

## BE LIKE THE ONE—A STUDY IN GRATITUDE

Presented by

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While Jesus lived here on Earth, He worked hard to try to help as many people as He could. His main goal, of course, was to help people **spiritually** by teaching them how to get to heaven. When it came to helping people, Jesus did not care what color a person's skin was, what nationality a person might be, or what language a person spoke. Nor did Jesus care what a person's status in life happened to be. In fact, Jesus helped all kinds of people, including Samaritans (John 4:6-26), prostitutes (Luke 7:36-50), lepers (Luke 17:11-19), adulteresses (John 8:3-11), despised tax collectors (Luke 5:27-30), and, as His enemies the Pharisees always were quick to point out, "sinners" in general (Mark 2:16).

Of course, Jesus' actions should not surprise us since He Himself said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Luke 5:31). It would have been impossible for Christ to have helped people who were spiritually sick **if He could not even associate with them!** Once those people learned that Jesus was their friend, they were much more willing to listen to what He had to say.

In order to help people spiritually, Jesus often helped them **physically** as well. This kind act on Christ's part—which often was expressed in the form of a miracle—provided people with undeniable proof that He was Who He said He was—**the Son of God!** At the same time, the many acts of kindness that He showed people also provided Him with good opportunities to teach them the Gospel so they could be saved.

In Luke 17:11-20 we find a fascinating account of one of Christ's healing miracles. Luke tells us how Jesus entered a small village, and there encountered **ten men** who were afflicted with the dreaded disease of **leprosy**. Leprosy is a horrible disease caused by bacteria that invade a person's skin and cause it to decay. People who had been infected by such bacteria were known as "lepers," and were doomed to die because in Christ's day there was no cure for such an infectious disease. Healthy people did not want to be anywhere near lepers because they were afraid that they, too, might come down with leprosy and die.

The Bible tells us in Luke 17:12 that the ten lepers "stood afar off, lifted up their voices, and cried out, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'" How sad that scene must have appeared to Jesus as He saw ten grown men who were dying of leprosy, and who, because of their fatal condition, begged Him to have mercy on them and heal them. Luke 17:14 says simply, "When Jesus saw them, He said to them, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed."

Can you imagine **how happy** those ten men must have been at the moment they realized that they had been healed? The fact that they were now healthy meant that they could be around people again. They could live with their families, shop in the markets, and eat in restaurants. But most important of all, they could worship God once more with others. What incredible joy they must have felt in their hearts!

If **you** had been one of those lepers, what would you have done after being healed by Jesus? Wouldn't you have immediately gone back to Jesus to say, "Lord, thank you **so much** for healing me!"? I suspect that is **exactly** what you **would** do. Yet, out of **all ten** of the lepers whom Jesus healed of leprosy, **only one** bothered to go back to Jesus and say, "Lord, thank you for healing me." **Only one!** Luke 17:15-18 tells us what happened.

"When the one leper saw that he was healed, he returned, and with a loud voice glorified God and fell on his face at Christ's feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. Jesus spoke to him and asked, 'Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Were there no others who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?'"

Out of the ten lepers whom Jesus had healed, apparently nine of them were Jews. But the one who returned to express his gratitude to Christ was **a Samaritan**—whom the Jews hated. How sad it was that the Lord's own people could not find it in their hearts to thank Him for healing them. Yet the despised Samaritan **did** return to thank Christ for healing him. Luke 17:19 provides us with the ending to the story when it tells us, "Jesus said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'"

This story is not so much about a **miracle** as it is about the **gratitude** that we should feel toward God **because He has done so much for us**. He has given us a lovely home here on the Earth. He has given us the many blessings we enjoy—like families and friends. And He even has given us His own Son Jesus to save us from our sins. As James put it, "**Every** good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). How true that is! And how grateful we should be every day of our lives!