



The Thankful Leper

*Track 21*

“Oh, why doesn’t anyone like us?” wailed a leper to his friends. “Can’t they see we are people too?”

The 10 friends huddled outside the village walls. They weren’t allowed to live inside the village like everyone else.

“Well, look at us!” answered one of the friends. “We have these

horrible sores and bumps all over our skin. People get scared when they see us!”

The first leper sighed. “I just wish someone would smile and say hello every once in a while. Instead, people just run away.”

Leper – a person who has a horrible skin disease

“Look! Who’s that?” shouted a leper, pointing down the road. “I see a man, and he’s coming right towards the village.”

“That’s Jesus of Nazareth!” shouted another leper. This leper was a Samaritan. The rest of the lepers were Jews. (Usually Jews hated Samaritans, but the other nine lepers didn’t mind him.)

“I’ve heard about this man, Jesus,” said the Samaritan. “He cares about all kinds of people. They say He’s healed people who can’t see, people who can’t hear and people who can’t talk or walk. He’s even healed lepers, like us.”

“Well, let’s see if He’ll heal us too,” said the friends to each other.

As Jesus came down the road, they stood far away. They couldn’t get too close to anyone – that was the rule.

Then they all cried out in their saddest voices, “Jesus, Master, feel sorry for us! Be kind to us and heal us,” they begged.

Jesus stopped. He looked right at the men. “Go to the priests and let them see you,” He said.

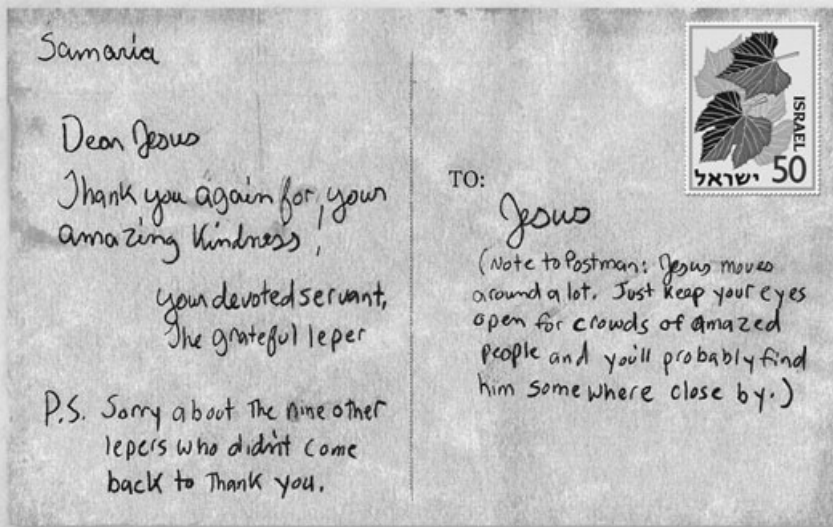
Go to the priests? The priests checked lepers’ bodies to see if they were still sick.¹

Wait a minute! *Did this mean Jesus would heal them?* They hurried to obey.

And as they went, an amazing thing happened! Their sores and bumps completely disappeared. Their skin turned brand new, like a baby’s skin.



Scripture: Luke 17:11-19



He fell flat on the ground before Jesus and thanked Him over and over again.

Jesus turned to His disciples, “Didn’t I heal 10 men?” He asked. “Where are the other nine?

“Oh, happy day!” shouted the friends. They rubbed their smooth arms and wiggled their fingers and toes. Now they could live in the village like everyone else!

They jumped and skipped along on their way.

But when the Samaritan saw that he was healed, he rushed back to Jesus. “Praise God! Glory to Him!” he shouted.

Not one came back to thank God except *this* man! And he’s a Samaritan – not a Jew.”

“Get up. Go on your way,” Jesus said to the man. “You believe in Me. And your faith has made you well.”

The Samaritan man jumped up. For the first time, he felt loved and forgiven. He would be thankful forever that Jesus cared about someone like him.

¹See Leviticus 14:3.

Learn from the thankful leper’s biography:

- Jesus cares for all kinds of people, no matter who they are.
- Trust in Jesus. And don’t forget to thank Him for what He has done for you!

Parent Ideas

The Thankful Leper

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus cares for all kinds of people, no matter who they are.
- Trust in Jesus. And don't forget to thank Him for what He has done for you!

1. Read-together activity

To prepare, underline or highlight the dialogue of the Samaritan leper. Your child can read the Samaritan's lines as you read the biography aloud together. Recruit other family members to read the dialogue of other characters, such as Jesus or the other nine lepers. Most of the dialogue of the lepers is fictional, but it helps your child to better understand and relate to lepers in Bible times.

If your child is not a skilled reader yet, read the Samaritan's lines first and prompt your child to read them after you.

2. Discussion activity

Ask your child these questions to help her personally engage with the biography:

- At the beginning of the biography, how did the lepers feel? (*left out, ugly, unwanted, disliked, etc.*)
- When have you felt this way? What did you do?
- How does Jesus treat people? How did He treat the 10 lepers? How does He treat you when you feel hurt or left out?
- Why do you think the nine lepers forgot to thank Jesus for healing them? What did they care most about?
- Why was the Samaritan so thankful to Jesus? Why was he more thankful than the others?

If your child is interested and able to handle the topic, you could tell her more about lepers in Bible times. (Be aware that the Bible word translated as leper or leprosy is a general term for various skin diseases. See Leviticus 13.) Lepers were religious and social outcasts in the truest sense of the word. They could not enter the temple or live inside the city. They had to wear ripped clothes, like mourners, and cry, "Unclean, unclean" so people would stay away (Leviticus 13:45). With their scaly and diseased skin – often missing fingers and toes! – lepers symbolized death. People also believed God was punishing them strongly.

On another note, if your child asks why Jews hated the Samaritans, you can explain that Samaritans and Jews disagreed over how and where to worship God. But Jesus wanted His disciples to accept Samaritans and teach them about the Savior. Jesus wanted His disciples to know that a Samaritan leper could have faith in God too.

3. Application activity

Think of people in your church, community or child's school who might need a friend (e.g., senior citizens at care facilities, persons with disabilities, immigrants, new students or neighbors, etc.). Involve your child in calling or visiting these people, inviting them over to dinner or hand-delivering a card or gift package to make them feel welcome.