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Luke 17:11-19

11. “While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.
12. As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;
13. and they raised their voices, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’
14. When He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they were going, they were cleansed.
15. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,
16. and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.
17. Then Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine--where are they?’
18. ‘Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?’
19. And He said to him, ‘Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.’”

This of course is a very familiar passage about 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus and only one came back to thank the Lord. This text is often used to teach the

natural tendency to take our blessings for granted, how rare it is for people to express thanks, and the importance of our being thankful as God's people. These are good and true lessons to be learned from this text.

I thought of this passage afresh here recently upon hearing a volunteer's report from Louisiana, after he helped homeless people in a shelter down there. He shared how people often refused bottled water and demanded soda pop instead. Others turned away healthy deli sandwiches, complaining that McDonald's food was not available. He estimated that 70% of the people he served were not thankful in any way.

Obviously, there is nothing new under the sun. But we who are Christians are expected to know the word of Christ, and so be prepared for the condition of people in the world. We who serve others in the name of Christ must be prepared to serve without gratitude or reward from others. It is the Lord Jesus we serve, and most often we serve our Lord through our service to others.

In fact, to serve without thanks is the better part of our lot as Christians. Indeed, as we serve others we must be prepared to suffer. Many who saw the news coverage of the red rescue helicopter that was shot down over New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, were horrified and thought it was unbelievable. But to any veteran rescue worker, or to those of us who know the truths of the New Testament, the shooting down of a rescue vehicle like that helicopter is nothing more than "business as usual" in this

old world.

Christians always have and will continue to suffer for doing what is right. The apostle Peter in his first letter, chapter 4, verses 12 and 13, writes: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing.” Notice our directive is to keep on rejoicing through it all.

Remember: “This world is not our home, we are just passing through.” Those who persevere in doing good and sacrificing--regardless how we are treated--these are the real winners in this life.

Galatians 6:9 gives us this direction: “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” Our continued good attitudes, regardless of what we face down here on earth, is the most important part of the test we face in this life.