



LWML CNH CHRISTIAN LIFE LINE

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RETURN TO GIVE THANKS (The Ten Lepers)

10th I wonder where they've all gone? I just don't understand why they all ran off like that. You see, there were ten of us – all lepers. You can't imagine how terrible it is to be a leper. It means leaving your home, your family – everything. It means living in caves, sleeping on the ground, begging for food, and fighting over the scraps that are thrown to you by people who pass by. It means watching your fingers and toes waste away – even your nose and ears perhaps.

But back to my story. Ten of us lepers were sitting back there, and a man came along. We called out to Him, *Master, have mercy on us*. Now I can't speak for the other nine, but when I asked for mercy, I really meant food, for lepers live in near-starvation.

But instead of food, Jesus said, *Go and show yourselves to the priests*. And as we began to walk, we were all cured! I was so excited! I started running so I could catch up to Jesus and thank Him. I just assumed the other nine were with me. But when I looked around, I was alone. I wonder where they've all gone?

1st I'm right here, the first leper to be healed. There I was, walking down the road, and all of a sudden, I was normal. Two of my fingers had rotted off, and now I have them back again. But I didn't see any reason to run after Jesus and thank Him. Do you think He expects that? It's His job, right? It never occurred to me He would want thanks for doing His job.

10th But He *does* expect our thanks in prayer, even if it's only – *Thank You, Jesus!*

2nd I'm the second leper that was healed. I didn't go and thank Jesus because – well – I – uh – I'm just not good at making speeches. I guess I am the quiet, reserved type.

10th Quiet? You? You sure could make yourself heard yesterday when you tried to take all of the bread thrown to us. You yelled at all of us and told us how you had the least amount.

2nd Well, I was the hungriest!! Oh my – I just can't express myself very well.

10th You don't have to make a *speech*. Jesus just wants a simple *thank you*.

3rd I'm the third leper. I suppose you want to know why I didn't run back to Jesus. Well, I'll tell you, then! I'm not sure it really *was* Jesus that healed me. Sure, He touched me. Sure, I began to heal right after that. But how do I really know – how do you know – that it was Jesus who healed us? Maybe, it's just a coincidence. AND I'm not running after Him when I'm not sure I owe Him any thanks!

10th You owe Him your very life!! Isn't that worth even *one* prayer of thanks?

- 4th No doubt you want to know why I, the fourth leper, didn't thank Jesus. Well, let me ask YOU a question for a change. This person, who healed us – He likes to do that sort of thing, doesn't He? I mean – He gets a lot of satisfaction out of it, doesn't He? Therefore, I submit that He doesn't need thanks for doing what He likes to do anyway!
- 10th Jesus doesn't *need* our thanks, but He does *want* them.
- 5th Hey, I'm the fifth leper who was healed, and you know what? I really intended to go back and thank Jesus. I really did! But when I got home, my family was so glad to see me – and I was so glad to see them. And – and I just plain forgot to go back and tell Jesus thanks. Now the whole town wants to give me a *welcome home* party. So I just don't have time to go back. After all, what kind of party would it be if the guest of honor – namely me – wasn't there? Say, as long as you are going back, would you say thanks for me?
- 10th Well, I hardly think –
- 6th There! That's the trouble – people just don't think! I'm the sixth leper, and I used to be a lawyer. Now that I am well, I plan to resume my law practice, so I have a very good reason for not returning to Jesus to express my appreciation. Simply stated – I was just afraid. After all, Jesus doesn't have a medical certificate to practice medicine. He could very easily be sued for malpractice! Furthermore, the Scribes and Pharisees don't approve of Him either, and they used to be my best clients. So I've concluded that if I want to resume my law practice, I'd best stay away from this Jesus. You see – I do think of the consequences!!
- 10th You call that thinking? You can't even say a simple prayer of thanks for the One Who healed you?
- 7th Come on, he says he's afraid. Well, so am I! Oh, I'm no smart lawyer like he is, but I am afraid in a different way. I'm the seventh leper who was healed. I'm afraid that Jesus might expect me to *pay* Him for healing me – or do some other favor for Him. I don't like being obligated to anyone. You know how it goes. You loan someone a cup of sugar, and then they bring it back and expect a cup of coffee with *more* sugar in it! Anyway – I intend to just keep to myself and not get involved with anyone – not even Jesus!
- 10th But what if Jesus hadn't involved Himself with you?!
- 8th Yeah! What if! Here I am – all healed. And what does it mean? It means going back to work! It means going back to a nagging spouse and crying kids. I hate work! I hate noise! I hate family responsibilities! When I was a leper, I didn't have to work or take care of family or be subject to noise!! But *now* – thanks to Jesus – uh, pardon me, but no thanks to Jesus – I'm right back in the old rat race!
- 10th Well, that accounts for eight of the lepers. I wonder where the other one is?
- 9th Uhh – here I am. I hope I wouldn't have to give a reason for not going back to thank Jesus, because it's not a very good one. When I got home, I took a long hot bath, and ohhhh – it felt so good to put on decent clothes again! You know how those old rags felt! Anyway, I got so busy that I just plain *forgot*! Now, I'm too ashamed to go back and thank him.

10th How strange this is!! Those nine persons are all Jews, just as Jesus is. I am a Samaritan, an inferior person in their eyes. You would think they would *want* to fall down on their knees to thank the One they call Master and Physician. Well – I too have to hurry back because I have a prayer of thanks to give to Jesus!

Adapted from *Little Foxes That Spool the Vines* by Ruby Maschke

Can any of you identify with these lepers and their excuses? Do you make excuses why you don't spend time in the Lord's Word, in prayer, or not stepping forward to serve Him with the gifts and talents He has given you? Our Lord freely offers healing in His name, and receives us with joy as His dearly loved children!

Dear God, I have been guilty of grumbling and griping about all my problems and trials. I have failed to be thankful and to remember that You are at work in my life, even through all the troubles. Please help me to accept all of life's little challenges and Your restoring help with grace and gratitude. I know You love me and work all things together for my good. I trust You, Lord. Teach me to be a "praiser" who always finds the good... and not a complainer who always finds the bad – in every situation. I want to be a person who keeps my eyes on You and praises You, no matter what may come my way. So, thank You God for my blessings and these challenges. I know You are in control of all things. Please help me remember that a heart can be filled in with joy every day, not just the easy days. May I live a life of true joy.

Father, teach me how to live in Your service. Holy Spirit, show me how I may serve You with all my heart and work together with unselfish love. Thank You for the blessings You've given me. Help me to use those blessings to bless others, and use my gifts and talents to serve LWML, my church, and my community. Thank You God for Your leading, Your hope, peace, love, comfort, and Your salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*May you have a blessed Thanksgiving
with your family and friends!*