



RETURN TO GIVE THANKS (The Ten Lepers)

Cast: 10 readers

(The tenth leper walks in, pauses, looks around. Other lepers are in various parts of the room.)

10th: I wonder where they've gone to. *(pauses and peers behind her)* I just don't understand why they all ran off like that. *(faces audience)* You see, there were ten of us - all lepers. You can't imagine how terrible it is to be a leper. It means leaving your home, your family - everything. It means living in caves, sleeping on the ground, begging for food and fighting over the scraps that are thrown to you by people who pass by. It means watching your fingers and toes waste away - sometimes even your nose and ears.

Now to get back to my story. All of us were sitting back there and a man came along. We called out to Him, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Now I can't speak for the other nine, but when I asked for mercy, I meant food, for lepers live in near-starvation.

But instead of food, Jesus said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as we began to walk, we were all cured! I was so excited! I started running this way so I could catch up to Jesus and thank Him. I just assumed the other nine were with me. But when I looked around, I was alone. I wonder where they are.

1st: *(sitting near front)* I'm right here, the first leper to be healed. There I was, walking down the road, and all of a sudden I was normal. Two of my fingers had rotted off and now I have them back again. *(holds up hand and wiggles fingers)* But I didn't see any reason to run after Jesus and thank Him. Do you think He expects that? It's His job, His profession really. It never occurred to me He would want thanks for doing His job!

10th: But He does expect our thanks in prayer, even if it's only "Thank You, Jesus."

2nd: *(speaks very slowly and quietly)* I'm the second leper that was healed. I didn't go and thank Jesus because - well, I'm just not good at making speeches. I guess I'm the quiet, reserved type.

10th: Quiet? You? You sure could make yourself heard yesterday when you tried to take all of the bread thrown to us. You yelled at all of us and told us how you had the least amount.

- 2nd:** *(loud and angry)* Well, I was the hungriest! *(catches herself)* Oh, my! *(Speaks quietly again)* I just can't express myself well.
- 10th:** You don't have to make a speech. Jesus just wants your "Thank you."
- 3rd:** *(defensive and grouchy)* I'm the third leper. I suppose you want to know why I didn't run back to Jesus. Well, I'll tell you then! I'm not sure it was Jesus that healed me. Sure, He touched me. Sure, I began to heal right after that. But how do I know - how do you know - that it was Jesus that healed us? Maybe it was just coincidence - and I'm not running after Jesus when I'm not sure I owe Him any thanks!
- 10th:** You owe Him your very life! Isn't that worth even one prayer of thanks?
- 4th:** *(speaks slyly)* No doubt you want to know why I, the fourth leper, didn't thank Jesus. Well, let me ask YOU a question for a change. This person that healed us - He likes to do that sort of thing, doesn't He? I mean, He gets a lot of satisfaction out of it, doesn't He? Therefore, I submit that He doesn't need thanks for doing what He likes to do anyway!
- 10th:** Jesus doesn't need our "thank you" prayers, but He does want them.
- 5th:** *(talks fast and excitedly)* I'm the fifth leper that was healed, and you know what? I really intended to go back and thank Jesus. I really did! But when I got home, my family was so glad to see me and I was so glad to see them that I just plain forgot to go back and tell Jesus thanks. Now the whole town wants to give me a "welcome home" party. So I just don't have time to go and thank Jesus. After all, what kind of party would it be if the guest of honor - namely me - wasn't there? Say, as long as you're going back, would you say thanks for me?
- 10th:** Well, I hardly think --
- 6th:** That's the trouble. People just don't think! I'm the sixth leper and I used to be a lawyer. *(self-righteously)* Now that I'm well I plan to resume my law practice, so I have a very good reason for not returning to Jesus to express my appreciation. Stated simply, I was afraid. After all, Jesus doesn't have a medical certificate to practice medicine. He could very easily be sued for malpractice! Furthermore, the scribes and Pharisees don't approve of Him, and they used to be my best clients. So I've concluded that if I want to resume my law practice, I'd best stay away from Jesus. You see, I do think!
- 10th:** That's thinking? You can't even say a simple prayer of thanks?
- 7th:** He said he's afraid. Well, so am I! Oh, I'm no smart lawyer, but I'm afraid in a different way. By the way, I'm the seventh leper that was healed. I'm afraid that Jesus might expect me to pay Him for healing me or do some other favor for Him. I

don't like being obligated to anyone. Anyway, I intend to just keep to myself and not get involved with anyone - not even Jesus!

10th: But what if Jesus hadn't involved Himself with you?

8th: Yeah! What if? Here I am, all healed. And what does it mean? It means going back to work! It means going back to a nagging wife and crying kids. I hate work! I hate family responsibilities. When I was a leper, I didn't have to work or take care of a family. But now, thanks to Jesus - pardon me, no thanks to Jesus - I'm right back in the same old routine. You know what my wife said to me when I got home today? She said, "It's about time you came home to take out the garbage!"

10th: (*looking around*) Well, that accounts for eight of the lepers. I wonder where the other one is.

9th: (*in farthest corner of room*) Here I am. I hoped I wouldn't have to give my reason because it's not a very good one. You see, I felt so good. I took a long, hot bath and brushed my hair, and it felt so good to wear decent clothes again. You know how those old rags felt! Anyway, I just plain forgot to say thanks, and now I'm too ashamed to go back and thank Him.

10th: (*walks a few steps and stops*) How odd this is. Those nine persons are all Jews, just as Jesus is. I'm a Samaritan, an inferior person in their eyes. You would think they would want to fall down on their knees to thank the One they call Master. Well, I have to hurry. I have a prayer of thanks for Jesus! (*exits*)

Adapted from a chapter in "Little Foxes That Spoil the Vines" by W.B. Martin.

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