

## Luke: 17:11–19

### From Catena Aurea:

11. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

**AMBROSE.** After speaking the foregoing parable, our Lord censures the ungrateful;

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** saying, And it came to pass, shewing that the Samaritans were indeed well disposed towards the mercies above mentioned, but the Jews not so. For there was enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, and He to allay this, passed into the midst of both nations, that he might cement both into one new man.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** The Saviour next manifests His glory by drawing over Israel to the faith. As it follows, And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, men who were banished from the towns and cities, and counted unclean, according to the rites of the Mosaic law.

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** They associated together from the sympathy they felt as partakers of the same calamity, and were waiting till Jesus passed, anxiously looking out to see Him approach. As it is said, Which

stood afar off, for the Jewish law esteems leprosy unclean, whereas the law of the Gospel calls unclean not the outward, but the inward leprosy.

**THEOPHYLACT.** They therefore stand afar off as if ashamed of the uncleanness which was imputed to them, thinking that Christ would loathe them as others did. Thus they stood afar off, but were made nigh unto Him by their prayers. For the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth. (Ps. 145:18.) Therefore it follows, And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us.

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** They pronounce the name of Jesus, and gain to themselves the reality. For Jesus is by interpretation Saviour. They say, Have mercy upon us, because they were sensible of His power, and sought neither for gold and silver, but that their bodies might put on again a healthful appearance.

**THEOPHYLACT.** They do not merely supplicate or entreat Him as if He were a man, but they call Him Master or Lord, as if almost they looked upon Him as God. But He bids them shew themselves to the priests, as it follows, And when he saw them, he said, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests. For they were examined whether they were cleansed from their leprosy or not.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** The law also ordered, that those who were cleansed from leprosy should offer sacrifice for the sake of their purification.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Therefore in bidding them go to the priests, he meant nothing more than that they were just about to be healed; and so it follows, And it came to pass that as they went they were healed.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Whereby the Jewish priests who were jealous of His glory might know that it was by Christ granting them health that they were suddenly and miraculously healed.

**THEOPHYLACT.** But out of the ten, the nine Israelites were ungrateful, whereas the Samaritan stranger returned and lifted up his voice in thanksgiving, as it follows, And one of them turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** When he found that he was cleansed, he had boldness to draw near, as it follows, And fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks. Thus by his prostration and prayers shewing at once both his faith and his gratitude.

It follows, And he was a Samaritan.

**THEOPHYLACT.** We may gather from this that a man is not one whit hindered from pleasing God because he comes from a cursed race, only let him bear in his heart an honest purpose. Further, let not him that is born of saints boast himself, for the nine who were Israelites were ungrateful; and hence it follows, And Jesus answering him said, Were there not ten cleansed?

**TITUS BOSTRENSIS.** Wherein it is shewn, that strangers were more ready to receive the faith, but Israel was slow to believe; and so it follows, And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 40.) The lepers may be taken mystically for those who, having no knowledge of the true faith, profess various erroneous doctrines. For they do not conceal their ignorance, but blazen it forth as the highest wisdom, making a vain show of it with boasting words. But since leprosy is a blemish in colour, when true things appear clumsily mixed up with false in a single discourse or narration, as in the colour of a single body, they represent a leprosy streaking and disfiguring as it were with true and false dyes the colour of the human form. Now these lepers must be so put away from the Church, that being as far removed as possible, they may with loud shouts call upon Christ. But by their calling Him Teacher, I think it is plainly implied that leprosy is truly the false doctrine which the good teacher may wash away. Now we find that of those upon whom our Lord bestowed bodily mercies, not one did He send to the priests, save the lepers, for the Jewish priesthood was a figure of that priesthood which is in the Church. All vices our Lord corrects and heals by His own power working inwardly in the conscience, but the teaching of infusion by means of the Sacrament, or of catechizing by word of mouth, was assigned to the Church. And as they went, they were cleansed; just as the Gentiles to whom Peter came, having not yet received the sacrament of Baptism, whereby we come spiritually to the priests, are declared cleansed by the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Whoever then follows true and sound doctrine in the fellowship of the Church, proclaiming himself to be free from the confusion of lies, as it were a leprosy, yet still ungrateful to his Cleanser does not prostrate himself with pious humility of thanksgiving, is like to those of whom the Apostle says, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, nor were thankful. (Rom. 1:21.) Such then will remain in the ninth number as imperfect. For the nine need one, that by a certain form of unity they may be cemented together, in order to become ten. But he who gave thanks was approved of as a type of the one only Church. And since these were Jews, they are declared to have lost through pride the kingdom of heaven, wherein most of all unity is preserved. But the man who was a Samaritan, which is by interpretation "guardian," giving back to Him who gave it that which he

had received, according to the Psalm, My strength will I preserve for thee, (Ps. 59:9.) has kept the unity of the kingdom with humble devotion.

### **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

#### **17:11–19 Cleansing of the Ten Lepers**

##### **Jesus Sent Them to the Priests to Fulfill the Law.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Why did he not say, “I will, be cleansed,” as he did in the case of another leper, instead of commanding them to show themselves to the priests? It was because the law gave directions to this effect to those who were delivered from leprosy. It commanded them to show themselves to the priests and to offer a sacrifice for their cleansing. He commanded them to go as being already healed so that they might bear witness to the priests, the rulers of the Jews and always envious of his glory. They testified that wonderfully and beyond their hope, they had been delivered from their misfortune by Christ’s willing that they should be healed. He did not heal them first but sent them to the priests, because the priests knew the marks of leprosy and of its healing. Commentary on Luke, Homilies 113–16.

##### **Bless the Helper for Benefits Received.**

Athanasius: Today, the Lord rebukes those who keep the Passover the way the Jews did, just as he rebuked certain lepers he had cleansed. You recall that he loved the one who was thankful, but he was angry with the ungrateful ones, because they did not acknowledge their Deliverer. They thought more highly of their cure from leprosy than of him who had healed them.... Actually, this one was given much more than the rest. Besides being healed of his leprosy, he was told by the Lord, “Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.”

You see, those who give thanks and those who glorify have the same kind of feelings. They bless their helper for the benefits they have received. That is why Paul urged everybody to “glorify God with your body.” Isaiah also commanded, “Give glory to God.” Festal Letter 6.

### **The Thankfulness of the Samaritan.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Falling into a thankless forgetfulness, the nine lepers that were Jews did not return to give glory to God. By this, he shows that Israel was hard of heart and utterly unthankful. The stranger, a Samaritan, was of foreign race brought from Assyria. The phrase “in the middle of Samaria and Galilee” has meaning. “He returned with a loud voice to glorify God.” It shows that the Samaritans were grateful but that the Jews, even when they benefited, were ungrateful. Commentary on Luke, Homilies 113–16.