

*<sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, <sup>13</sup> they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" <sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. <sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? <sup>18</sup> Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well." Luke 17:11-19 NRSV*

One of the things I think people appreciate, but sometimes never comment about, is acknowledgement of thanks, almost immediately for something they did. One of my supervisors in a company I worked for had a daily memo called "positive reinforcement." When it was sent out to the employees of the stores, many of them derided the memo but I think people underneath really did appreciate the acknowledgement as well as the thanks from the boss. My mom always used to say "thanks for everything" after we stepped in to help her after my dad died. I think she made sure she said that because her father never seemed to appreciate anything she had done for him, when she took care of him when he got older. Then I read of a famous person who died some years ago, and had habit of writing "thank you" notes when he received anything gift from someone else. It really made a positive impression on those who received them. The text is the story of a healing of ten lepers who Jesus encounters on the road. What is interesting is that they do not directly ask for a healing but for Jesus to have "mercy" on them. Jesus response is for them to go show themselves to the priests. So they go on their way. Now going to the priests was no simple matter. If you read about the procedure to find out if one is cured from leprosy in the book of Leviticus, you are reading a couple of chapters of things that must be done by the priests to determine that the individual is free from the disease.

So I imagine the ten of them, being separated from their families and communities were very anxious to be "cleared" and go back. One of the lepers, though, does go back. Because this one goes back, and ironically he is from the area that all Jews despise; Samaria. Jesus makes note of this and takes it a step farther saying "your faith has made you well". Because this man, a Samaritan, immediately takes time to say "thank you" he receives more than just a physical healing.

Many of us live busy hectic lives. Just as a "thank you" transformed a healing into something more, so we might be surprised how being able to say thanks NOW strengthens and encourages those we know as well as ourselves in our mutual walk with the Lord.

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