

## **Sermon Draft**

**Text: Luke 17:11–19**

**Sermon: “Be Thankful”**

“Git ‘N Go” is the name of a popular chain of convenience stores in some parts of the United States. The idea is that you come in, get what you want, pay for it, and go on your way. The name gets across the idea of quickly getting what you want and getting out of there as fast as possible, so that you don’t waste any precious time. Often that phrase describes our lives:

We want to get work over with during the day and go on with better things.

We want to get schoolwork done and go outside and play.

We want to get as much out of a relationship or a person as possible and go on our way to the next relationship or person.

As families, we want to get the meal over with as quickly as possible and go onto all, the other activities we each have planned.

This “Git ‘N Go” attitude also describes 9 out of the 10 lepers in our Gospel lesson. The question we want to ask ourselves is,

“Does this attitude also describe me, as a child of God?”

So, we have Jesus and the 10 Lepers. Jesus made a deliberate effort to go among the people by traveling the border and not taking the “straight shot” to Jerusalem. He deliberately went into the village. Jesus showed his great love and healing power to people who were not permitted to come near him. Our Lepers in today Gospel show Jesus caring about a group of people the world had ostracized. He listened to, and immediately answered, the request of the lepers. He didn’t make them beg or justify their request. He restored them to health, to their families, to the community and to life itself.

The 10 lepers showed their faith: They had faith enough to ask Jesus to have pity on them. They believed his word of healing and went on their way, trusting that he would provide healing before they got to the priest.

They all had a life-changing experience: They were no longer unclean, which meant they could worship in the temple again and were no longer ostracized from family and society. They were no longer headed for a premature, and perhaps painful, death.

They had something to be thankful for and something to celebrate. They had truly been blessed by God incarnate.

Sadly nine out of 10 took this great blessing for granted and kept on running. How often are we guilty of doing the same, we are too busy with life to stop and take time to give thanks. Jesus showed his great love for them. He did not condemn the ungrateful lepers or take back their healing when they did not return to thank him. They had their healing for all their life. They just had no relationship to the Healer.

Except for the one. One returned and gave thanks. He knew he wasn't worthy of what happened therefore, he didn't take this great blessing for granted (perhaps being a Samaritan had something to do with this). We all remember the story of the Good Samaritan. His worship of Jesus was a response of love. He was blessed by Jesus as Jesus commended him for his faith.

Like the 10 lepers, we have experienced the loving, healing touch of Jesus. We are surrounded by His love and care every day. He loves us so much he deliberately made the effort to come to us.

He left behind his heavenly home and humbled himself to become one of us. His purpose was to take our place on the cross. He goes there willingly, taking the punishment we deserve because of our sins. He allowed himself to be placed outside of God's love, abandoned by his Father as he hung on the cross. He loved us so much he died for us to defeat what we never could have defeated. Nothing will ever separate us from his love. He has cleansed us of our sin, which (far worse than leprosy) cuts us off from God. We can now stand before God as clean and pure, because of the blood of Jesus.

Like the nine, we know the temptation of taking God's blessing and running the temptation to "Git 'N Go." We get what we want from the Lord and go our own way, forgetting him even though our lives have been eternally changed. Satan and the world distract us getting us to focus on the things of this world instead of what is important. Jesus is put on the back burner. We don't seek his face often. We neglect his means of grace, so that we don't live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We rush through life, never taking time to be with him. We slowly move away from Jesus. We only use him when a crisis arises.

Yet like the one leper who gave praise to God and thanks to Jesus, we can “show and tell”: Jesus shows us his love and power; we can’t help but tell him thanks with our lives. We act like we are “in love” with Jesus. We open ourselves to his strengthening power through the means of grace, so that our relationship with him is constantly being strengthened. By his power, our whole lives are a witness to his love. Having been shown his love, we “show and tell” that love. Does our life show that we have a love relationship with Jesus?

Another way to look at this is by asking this question: Are you a praiser or complainer? I imagine those nine lepers were ungrateful complainers, for whom nothing was ever good enough in life. They probably always found something to complain about, even though they too had been touched by the love of Jesus.

They're the kind of people who probably even complained about going to show themselves to the priest after they had been healed.

I imagine that the one leper who returned to thank Jesus continued to praise Jesus for the rest of his life. People could see by his life that he had been touched by the love of Jesus because of the joyful life he lived. You have been touched by the love of Christ. What marks your life? Git 'N Go (complaining) or Show and Tell (praising)?

In October 1994 a leading law school announced it had received the largest cash gift ever given to a law school: \$13 million.

What inspired such generosity? Gratitude. Almost 40 years before the gift was given, the donors had met at the law school. The day after final exams they were married. Together they went on to become highly successful in business. Their deep gratitude to their university was because of its role as matchmaker. At the ceremony to mark the donation, they said, "The school had a unique role in bringing us together."

Jesus Christ has the unique role of bringing us to God. He presents us as his forgiven brothers and sisters to the heavenly Father. He alone can bring us together, for in his death on the cross we are declared “not guilty” and brought into a new relationship with God. Christ heals us through his sacrifice, and promises the joy of eternity with God. We are grateful! (Craig Brian Larson, *Contemporary Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, and Writers* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996] 79).

Amen