignity to each one of us. And we will never achieve the equality that we think is right without grounding our life upon the Bible and coming to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and a correct relationship with God.

Well, it was the same in Jesus' day. And in fact, if there is division in our day, there was even more division in Jesus' day. There were division on historical grounds.

In fact, it's interesting that in this passage we just read, the writer Luke, he deliberately homes in on the fact that this took place on the border between Samaria and Galilee because the Jews and the Samaritans were in conflict with one another.

And it's difficult for us to imagine the utter hatred that there was between the Jews and the Samaritans. They really, truly hated each other. Well, there was also separation on religious grounds.

[26 : 52] There were religious factions and groups and categories amongst the Jewish people. There were Pharisees and there were Sadducees. And then, of course, like I said, there were Samaritans.

There were the scribes. And they did not always... We think that the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they were just, well, there was only a little bit of difference between them. There wasn't. There was a massive difference between them.

And they did not get on well. They were separate. They always argued with one another. And there was division on moral grounds. There were the tax collectors and the prostitutes and the sinners.

And they were kept separate from the religious people of that day. And you would cross the road rather than meeting someone who was a tax collector. That's why Zacchaeus, he found refuge up a tree.

Nobody wanted him. Nobody wanted him in the crowd. And he felt isolated from that crowd. There was, again, another form of discrimination or separation. And there was the discrimination on health grounds as well.

[27 : 54] And that's where our chapter takes us. Because wherever Jesus turned, he met with separation and discrimination. There was division. And that division was no more evident than when there was a leper, or in this case, where there were 10 lepers.

And it's impossible for us to appreciate what life was like and how you would feel if all of a sudden you looked at yourself and you discovered that you were a leper.

We just read in Leviticus chapter, that chapter in Leviticus, where someone in the Old Testament discovered that they had the dread, and it really truly was, it was a dreaded disease.

And you prayed that you would never get leprosy. Because the moment you were diagnosed with leprosy, then your whole world changed. The first thing you would have to do was you would have to tear your clothes.

Can you imagine having to tear your clothes? And there were various reasons why people would tear their clothes. One was repentance, when you wanted to repent of something, or when you were sorrowing.

[29 : 02] But this was to show other people that you were a leper. And it was a kind of a badge, so that if someone saw you walking about with torn clothes, they would know not to go near you, because there was a risk of them catching the infection which you had.

Your head would have to be bare. You would have to shave your head. Again, I guess for health reasons, but also as a sign. You would have to cover your upper lip.

Again, they were making it absolutely clear that this person was to be isolated and not approach. You weren't allowed to live in a house. You had to live outside the community of Israel.

And you had to cry. Anytime there was a danger of you meeting someone, then you had to cry, unclean, unclean. Now, that is discrimination.

And it was ordered by the Lord in order to protect His people. That had to happen. Otherwise, other people would catch it. And you would have the whole camp of Israel.

[30 : 05] It would spread like wildfire. And everyone would be infected with this disease. It was a necessary measure in those days. But it meant that one section of the community was consigned to a life of misery.

It's difficult for you to imagine. You catch a disease. You're never allowed to stay in your house again. It was almost like a kind of living death where you had to join together.

The only people that you could find were other people who had the same disease. You had to take refuge amongst them. Therefore, you had leper colonies. There's that chapter in the Old Testament where there was a leper colony outside of Samaria.

And when the enemy had surrounded Samaria, you remember it was the lepers that went and investigated what was happening in the enemy camp.

And that was just how hopeless their future was. A life that was destined to isolation. It's little wonder then that these 10 lepers who obviously lived together, they went everywhere together.

[31 : 10] They were, I suppose, connected to each other by the disease that they had. A little wonder that when they heard that Jesus was in the area, they took the only action they could.

And that was to cry to Jesus for help. Jesus, have mercy upon us. They couldn't come near him. They had to stand far away. And that was what they did.

And, of course, Jesus became conscious of them. They knew that Jesus was in the area. He became conscious of who they were and why they had come to him and what they were asking him to do.

And Jesus, like he did, time and time again, when he was confronted by an illness, when somebody was taken to him with a particular sickness, be it blindness or deafness, or they couldn't walk or whatever, even someone who had passed away, Jesus responded in mercy and in grace.

And it was the same with this. When he saw them, he said to them, go and show yourselves to the priests. And by so doing, we read there in Leviticus how it was the priest's job to do two things.

[32 : 22] He had to diagnose the leprosy in the first place. He was the inspector, if you like, God's inspector, whose job it was to diagnose when the leprosy had broken out in the first place and to be able to determine whether it was a dangerous form or whether it was a trivial form of skin disease.

And he had all these instructions by which he was able to know what exact kind of disease it was. And then he was also the person who, when a person was healed of the leprosy or whatever skin infection it was, that he had to go to the priest.

And it was a priest that kind of was the rubber stamp. And it was a priest that would say, this man or this woman is now cleansed from the disease that they had. So the priest had two functions.

He had to inspect and he had to approve when a person was cleansed. And these people, of course, these men, they came to Jesus.

They cried to him for mercy. And Jesus' answer was for them to go and to go and show themselves to the priest. Now, it seems to me that you must wonder what these men, what was in the mind of these men at that time.

[33 : 42] And there was only one of two possibilities. Either Jesus was treating them with cynicism, some kind of cruel joke, in showing them, in leading them to the priest, who would only just simply re-diagnose what they knew already, or he was going to heal them.

And they took him at his word. When he said, go and show each other, they went immediately. And they made their way towards the priest, where he was going to inspect them once again.

They had been to him before. It was the priest who had told them originally, who had given the bad news to them, the news that had changed their whole lives. From then on, their lives had never been the same.

And now Jesus was sending to the very same person as had pronounced them unclean in the first place. And it was as they took Jesus at his word, that all ten of them, on the way to the priest, they looked at themselves, and they discovered that there were no longer any symptoms.

Their skin was clean. They had been miraculously, instantly, medically, completely healed.

[35 : 18] This was a miracle. Yet one more miracle, I guess the men had heard, of Jesus' extraordinary power. And they had come, because up until then, there was absolutely no hope for them.

They were desperate. They came to Jesus, because they knew where he was, and they cried to him for help. And he sent them away, as they obeyed him.

It's quite interesting, isn't it, how often Jesus asked people to do something in order to be cleansed.

that it came by way of a command, and it was very often an impossible command. Like, for example, when he met the man at Bethesda, a man who had a disease for 38 years.

He was paralyzed for 38 years. And he came to him, and he said, do you want to get well? And then when the man said, yes, I want to be well, he said, well, take up your bed and walk.

[36 : 28] That was impossible for him to do. He was commanding him to do something which he couldn't do. And yet, that was the very thing that Jesus had healed him from.

And so he got up, and he took up his, it was the same there. They were to show themselves to the priest as an act of faith. And faith is where you take Jesus at his word, and where you respond to Jesus at his word.

You listen to him first. Faith is not some kind of way in which we earn our way into God by being devout. Faith is when we listen to what Jesus tells us, what he tells us about ourselves, and how he responds to when we come to him and ask him to change us and to make us the kind of people that he wants us to be.

Faith is when we believe that he has so done. So if you are asking him tonight to sincerely to save you, to rescue you, if you're coming with a consciousness of your own need and your sinfulness and your desperation, because that's what sin produces, it's desperate, then we come to the Bible, we ask that the Lord will save us from our sins.

We read the Bible and say that, He who comes to me, I will never drive away. You take that at God's word. You believe that that applies to you.

[38 : 04] You take him. He's already told you that if you come to him in faith, turning away from your old life, turning to him in faith, then you are set free from your sin.

I need to ask you tonight, if you have done that, if you've come to him and asked him to save you, why don't you believe him when he tells you that you are?

These men did, or at least in a measure, these men did, to the point where they turned round and where they went towards the priest, who would presumably pronounce them clean and make whatever sacrifice was required in those days to pronounce them as having been delivered from the disease.

So far, so good. But here's where the story takes a turn. Because one man, one out of the ten, stopped.

And when he had discovered that he had been miraculously cured of his leprosy, he decided that, I'm not going to, there's something I need to do before doing anything else, before taking one step further.

[39 : 24] Even if it means leaving my nine companions, that's their choice. I need to go back to this man who has miraculously cured me and I need to thank him.

And he ended up doing what none of the other nine men did. He, with a loud voice, glorified God and he fell on his face, at his feet, and he gave him thanks.

And it's at this point that there's another separation. You might say, well, surely you're not going to emphasize too much on what this one man does.

I'm quite sure that the other nine were thankful in their own hearts. You're surely not going to tell me that it's so important to turn back bodily and physically to Jesus.

No, I'm not, but Jesus is. And the very fact that Jesus comments, that he asks this all-important, all-searching question, where are the other nine?

[40 : 25] It means that the one man who turned back did what Jesus expected him to do and did what the miracle demanded that he should do.

It's very obvious that the way that this one man expressed his gratitude to God is crucial to the story. He could have been grateful to God on the way in his own heart, but it's clear that in returning to Jesus that he's doing something that is different.

And I believe that there are two reasons why that is the case. Because, first of all, I believe that in coming back to Jesus, this one man shows that he understood the miracle more than anything else because of what it represented.

Remember that every time that Jesus did a miracle, every time he did something that was miraculous or supernatural, it was a demonstration of who he was.

It was a demonstration of Jesus being his godness, his divinity, if you like, or his deity.

[41 : 39] And it must have been that this one man, rather than, more than simply marveling at what happened, and sighing a massive sigh of relief, and I'm sure breathing a prayer of thanks to God, no, no, that was okay, that's one thing, but no, I have to, there's something more than this.

This is absolutely incredible. Here is a man, this one man, he's done it for others, and now he's done it for me.

I must understand, I want to understand more of who this man is. It's like the disciples, when they were in the boat, making their way from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other, and there was the wind and the waves, you remember how he was asleep in the boat, and they went to him, and they woke him up, and they said, Master, don't you care if we drown?

And he woke up, and he said, peace, he spoke to the wind and the waves, and the wind and the waves, they immediately died down. Now remember what the disciples said, what kind of man is this?

Now that's when faith demands to go further, and it draws us to Jesus, that's what real faith is, it's not just a recognition that something wonderful is happening.

[43 : 00] Faith is when you stop, where you are, and you turn around and you say, I need this man, I need to, my life is being drawn to Jesus, it's not enough for me.

It's amazing, isn't it? Seemed to be enough for the other nine, they were cured, but for this one man, it wasn't enough. He drew, he was drawn back to Jesus, to worship him, and to thank him publicly, and we believe, put his faith in him.

So the other nine who failed to give thanks to God, it wasn't just simply unthankfulness, but they failed to see the greater miracle, and except for this man who suddenly saw that there was something else going on, and that the same, and that by coming to know this person, then he could be right with God.

And the second thing that I see in this passage is this, that there is only one way to be truly grateful to God, and to worship him, and to give glory to God, and by coming to Jesus Christ.

It's quite strange, isn't it, when I say to you, it's not enough to be thankful. Sounds really bad, doesn't it, to say that? Sounds really sinful when I say it's not enough to be thankful.

[44 : 30] And I say that because there are people for whom it is enough, and who they say whenever you start talking to them about the gospel, they say, well, I pray every day.

There's never a single day before I go to sleep. I say thank you to God for all the blessings, for health and strength, for the air that I breathe, for the food, for my work, for all that God has given to me.

I say thank you to God. Well, that's all very well, but that's not what the Lord is looking for in the first instance. And the very fact that you do say thanks to the Lord means that you recognize that there is a God who is good to you, and who has given you every good thing that you enjoy in the world.

And there is a God who has spoken to us, and you know that because you've read the Bible and because you know what he is asking you to do. He's inviting you to be saved and to come to know him.

And the very fact that you connect what you enjoy in this world with God and you recognize that it is his providence that has led you and guided you all every step of the way to the point where every day you say thank you to him.

[45 : 59] And yet the very thing you won't do is what this man does and return to God, fall down at his feet, turn away from everything that is sinful in your life and ask him to be.

your savior. And the reason I believe is largely this because when you're confined to just saying thanks to God, there's something quite dignified about saying thanks, isn't there?

We teach our children rightly so. When they get something they say thank you because of politeness. Because it's the right thing to do. We live on these principles. The right thing to do.

And so when it comes to God, we do the right thing. We say thank you to God because we've always been taught that way. It's the right thing to do. But what God is asking us to do is more than that.

Because his goodness to us is a sign. It reflects the goodness of God and the truth of God. It's God saying to us, you know what I've done for you.

[47 : 09] But I've done something that is far more marvelous than even the air that you breathe and the food that you eat. I've sent my son into the world to die at Calvary so that your sin can be forgiven if you come and trust in him.

And he says, this time I'm not looking for thanks. I'm looking for faith that says to Jesus, I want you more than anything else to be my savior.

I am a sinner. I'm bankrupt. I'm dead. I've made a mess of my life. So far, my number one priority has been myself.

I'm a proud and a conceited person. And more than that, there is stuff going on inside my heart that I know I can't control.

My life is not what it appears to be on the outside. I've deceived my friends and my family but you know what I'm really like, God, because you know everything about me and there's nothing I can do to change myself.

[48 : 23] You know I've tried to change myself. Time and time again, the only hope that I have is in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the Lord is looking for.

The faith that says, Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner. That's what this one man saw. And he was a foreigner.

He was the only man as far as we can see who lived outside or who came from outside of Israel. And he was the very one just like so many people there were in the Bible who came from outside of Israel just like there are today.

The gospel is being preached in all kinds of places in the world today. Towns and villages and churches in the middle of the jungle somewhere or in some little church that's meeting in a house and they're inviting their neighbors to hear the gospel and neighbor will go they'll open up their Bible they'll start reading the Bible and they'll discover for the first time who Jesus was.

They'll discover how completely different and unique the Christian gospel is from every other religion in the world and as they listen something happens to them and they come to faith they say yes I want Jesus I know I'm a sinner I know I'm guilty and if I die today I go to a lost eternity and yet Jesus died to set me free from sin and they say yes I want him and they're coming to know Jesus.

[50 : 01] Meanwhile there are people living in Lewis who have heard the gospel tens dozens hundreds of times and instead of drawing them to Jesus it has hardened them to Jesus and it's not just here it's in every other community where the gospel has been preached and shared down through the years.

And there are times when the Lord deliberately he shows us his own goodness to us in order to see if there can be provoked within us a spark of faith perhaps it's a sickness from which you have recovered just like these lepers it doesn't have to be a miraculous healing every healing is God's healing even healings that come through medication and come through surgery or some procedure or whatever our hospitals everything is there by God's providence for our good and so when you have an accident and you're almost killed you've been taken to hospital with some injury and where after a process of surgery or whatever you come out of hospital that's God who has healed you now are you going to listen to the

Lord are you going to start reading your Bible are you going to come to know him and Jesus as your savior because there's more to come when we recognize the goodness of God and God is saying to us we've only just begun that's what I'm like gracious kind in dealing with you instead of that you know what we say we say that was lucky I was so lucky that I didn't die in that accident there's no such thing as luck no such thing God is in charge God is ruling and reigning over every event that takes place and we would be very foolish not to recognize him in that and tonight I'm going to speculate

I'm going to look at just try and guess what the other nine were thinking about when they refused to turn back I wonder if one of them was a good Jewish man good religious Jewish man or he knew his Old Testament he knew his Bible he went to the synagogue at least before he was pronounced to have leprosy and all he wanted to do was to get to the priest in order to do the right thing the proper thing the religious thing this was his duty to go and see the priest and then everything from that moment in time would be back to normal I wonder if another one was simply forgetful I don't mean inadvertently forgetful but you know it's amazing what you can do with your memory how you can blot out what you don't want to remember and I wonder if someone was like that with his leprosy you know that's a part of my life that I would rather forget

I spent five years of my life as a leper but I don't want anybody to know about it I want to move on now draw a line under the sand and forget the past move on into the future there are people who live like that I wonder thirdly if one of them was thankful in his heart but not thankful in him going back to Jesus and worshipping him and giving his life to Jesus simply thankful like I say because it was the right thing to do I wonder if one of them was proud too proud to go back to Jesus and to worship him what's keeping you from worshipping Jesus today is your pride sin is where I get to be number one and the idea of bowing down and worshipping and admitting my own sinfulness and failure is quite beyond me that's pride that refuses to admit our own failure maybe there was another one who said well

[55 : 07] I'll come back later I know Jesus is in the vicinity once I see the priest then sure I have every intention of coming back and worshipping him the way that my Samaritan friend has done but Jesus calls us now he calls us to faith now because there may not be another opportunity there may not have been for this man and there may not be for you the time to come to Christ is now while there is still opportunity there may have been another one of the rest of them may have just been quite happy with taking what God has given him I'm not talking about the thankful one but there are many people in the world for whom they're just happy to believe in God they don't want any more they say that's enough

I know there's a God I know that God gives me everything but I just simply don't want any more than that surely I've got a right to draw the line somewhere and say well that's he's given me everything that I need everything I enjoy I don't want any more perhaps another one had all good intentions that from now on he said well because my life was a nightmare for so many years and because somehow or other God has healed me therefore I need to from now on make sure that I am obedient to God and that I live my life as best I can doing my very best as a payback for what God has done for me it's like the person like I say before who sees God's hand in his life and he says to himself well

I'm going to make sure I do my best in order to to repay God for what he's done for me you can't you can never repay God for what he's done for you what God asks us to do is not to repay him but to accept what he has done for us perhaps there was another man who was who believed that he was in the right place at the right time you know how there are people who say what's for you won't go against you won't go past you I was just in the right place at the right time I'm just lucky and then lastly there may have been one who thought that he had just done something right in order to deserve the goodness of God these are all ways in which we we construct our own responses to what God has done in us they're all wrong ways

God is not looking for any of them he's looking for faith in Jesus Christ Christ and in Jesus Christ alone because you see whatever was going through the minds of the other nine it could have been nine different things or it could have been one thing it was wrong and there was a division a final division not this time between those who had leprosy and those who didn't but those who were who saw and experienced the goodness and the power and the reality of God and who went back to him to commit their life to him in Jesus Christ and those who went merrily along the way and I want to ask you tonight which side are you on the man who devotes himself to Jesus turning away from his old life and committing himself to

Jesus from then on or those who simply stayed as they were and who refused him by so doing maybe this was not the intention in their hearts but by so doing they were turning their back on Jesus Christ I sincerely hope tonight that there will be nobody here that will turn their back on the son of God let's pray our father in heaven we pray not to refuse you we pray that your word will reach into our hearts and in great power we pray lord that that we will not be like the nine who refused to come back to Jesus but that we will be like the one who seeing what had happened to him recognizing the truth of Jesus that he was the son of God who turned himself and turned who turned his back on his old life and who became we believe a new creation we pray that you will make new creations out of us tonight in Jesus name amen turn with me to page 191 in sing psalms and it's psalm 146 psalm 146 it's the sing psalms version it's the last four verses and the tune is stuttgart psalm 146 verse 6 to the end he who made the earth and heaven and the seas with all their store he who keeps his every promise who is faithful evermore verses 6 to verse 10 on page 191 on psalm 146 and we'll stand to sing he who made the earth and heaven and the seas with all their store he who keeps his every promise who is faithful evermore he delivers from oppression and relieves the of his might he releases those in prison to the blind the

[62 : 05] Lord gives sight those who are bowed down he raises God delights in righteousness he protects and cares for strangers widows and the fatherless he protects the wicked purpose so the Lord through endless days praise to every generation praise your God oh Zion praise and now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the love of God the father and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with each one of us both now and always amen hum to Him to Thank you.