

## **Sermon Notes | 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025 | The Well Community Church – Indian Service**

**Greetings in the name of the LORD and savior Jesus Christ ! welcome to The well community church – Indian Service**

TITLE: GIVE THANKS – THE ONE WHO RETURNED

TEXT: Luke 17:11–19

### **GOD IS LOOKING FOR THANKFUL HEARTS**

We are in a month of “Give Thanks,” and as a church we have already looked at Job and Habakkuk—two people who praised God in very dark seasons. Job worshiped when he had lost everything. Habakkuk rejoiced even when there were no figs on the tree, no grapes on the vine, and no cattle in the stalls. They taught us that thanksgiving is not a feeling we have when life is good, but a choice we make because God is always good. Today we move into the New Testament and watch Jesus Himself respond to gratitude. In Luke 17:11–19 we see a very simple scene: ten lepers cry out for mercy, ten receive healing, but only one returns to say “thank You.” The other nine vanish into the crowd, back to their normal lives. And in the middle of that moment, Jesus asks a question that still echoes into our churches, our homes, and our hearts today: “Were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?” If Jesus came and stood in our church this morning, would He find us among the nine who received but did not return, or among the one who came back, fell at His feet, and gave thanks? Today I want to walk through this story slowly and clearly, so that by the end of this message, each of us will make a fresh decision: “Lord, I don’t want to be counted with the nine. I want to be like the one who returned. I want my life to be a life of thanksgiving.”

### **THE CONDITION OF THE TEN – LEPROSY AND OUR SPIRITUAL REALITY**

The Bible tells us that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and passed between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten men who were lepers met Him, but they stood at a distance. Leprosy in Bible times was not just a skin disease. It attacked the nerves so people would lose feeling. They could hurt themselves badly and not even realize it. Body parts could become damaged, infected, and even fall off. They were physically broken. But beyond the physical pain, lepers were considered ceremonially unclean. They were not allowed to live with their families, not allowed to enter the temple, not allowed to participate in normal community life. They had to live outside the camp, away from everyone. Whenever someone came near, they had to shout, “Unclean! Unclean!” so that

others would stay away from them. Their disease did not just affect their skin; it affected their identity. They were no longer known as fathers, brothers, sons, or neighbors. They were "the lepers." That was their whole identity in the eyes of society. In many ways, this condition is a picture of humanity's spiritual situation without God. Sin also separates us, damages us, and distorts our identity. It makes us feel unworthy to come close to God. It isolates us, not always physically, but emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Just as lepers had to stand far off, many people today feel like they have to stand far from God because of shame, guilt, or failure. But the good news in this story is that Jesus walks into the very place where lepers are. He is not afraid of their condition. He is not disgusted by their problem. His holiness is powerful enough to heal.

### **THE CRY FOR MERCY – HOW MIRACLES OFTEN BEGIN**

The ten lepers, standing at a distance, lift up their voices and cry, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" I love that they did not whisper. They did not pray silently in their hearts. They cried out loudly because desperate people don't care what others think. They had one hope and one chance: Jesus was passing by, and they wanted to be sure He heard them. Notice that they did not ask for money, food, or clothes. They did not even specifically say, "Heal us." They cried, "Have mercy on us." Mercy is when God does not give us the judgment we deserve but instead gives us the kindness we do not deserve. Mercy is God's heart moving toward our pain. Many spiritual breakthroughs begin with a simple, honest cry for mercy. That is where salvation begins. That is where forgiveness begins. That is where healing often begins. Sometimes we are too proud to ask for mercy. We think we are strong, capable, or good enough without God's help. But these ten men had no such illusion. They were finished in their own strength, and their humility positioned them for a miracle. When we humble ourselves and cry, "Jesus, have mercy on me, on my family, on my situation," we are opening the door for God to work.

### **THE JOURNEY OF OBEDIENCE – "AS THEY WENT, THEY WERE CLEANSED"**

When Jesus sees them, His response is simple: "Go and show yourselves to the priests." That might seem strange because they are still lepers at that moment. In the Law of Moses, a priest had the role of examining someone who had been cured of leprosy and officially declaring them clean, so that they could return to normal life. But at the moment Jesus speaks, nothing has changed yet in their bodies. No instant miracle. No shining light. No voice from heaven saying, "You are healed." Just a command: "Go." The Bible says, "And as they went, they were cleansed." Not before they went. Not before they moved. Not

before they obeyed. As they stepped out in faith and obeyed Jesus, the miracle unfolded. Imagine those first steps. Maybe one of them said, "Why are we going to the priest? We still look the same." Another might have said, "I don't feel any different." But still, step by step, they walked. At some point on that journey, maybe one looks at his hand and sees that the white patches disappear, the sores are gone, the nerves are restored. Another man looks at his friend and says, "Your face, it's normal!" And they realize—they are healed. Many of God's works in our lives happen like this: not all at once, but "as we go," as we obey. Perhaps God has asked you to forgive someone, to give something, to step out in service, to turn away from a habit. Maybe you do not feel different at first, but as you walk in obedience, change begins. The supernatural power of God often meets us on the path of obedience. The important thing to see is that all ten lepers received healing. All ten experienced the mercy of Jesus. All ten could have written a testimony. All ten had a reason to be grateful. But not all ten responded the same way after the blessing.

### **THE TURNING BACK – THE HEART OF TRUE THANKSGIVING**

Verse 15 says, "Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice." The others saw they were healed too. They must have been just as excited. They may have walked faster, even started running. But one did something different. He stopped. He changed direction. He turned around. This is the key picture of thanksgiving. Gratitude turns us back to God. Please notice: the miracle itself did not automatically create gratitude. Ten were healed, but only one chose to return. In the same way, blessings do not automatically produce worship. Many people receive answers to prayer, protection, provision, promotion, healing, but do not return to say, "Thank You, Lord." The one who returned was praising God with a loud voice. He was not shy, embarrassed, or reserved with his thanksgiving. When God has done something great in your life, it is okay to be loud. It is okay to be expressive. It is okay to say, "God, You have been so good to me!" Verse 16 tells us that he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. The man who had to stand at a distance because of leprosy is now lying at the feet of Jesus in closeness, intimacy, and worship. Grace has brought him near. This is what thanksgiving does. It does not just talk about the gift; it returns to the Giver. It bows low before Jesus and says, "You are worthy. You are the source. You did this for me."

### **JESUS' QUESTIONS – WHAT HEAVEN NOTICES ABOUT GRATITUDE**

Jesus notices his gratitude, but He also notices the absence of gratitude in the others. He asks, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give

praise to God except this foreigner?" We learn something important here: Heaven keeps count. God knows how many He has blessed, how many He has healed, how many He has rescued, how many He has helped. And He also notices how many return. God is not insecure, but He is deeply relational. He desires not just to bless us, but to walk with us. He does not want to be treated like an emergency number we only dial in crisis. He is a Father who wants ongoing relationship. "Where are the nine?" is not just a question about those men—it is a question to every generation. Where are the believers who will not just ask, but also thank? Where are the families who will not just complain, but also praise? Where are the churches that will not just pray for revival, but also thank God for what He has already done? Then Jesus says to the man, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well" or "your faith has made you whole." The others were healed physically, but this man received something deeper. He did not just get a miracle; he got a relationship. He did not just receive healing; he experienced salvation, restoration, and wholeness. Thanksgiving opened a deeper door than the other nine ever walked through.

### **WHY MANY STAY WITH THE NINE – BARRIERS TO THANKSGIVING**

Why do so many people remain in the category of "the nine" instead of joining "the one"? There are several common barriers. One is forgetfulness. We are quick to cry out in desperation but quick to forget after the answer comes. The emergency passes, the danger is over, the sickness improves, and we move on. Another barrier is entitlement. Sometimes, deep down, people feel, "I deserved that blessing. I work hard. I am a good person. Of course God should help me." Entitlement kills gratitude. If I think I deserve everything, I will thank God for nothing. A third barrier is comparison. Instead of celebrating what God has given, we focus on what He has given to someone else. "Why did they get more money, more success, more opportunities, more gifts?" Comparison shifts our eyes from God's goodness to our neighbor's advantages. It steals joy and silences thanksgiving. Another barrier is disappointment. Some people stop thanking God because there are prayers that He has not answered yet or situations that are still painful. They say, "I will thank God when everything is fixed," but that day never seems to come. However, the Bible never says, "Give thanks in all circumstances once everything is perfect." It says, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Thanksgiving in the middle of struggle is not denial; it is faith. When we thank God even in confusion or pain, we are saying, "God, I do not understand everything, but I trust YOU. You are still good. You are still with me. You are still worthy of praise."

## **HOW TO CULTIVATE A THANKFUL LIFE – PRACTICAL STEPS**

So how can we, as individuals and as a church, become like that one man who returned? First, we can cultivate daily remembrance. Make it a habit to think back over each day and recognize at least a few things God has done or protected you from. You woke up. That is mercy. You had food. That is provision. You are saved. That is grace. Second, we can practice spoken thanksgiving. Do not just feel grateful—say it. Say, “Thank You, Lord,” often. Say, “Thank you” to people God has used to bless you. Gratitude grows stronger when it is expressed. Third, we can build thanksgiving into our prayer life. Instead of only bringing requests, start with thanks. Before asking for new things, thank Him for old things. Thank Him for prayers He already answered years ago. Fourth, we can teach our children and younger believers to say thank You to God. In our homes, before we eat, when we travel, when we see a blessing, we can pause and say, “Let’s thank God for this.” A thankful culture does not happen by accident; it is taught and modeled. Fifth, we can worship intentionally, not just when we feel it. Sometimes our feelings will follow our thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is often the key that unlocks joy. Many people say, “I will praise God when I feel happy,” but the Bible often shows people praising God first and joy coming later.

## **THANKSGIVING IN THE CHURCH**

Imagine what our church would look like if we truly became “the one who returned” together. Our worship times would be full of sincere voices, not just singing words on the screen, but truly thanking God for personal things He has done. Testimonies would flow more often—not to make people look good, but to make God look big. We would hear stories like, “God protected me,” “God restored my relationship,” “God healed me,” “God gave me peace,” and we would all give thanks together. When new blessings come to the church—a new ministry opening, a financial provision, lives saved, baptisms, growth—we would stop and say, “Lord, we return to You with thanks. We know this is Your doing.” Even in challenges as a church, we would still give thanks that God is working, God is teaching, God is pruning, God is moving us forward. A thankful church is a strong church. A thankful church is a church that stays close to Jesus’ feet.

## **THANKSGIVING IN PERSONAL LIFE – FAMILY, WORK, AND HEART ATTITUDE**

In our families, thanksgiving can change the atmosphere. Complaints create heaviness, but gratitude creates joy. Instead of always talking about what we lack, we can intentionally talk about what we already have. At work or in school, we can be different

from the world. The world complains about everything—bosses, teachers, governments, prices, weather, traffic. But a believer who practices thanksgiving shines like a light. When others complain, you can quietly say, “I thank God that I even have a job” or “I thank God that I can study and learn.” This does not mean we ignore problems, but we refuse to let complaints dominate our mouths. In our private hearts, a thankful attitude protects us from bitterness and depression. When we start each day with, “God, I thank You,” we are opening the day with faith. Even if tears are in our eyes, thanksgiving opens our spirit to His presence. Many people are waiting for joy to come and then plan to be thankful. But often joy starts with thanksgiving.

## **CONCLUSION – CHOOSING TO BE THE ONE WHO RETURNS**

As we come to the end of this message, let us return to the picture in Luke 17. Ten men are healed. Ten men look down at their hands and see the disease gone. Ten men feel strength returning to their bodies. Ten men have a fresh chance at life. But only one turns around, only one runs back, only one falls at the feet of Jesus, and only one hears the words, “Your faith has made you whole.” I believe Jesus is still looking in every congregation and asking, “Where are the ones who will return?” Many people in this room today could say, “Jesus has been good to me. He has forgiven my sins, healed my sickness, protected my life, saved my family, carried me through storms.” The question is: will you just keep walking, or will you turn back to His feet in thanksgiving? Maybe today you realize you have been among the nine—receiving but rarely returning, enjoying blessings but seldom thanking the Giver. God is not condemning you, but He is calling you higher. He is inviting you into deeper relationship. He is inviting you into a life of thanksgiving. Today, in your heart, you can say, “Lord, I choose to be like the one who returned. I choose to stop, turn back, bow down, and give You praise. I give You thanks for all You have done, all You are doing, and all You will do.” Let this not just be a “Thanksgiving month” for us, but the beginning of a new lifestyle where gratitude is part of who we are every day.

## **CORRIE TEN BOOM: THANKING GOD IN THE DARKEST PLACE**

To close, I want to leave you with one powerful true story from a missionary believer that shows how thanksgiving can exist even in the hardest conditions, and I want to place this at the end, as a final picture for our hearts. During World War II, a Dutch Christian woman named Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsie were arrested for hiding Jews from the Nazis. They were taken to a concentration camp called Ravensbruck—a place of overcrowding, hunger, cold, cruelty, and constant fear. The barracks they stayed in were packed with

women, the beds were like wooden shelves, and on top of that, the place was infested with fleas. Fleas biting them day and night. When Corrie saw the fleas, she was disgusted and angry. It felt like too much. Already they had lost their freedom, their home, their comforts; now they even had to share their beds with insects. One day, Betsie opened the small Bible they had managed to smuggle in and read from 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Betsie said, “Corrie, we must obey this. We must give thanks in this place, for everything.” Corrie agreed to thank God for some things: that they were still together, that they had a Bible, that they could read God’s Word. But when Betsie said, “And thank You, God, for the fleas,” Corrie protested. “No, not the fleas! There is nothing good about fleas!” But Betsie insisted gently, “We must thank God for everything. He knows why the fleas are here.” Reluctantly, Corrie joined her sister in thanking God even for the fleas, though she did not understand. As weeks passed, the sisters started to hold small Bible studies in the barracks at night. Women gathered around, hungry for hope, listening to the Word of God. They prayed, sang softly, and encouraged one another. Strangely, the guards never came inside to stop them. They did not interrupt. They did not search. They stayed away. One day they discovered the reason: the guards refused to enter the barracks because of the terrible flea infestation. The very thing that seemed like a curse—the fleas—became a protection. Because of the fleas, the women were free to worship, read Scripture, and share Jesus without interference. In that awful, dark place, God had used something small and irritating to accomplish something big and eternal. Corrie later looked back and realized that when they thanked God even for the fleas, they were trusting that His wisdom was higher than their understanding. Church, that is the heart of thanksgiving. We are not saying that every situation is good, but we are saying that God is still good in every situation. We are not thanking God because everything feels comfortable; we are thanking Him because He is working, often in ways we cannot see yet. Just like that one healed leper who turned back to fall at Jesus’ feet, and just like Corrie and Betsie thanking God even in a concentration camp, we too are invited to live a life that says, “Lord, I trust You enough to thank You—not only when I hold the blessing in my hand, but even when I hold a question in my heart.” Today, will you choose to be the one who returns? Will you choose to thank Him in all circumstances? May God make us a people, and a church, who live at the feet of Jesus with grateful hearts. Amen.