

I don't have statistics to back this up, but does it seem that people just aren't very thankful? Do you hear "Thank You" much? Even more rare is to hear "Thank God!" Whatever is happening in the world usually rubs off on us, Christians. Are we as thankful as we should be? Have we cut back on our attitude of gratitude?

It's not hard to see why. The media makes their living off telling us bad news and what's wrong. We hang around people who aren't especially thankful. We, ourselves are spoiled. We feel entitled. When we feel that deserve things, there's no need to be thankful.

What's the antidote for thanklessness? How does one regain that lost feeling of gratitude? There's a Bible story just for this. It's where: **“One Sick Stranger Teaches Us Thanksgiving.”** It's perfect, because: We've got the **Same Condition** he has. We've received the **Same Recovery** he did. We need to offer the **Same Thanksgiving** he did.

1 - One of Jesus' trips south from Galilee to Jerusalem found him traveling **along the border between Samaria and Galilee.** Most Jews kept their distance from Samaritans, but not Jesus. He cares for everyone, even half Gentiles, like Samaritans, even full Gentiles, like you and me.

He walked into a Samaritan town where **10 men who had leprosy met him.** There were 10 because lepers couldn't go anywhere near their loved ones who didn't have leprosy. Leprosy was easily transmitted. That's why they banded together in colonies. **They stood at a distance** – maybe 100 yards, or so – because again, they couldn't go near healthy people. The combination of distance and their weakened voices from the disease forced them **to call out together in a loud voice: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"**

"**Master**" was a term only disciples or followers of Jesus used for him in the NT. What they could really use was healing, but anything Jesus could do for them would be appreciated.

It's hard for us to imagine how nasty leprosy was. There was no treatment for it. It was a death sentence back then. Let me read to you about leprosy. *"Leprosy begins as a white or pink discoloration of the skin on the eyebrows, nose, ears, cheeks or chin and develops into tumor-like swellings on the face and body. There is deformity of the face. Nerve endings in hands and feet no longer feel heat or pain, which can lead to the loss of fingers and toes due to injury or infection. Leprosy causes sickness for anywhere from 10-20 years, before death occurs either from the disease, or from the body's weakened state."*

That's terrible, isn't it? So, when was the last time you thanked God you didn't have leprosy? We should thank God for that, shouldn't we? When was the last time you thanked God for all the days you've gone without a cancer diagnosis or a surgery? Have you thanked God lately that you're able to walk and talk and think ..... to see and hear ..... to eat and drink? Just because you do those things every day without even thinking about it, don't take them for granted. We don't deserve them.

You do realize that you have a disease that robs you and ruins you and will eventually kill you too, don't you? We have leprosy, the **Same Condition** he had. Our leprosy doesn't affect our bodies. Our leprosy is sin and it affects our souls. Sin separates us from others. Sin keeps us from connecting with God. Sin separates us from the blessings of God. Sin drives us to isolated places until we die.

2 - Because we've got the **Same Condition** as he had, we also cry out: **"Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"** He'll do for us, what he did for them 2,000 years ago. **When Jesus saw those 10 lepers, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests."** God had given the priests the task to check for leprosy and if it would ever happen - the cure. Those 10 lepers took Jesus at his word. They headed for nearest priest, and just as quickly as **they went - they were cleansed.** Without any kind of medicine, their bodies were restored, their limbs were no longer missing or damaged, their skin

became healthy. They must have felt like a million bucks.

The same way it happened for him, we've also received the **Same Recovery** as he did. Jesus tells us: *"Take me at my Word! Trust me! I'll restore your strength by breathing spiritual life into your heart and soul. I'll restore your limbs by nailing my own to the cross. I'll get rid of the leprosy of your sin, by giving you my holy and perfect life. I'll take your disease and die your death so you won't have to."*

You know what that means! Any pain – the legs that ache, the back that's injured, the headaches and allergies, the failing heart or the cancer-filled body - that's not the end of your story with Jesus. When Jesus returns, he's going to raise your body from the grave and give you a perfect, pain-free, fully-healthy, complete body which means you'll never be sick or sad or die again. You'll have a glorified and resurrected body, like his, waiting for you on that final day!

3 - The most shocking news in this story isn't that Jesus healed an incurable disease. We've witnessed his healing power plenty on the pages of Scripture. It's that 9 of the lepers never thanked him. How ungrateful could someone be?

Only **1 of them when he saw he was healed** took that 100 yard hike back to Jesus. A reunion with his family could wait. Celebrating with his friends could wait. Getting on with the rest of his life could wait. He needed to acknowledge that Jesus was God by praising him at the top of his lungs because now he could do more than just whisper.

He thanked him, because he didn't deserve anything. He owed everything to Jesus. And here's the kicker - he was a Samaritan, the last person you'd expect to thank Jesus.

Jesus' question to this once sick stranger seems reasonable: **"Were not all 10 cleansed? Where are the other 9? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"** Yes, Jesus expects a thank you. He's not being selfish. He wanted the

thank you directed to his Father. Jesus expects a thank you from you, too.

He now provides an even bigger blessing to the one who threw himself at Jesus' feet in humble thanks: **"Rise and go, your faith has made you well."** *"As certain as I've cured your leprosy, I've healed the leprosy of your sin. You can always count on me!"*

A Sick Stranger Teaches Us Thanksgiving. Did you catch the ways we're like him? We've got the **Same Condition** he had. He had leprosy. We have the leprosy of sin. We've received the **Same Recovery** he did. Jesus heard his cry for mercy and healed him, providing recovery from his disease. Jesus hears our cry for mercy and forgives us, providing recovery from our sins.

We need to offer the **Same Thanksgiving** he did. So, how are we going to remember to take that 100 yard hike back to Jesus every day? First, we read our Bible every day. Second, we get to church every week. There's no place like it to praise Jesus with a group of Christians using words and songs of thanksgiving. Then, each day, make sure that ....

- If you're facing troubles ... thank God there aren't more.
- If you're sick ... thank God you're coping.
- If you're sad ... thank God he loves you.
- If you've got relationship issues ... thank God for the good ones.
- If your job is challenging ... thank God you've got a job.
- And, when the news gets you down, change the channel, or turn it off ... and thank God you've got Jesus.
- And, when everyone else's fun or complaining on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat gets you down, turn that off too ... and thank God that Jesus has got you.

One more thing that will really help. Make sure that say "Thank You" at least once a day to your spouse and kids, to your parents, your brothers and sisters, to your coworkers and friends. You know that One Sick Stranger Taught Us - all of us - Thanksgiving. "Thank God!"