

Miracles of Jesus 12-11-11b

We continue our study now looking at the cleansing of the ten lepers in Luke chapter 17. We spent quite a bit of time reviewing the on-ramp for this miracle, the background and the context of it, because as has been the case in all of these miracles, they're not isolated episodes. It's not just a happenstance that it occurs in the Gospel of Luke where it does.

It is an integral, in-woven part of the fabric of the account at this point, and you have to look at what precedes it to fully understand it. And we're talking about deliverance by faith. There's an interesting study that you can do, which, before we conclude our series, we'll review about commonalities in the various miracles.

After we have looked at all of them, we'll see some of the warp and the woof of these accounts in terms of which ones mention that the individual being healed had faith, which of them are accomplished by a touch, which of them are accomplished by a word, which of them are accomplished at a distance, which of them are explicitly detailed, and which of them are kind of like the man with dropsy. That's the extreme case, one where we have no details whatsoever. We don't even know for sure that the man was healed.

We assume so, but it doesn't say that he was. But here, that's the background. We know that we're talking about faith and deliverance.

There's a lot of subjects that could be addressed, but that's the emphasis here, faith and deliverance. Within that sphere, we have cleansing and healing. A lot of things you could say about faith, a lot of things you could say about deliverance, but in this particular case, the nature of the deliverance is cleansing and healing.

Healing, of course, speaks more of the overt physical manifestation and consequence of sin. It's a fallen world in which people have diseases or shortfalls or handicaps, if I can use that word. And there is the moral or spiritual aspect, which is the clean and unclean idea.

There is a request in verse 13, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Jesus responds with a statement and two questions. The statement is to all ten lepers, Go, show yourselves to the priests.

Actually, more than a statement, it's an imperative. It is a command, Go, show yourselves to the priests. Then when the one Samaritan ex-leper returns, Jesus asks him two questions and then gives a statement.

Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? Notice, these questions seem to be addressed to the disciples, especially when you look at the third one. He doesn't say,

except you, right? He talks about him in the third person. Where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? Now, why does Jesus ask these questions? And why does he ask them of the disciples? Because in the context, they have said, increase our faith.

And he said, if you knew what you were doing, if you were aligned with the plans and purposes of God, if you had faith, if you had knowledge of the content and confidence in that knowledge, just the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to do extraordinary things, things that seem impossible by human standards. And you would be servants who recognize their place and their function. You would tend to think, well, people that are uprooting trees and planting them in the sea, they would be great and mighty prophets going through the land, becoming prominent and recognized and so on.

And he says, no. Just because you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you're still a servant. And you are doing no more in exercising that faith than coming in from the field and preparing the master's dinner.

But notice it's all about the master. It's the master's field. It's the master's plan.

It's the master's designated function. It's the master's wherewithal that has made them servants and given them a worthwhile task. It is the master that says, fix my dinner.

And after they have done so, they say, we are unprofitable servants. We have done no more than what was required of us. The requirement itself comes from the master.

It's all about the master. It's all about the glory of God. So these are the factors that are at work and are at various times cycling into prominence in this miracle.

Cleansing of the ten lepers really has very little to do with leprosy. And it really has very little to do with cleansing or healing. It has a lot to do with faith, with deliverance, with recognizing our place in the plan of God and recognizing that we are in it for the glory of God.

We don't enter into a relationship with God so that He can be the genie of the lamp and solve our problems. We enter into a relationship with God because He is the master. We are servants in this sense.

And in this age, we are also sons. We are also children. This, remember, is still the Old Testament age.

And so we're observing, interpreting, and applying. And this is a proxy. As God deals with the nation of Israel in the Old Testament age, which includes the gospels, so He deals with the individual believer today.

So when we say servants, Jesus tells the disciples in the upper room, John 13, I no more

call you servants, I call you friends. Because there is a new relationship that begins after Judas departs and Jesus, in John 14, begins to give church age truth. The Holy Spirit is coming.

The one who has my words and keeps them, I and my Father will come to him and make our home with him. That's never an Old Testament promise. Nobody ever said the Father and the Son are going to come and make their home in your soul in the Old Testament.

This is church age truth. And it's just the inception, just the tip of the iceberg. Paul the Apostle will be the steward of the mysteries of Christ.

But Jesus gives a preview of coming attractions in the upper room discourse. But, that's what we're really talking about here. So, it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee as He entered a certain village.

Entering and exiting a village is often the occasion for miracles. We've seen this and we will see it. With blind Bartimaeus, it will be an issue in that miracle.

You see it with the blind men that followed Jesus as He came. Son of David, have mercy on us. As He came to the village and the widow was coming out with her son on the way to the graveyard.

Many times the encounter and the opportunity comes as Jesus is entering or leaving a village. And remember in our most recent miracles, Jesus took the man aside, took him away from the crowd and dealt with him away from the crowd. This is a reminder to us the application of that observation is that our relationship with God, our relationship through Christ is an individual matter.

Jesus doesn't stand outside. Did you ever wonder? Jesus never stands outside a village and says, all you sick people are healed. Could He have? Did He have the power? He never does a corporate healing.

It's individual, one by one. They brought to Him those who were sick and afflicted. They brought to Him all who were diseased.

They brought them one by one and He heals them one by one. Wouldn't it have been more efficient for Him to just say, all right, you know, the line is long here and the polls are closing in 10 minutes, so you've all voted. You're all cleansed.

Everybody look up here. Do you believe I'm the Son of God? All right. Everybody's healed.

Take them home. On the way home, they'll all be... He never does that. It's always individual, isn't it? Every single time, every single healing miracle is individual.

What are the corporate miracles? One is that everybody gets a blessing. Food, the bread,

feeding of the 5,000, feeding of the 4,000. That's a one-to-many deal, which is the model that we have had ever since ancient days.

The priests would minister and teach the people as a group. The ceremonial sacrifices and rituals and feast days were observed by the group to learn corporately. People gathered to hear the apostles preach corporately.

They gathered to hear Jesus teach corporately. One-to-many is in feeding. Those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness will be filled.

But when it comes to sozo, when it comes to deliverance, it's individual. This is why we have to express individual faith. You're not saved in the household just because your mother is saved or your father is saved.

You have to have your own individual faith, and you have to have your own individual relationship with God. Note that there is a division. There is a minority of this ten-leper group that is declared to be delivered.

The ten are cleansed, but there's one who's delivered. Go show yourselves to the priests. So it was, as they went, they were cleansed.

Their leprosy went away. This provides potential. Now, what are you going to do with this habiliment, with this giving of restoration? What do you do with it? Are you going to glorify God, or are you just going to say, well, that's a relief.

Let me go back and see my relatives and friends and resume my business and do all the stuff that I always wanted to do, that leprosy kept me from doing? One of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned. He recognized he wasn't just cleansed, he was healed. And part of the healing, it's kind of like when they turned to go show themselves to the priest, in that act of recognition and of obedience, that's where the healing took place, where the cleansing took place.

This man, in recognizing what has been done to him, realizes that he's not just cleansed, he's healed. Now, what's the difference? Well, remember, cleansing, that's a removal of filth, removal of that which defiles. And in the spiritual sense, at the point of salvation, we are cleansed.

In Hebrews, it talks about one who sins willfully and doesn't recognize that he has been cleansed from his old sins. And that one who sins willfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, of how much sorer punishment shall he be worthy who trods underfoot the Son of God and does despite to the Spirit of grace. There is an initial deliverance.

There is an initial act of God at the point of salvation. But what do you do with that? Well, there is only a minority who seek out the glory of God, who recognize the glory of God.

And that's what this man represents.

And oddly enough, he's the one that comes the furthest. He's not just a leper. He's a Samaritan.

And it is that way with us. Why do you think man who is created a little lower than the angels is going to be eventually in Christ raised above them? Because we've traveled a further distance. The unfallen angels have never been mired in sin.

They've never been conceived in iniquity and born in sin. We are like the Samaritans in that we have appreciation for the distance, the, oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. So he falls down on his face at his feet giving him thanks, gratitude to God.

If you're not grateful, why would that be? What's the difference between gratitude and a lack of gratitude? Ingratitude exists where there is a sense of entitlement. Well, this is what I deserve. This is what is expected.

For example, Luke 17, verse 8 and 9, Will the master not say, prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. Does the master have gratitude to the servant for doing the things that were required? No. Should the servant be grateful to the master for providing and directing and making him useful? Yes.

Gratitude flows in one way. God is not grateful to us because we remember to pray or because we exercise faith or we recognize his glory. Gratitude goes the other direction.

And that's what this leper understands. He fell down at his feet giving him thanks. Jesus didn't say, well, thank you, Samaritan leper, for coming back and recognizing the deliverance that I have granted to you.

Did Jesus thank the leper? No. It is expected that when you recognize what God has done, that you would be thankful to God. That's why this context is so important.

Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? In other words, Jesus expects the other nine to return and give thanks and to glorify God whose power has been invoked on their behalf. And were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? Well, this is the question that we ask ourselves. We are considered foreigners.

We're strangers, aliens from the life of God, from the nation of Israel and so on. And what is our response to what God has done for us? God made no distinction. There is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor free. We are one in Christ. And in this age, everyone has an

opportunity.

So are we the ones who are going to be grateful? It's hard when we don't think things are as we would like them to be. We could conceive of a great plan. You should see the plan of Sam.

I've got the best plan. I've got this idea of how things could be where I can write a check or make a charge anytime I want and never bounces, never falls short. There's never a lack of balance in the bank.

Anything I want, anything I see, I've got money to pay for it. And I wouldn't be extravagant. I wouldn't go live in Willow Bend or something.

It would just be convenient. When I see a thing or need a thing or want a thing, want to do an upgrade, I don't have to go do it myself. I can hire guys to come in and do it.

And I can get the nice materials and have them put it all in. And my car breaks, I don't have to say, well, is this expense going to be more than the worth of the car? Hey, I like that car. I don't care what it costs.

I just write a check. This is the plan of Sam. What I want, I get.

And I'd be careful. I wouldn't be extravagant, at least not in the beginning. But you'd be surprised how that power, look at your celebrities that do end up with uncommon wealth or look at how many lottery winners end up on a slab at the mortuary because they can't handle it.

It's a blessing that we can't do that. God knows what is best for us. All things work together for good to those who love God, that called according to His purpose.

And guess what? It works together for good that we're not insanely wealthy because we would destroy ourselves. We think, oh, I'll just do a few things. I'd put it all in the bank, save it for my kids.

No, we wouldn't. We'd spend like drunken sailors and kill ourselves with it. That's why God doesn't give it to us, at least not yet.

When we're glorified and we don't have a sinful nature, we don't have corruption festering within us, then God will give us a hundredfold. Remember what He told the disciples? If you've given up houses and lands, you'll have a hundredfold later when you can handle it. But God is a wise Father.

And in the same way that we don't give our seven-year-old children the keys to the Pontiac to go drive, God does not give us everything that we want. We would destroy ourselves. And if you know yourself well, you know this is true.

I like food. I would just eat, eat, eat, eat, eat. All of my favorite foods because I can.

Well, gratitude flows in the other direction. So we're talking about faith and we're talking about deliverance. There is obedience that the request of these ten lepers was have mercy, and Jesus does.

The requirement for them to enter into that mercy is go show yourself to the priest. This, by the way, is a testimony. Remember, Jesus has given this command once before to a leper, go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifice that Moses has commanded, right? We saw that several miracles ago.

But the man didn't go. Instead, he noised it abroad. Jesus said, don't noise this abroad.

Go show yourself to the priest. He did the exact opposite. Jesus healed him and then gave him the command.

Well, this time, Jesus gives the command, and as they fulfill the command, they are healed. Did these guys make it all the way to the priest? We don't know. Hope so.

They at least started in that direction. If you read Leviticus 13, you find out all of the requirements for lepers. They have to tear their clothes.

They have to cover their face. They cry out unclean. They live outside the camp and so on.

All of this, they have been delivered from, and it is by the grace of God. It is the mercy of God. Turn with me just quickly to, keep your finger here on Luke 17.

Turn back to 2 Kings 7. Very famous episode involving lepers in this chapter. Elisha said, Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time, a say of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel.

Remember there was a great starvation. Israel was being under siege by the Syrians. And Elisha said, Tomorrow food will be cheap.

That's what he's saying. You'll hardly be able to give away food. You'll get a whole say of fine flour for a shekel.

Two sayers of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria. An officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be? And he said, In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. Man doesn't believe it.

There were four leopards at the entrance of the gate. They said to one another, Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say we will enter the city, the famine is in the city and we shall die there. If we sit here, we die also.

Now therefore come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we'll live. If they kill us, we'll only die.

We've got three options here. One of them is to die in the city. One is to die outside the city.

And the third is to go to the Syrians and maybe die or maybe get fed. A lot of the ancients had superstitions about crazy people and the disease, that they were under some sort of special observation by the gods and they wouldn't mess with them because they didn't want to bring down the wrath of that particular deity on themselves. So they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians.

And when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise, no one was there. For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses, the noise of a great army. They said to one another, Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us.

Therefore they arose and fled at twilight. They left their camp intact. Tents, horses, donkeys, fled for their lives.

So these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp. They went into one tent and ate and drank and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, went and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent, carried some from there also and went and hid that.

Then they said to one another, We're not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us.

Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household. So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city and told them, saying, We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound, only horses and donkeys tied and the tents intact. Gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside.

The king arose, said to his servants, Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know we're hungry. They've gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying when they come out of the city, we'll catch them alive.

Can't believe that God would have actually provided deliverance. Even though Elisha had said, Hear the word of the Lord. Tomorrow food will be abundant.

Notice there is a delay here. How much sooner they could have gotten out and had this problem solved, but they didn't believe the prophet. One of his servants answered and said, Please let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city.

The only ones they haven't eaten. And it may be that they become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it, or they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed. Let us send them and see.

So they sent out a test case. So they took two chariots with horses. The king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, Go see.

They went after them to the Jordan. Indeed, all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. Messengers returned and told the king.

People went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a sava of flour was sold for a shekel, two savas for a shekel of barley. According to the word of the Lord, the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate, but the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him.

So it happened, just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two savas of barley for a shekel, and a sava of fine flour for a shekel shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria. Then that officer had answered the man of God and said, Now look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be? And he had said, In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. In case you missed it, it is repeated.

Faith and deliverance. Aren't those the subjects of our leper story in Luke 17? Faith and deliverance. No faith, no deliverance.

You may see the deliverance, but you're not going to fully enter into it. These nine lepers have seen God's deliverance. They are cleansed, but they're not really entering into it, and they're ultimately going to be judged because they don't glorify God.

You think, Well, but they got cleansed, didn't they? Well, these people won the lottery, didn't they? That you find swinging from a rope in their basement, or their relatives kill them, or they wind up spending it all profligately and destroy themselves with it, and end up addicted or worse. Look it up sometime, what has happened to so many of these lottery winners. Very few of them have actually been smart enough to just sock it in the bank and do something prudent.

There's a reason why people aren't well off, because it's like you can't handle it, and we truly can't. So, have mercy is the request. The requirement is go and show yourself.

This is sort of an imperative request. The lepers say, Lord, have mercy on us. And he says, you go show yourself to the priest.

You be obedient, and we'll see what happens. So, as the ten obey, they are cleansed.

One saw that he was healed and turns back.

One glorifies God, falls at Jesus' feet, and thanks Him. And that one is not a Jew, but a Samaritan. This foreshadows what's going to happen overall in the first advent, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, His time in Israel.

Israel, by and large, is going to reject, and it is those who are outside who will eventually accept. Now, there is a parallel. Think about the church age.

At the beginning, Israel was all about believing God. They splashed the blood on the doorposts. They were delivered from Egypt through a series of events.

They expressed faith in God and were given provision, but they ultimately failed, and they dropped in the wilderness. And it took a second generation to enter the land under Joshua. You look at the church age.

Initially, there is great faith. There is the spread of the gospel. There are all these churches planted and established.

You have the letters to the seven churches. But in the course of this age, we have very much followed the pattern of Israel in that you have the Lord Jesus in Luke 18. You're right here in Luke anyway.

Just look at the beginning of that chapter. He tells a parable, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. This is good for this past week, and disappointment at the large level.

There was a certain judge who did not fear God, nor regard man, you know, the importunate widow parable. Because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. Hear what the unjust judge said.

Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? There is often a delay in our deliverance. This is going to be nowhere more clear than when we look at the raising of Lazarus. Messengers come to Jesus and say, Lazarus is sick.

Jesus could have said, Oh, Lazarus is sick? Well, go back and by the time you get back, he'll be healed. We wouldn't have John chapter 11, would we? It is the delay in Lazarus' deliverance that brings great glory to God, because his deliverance is that much more profound in that he dies, in that he is in the tomb for over three days. Right? The glory of God is revealed in the delay.

Jesus healed people all the time. If He just said, Oh, Lazarus has got a fever, well, go back and he's healed. I've healed him at a distance.

But it's one of the most profoundly great miracles that Jesus ever did, and it is because

of the delay. That's what this parable is about in Luke 18. The judge doesn't right off grant the widow's request, but because she persists and she believes that this judge has the power and will eventually be willing to grant her request, she persists and she keeps after it.

Because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. She believes I'm going to do this sooner or later. I better go ahead and do it.

That's at the human level. Then the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said. Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them, though there is a delay? I tell you, He will avenge them suddenly, speedily.

You think, well, wait a minute. I thought this was all about it taking some time. Well, speedily is kind of misleading.

It will happen suddenly. You pray day and night. You wait and you wait.

And the longer the delay, the greater the glory of God when He finally answers. I tell you, He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? Have we got any widows who are willing to keep after it? Do we have any people who are elect, who are chosen, who recognize their call and cry out to God day and night and don't give up? Their faith does not flag.

They recognize that the glory of God is in it. When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth? You think about the state of the church in the world today, especially in this country. Much healthier Christianity going on in places like Korea and Africa than there is here in the United States, by and large, on average.

When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth? That's talking about the second coming, but it applies as well to the rapture. So, nine did not return or express thanks. Nine have been put to shame by a foreigner.

And this is a constant theme in Scripture, that God is going to, Paul talks about this expressly in Romans, God is going to shame and embarrass Israel by offering grace to the Gentiles, and they are going to seize on it where God's own people did not. And God is going to rebuke them and embarrass them. This is Romans 10, verse 19.

This goes all the way back to Deuteronomy 32, 20 and 21. Remember, we saw this in Matthew 15, with the woman, O woman, great is your faith. So, this episode primarily, as we've seen in the past, reflects the state of rejection of the Lord Jesus in Israel and the fact that God is going to turn to the Gentiles, specifically through the Apostle Paul.

He will be the Apostle. Jesus sends 11 of his disciples to Israel, and Israel is going to drop off the map. The Jewish Christianity, Jewish church is going to drop off the map, and it is going to be in the Gentile realms that it flourishes.

And you notice the letters to the seven churches that Jesus sends through John in chapter 2 and 3 of that apocalypse. Where's the church in Jerusalem? You've got Philadelphia, Smyrna, Thyatira, Ephesus. Where's Jerusalem? What happened to the Jewish church? By the end of John's life, it's gone.

Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. So, that's foreshadowed here. But what are our applications, real quickly? Gratitude, praise, and worship of God are the natural products of genuine faith.

If you do not feel grateful to God, if you do not have welling up in your heart a feeling of thanksgiving, if instead you sort of feel a sense of entitlement or disappointment with the way God is dealing, why hasn't He answered? Why hasn't He moved? Why hasn't He provided? Why hasn't He done? If we have a why hasn't He attitude instead of a gratitude and thanksgiving, why hasn't He invited me to the table instead of telling me to make His dinner? We have a choice. We're either going to be grateful or we're going to be a little put out and a little disappointed. Gratitude, praise, and worship falling at Jesus' feet are the products of genuine faith.

And if we don't feel grateful, guess what? Our faith is hollow and empty. It's not real. It's a show.

It's a put-on. It's a self-deception. God's provision is often conditioned on obedience.

These men were not healed until they turned and followed. But obedience does not earn deliverance. It can be a condition, but it doesn't create an obligation on God's part.

That's what that previous illustration from Jesus is talking about. Just because you obey doesn't create any obligation on the part of the Master, but it is often a condition for deliverance. And this sort of goes without saying, but we should never take God's grace for granted.

Nine of the lepers were real happy that they were cleansed, but Jesus says, where are they? Where is relationship in that? They got a circumstantial deliverance, but they haven't been delivered the way this Samaritan leper is who has a relationship with Jesus Christ, who is glorifying God, who has entered into a completely different plane and level. We should never be so impressed with what has been given to us that we forget who gave it. Our attitudes can have as large an impact as our actions.

That goes back to what we saw in our B attitudes this morning in our memory verse from Matthew 5 and verse 6. Our attitudes can have as big an impact as our actions. We tend to think in physical terms. We think, well, you know, the hidden things of the heart, nobody cares about that.

It's what you see. It's what people do that counts. Attitudes in God's book, it's the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Finally, we should not only enjoy God's grace, but think through what His grace enables us to do. It's not that we have been relieved. It's not just that we have been delivered.

We are delivered and enabled so that we can serve. We are enabled. People are all interested in empowerment.

We have been empowered by God. So what do we do with that? Are we looking to our own agenda or looking to God's? These are questions we can ask ourselves. Sounds great from a pulpit on Sunday morning, but if we can review this and remember it on Tuesday and on Wednesday and on Thursday in our time of reflection on God's word, revisit these things and ask ourselves some hard questions.

What kind of leper am I? What kind of cleansed leper am I? Am I returning to the source of my deliverance and my cleansing and my blessing? Or am I content to receive the benefits of God's grace and now go my way? It's an important question to ask. Faith is always the means of appropriating God's deliverance. And we are people of faith.

That's why you're here. That's why you're listening to the word of God. That's why you're storing it away for future reference.

It isn't enough to agree with it and hear it today. It's what we do with it tomorrow. And I would be fascinated to see the biography, the later life of these ten lepers.

I think the larger Bible that we'll have access to after we're united with Christ in glory may detail what happened to these ten men. Which one would you predict had the best and most productive life and is going to occupy a wonderful place of blessing in the eternal future? It goes without saying. It didn't matter that he wasn't born an Israelite.

It didn't matter that he started out with a lot of deficits and negatives. It's what he did in faith and in obedience and in seeking the glory of God, recognizing in gratitude the mercy of God, the fulfillment of that request. Lord, have mercy on us.

And that should be our goal as well. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll take a look at blind Bartimaeus next time.

Actually, it's Bartimaeus plus one, depending on which account you read. Matthew always gives us a fuller account, so we'll be looking both at Matthew and the parallel next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for how specifically and in such detail we see the provision that You've made for us, the blessing that You have bestowed on us, the deliverance that You offer to us, and the means by which we enter into all of those things by faith. Expressed in obedience and recognized in gratitude. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts so that it will make a difference as we live our lives in the time that remains to us in this life and as we prepare for the next.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.