



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday's Gospel reading is a very surprising and moving account of gratitude for all of God's wonders.

The Evangelist tells us that Jesus was visited by ten lepers when entering a village. Lepers, of course, were outcasts from their communities because of their condition—but our Lord has already made His Ministry known to those who are sick and suffering, and so these lepers cry out, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*" (*Luke 17:13*)

Our Lord, taking pity on them, tells them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests", and, in doing so, they are made well. (*Luke 17:14*). However, of these ten, only 1 returns to thank Christ. Even more surprising, that man is a Samaritan.

We must remember the difference between Jews and Samaritans during Christ's ministry. Each group thought about and worshipped God in different ways. Jews worshipped the Lord in the Temple, but the Samaritans worshipped Him on Mount Gerizim. It is for this reason, and many others, that the Jews and Samaritans considered each an anathema. This is the reason Jesus says, "*Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?*" (*Luke 17:18-19*) Our Lord does not say this to be critical, but out of true surprise.

Nine of these lepers turned to God out of a true sense of need having been cast out of their homes and families; but the moment they were cured by the Lord, they were "too busy" to return to offer their thanks. Are we like the nine, who seek God in times of distress, yet forget Him once the storm passes? Or are we like the Samaritan? Do we seek Him, and, when He has comforted us, fall at His feet in prayer and thanks?

Our Lord says to the cured Samaritan, "*Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.*" (*Luke 17:19*) The Samaritan's belief in the Lord has made him well. May we all have the strength of faith to cling to Lord—not only in times of distress, but joy and beauty as well.

+ALEXIOS
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