

**Sermon Notes:** October 12, 2025

**Focus:** thankfulness and foreignness

Lectionary Readings

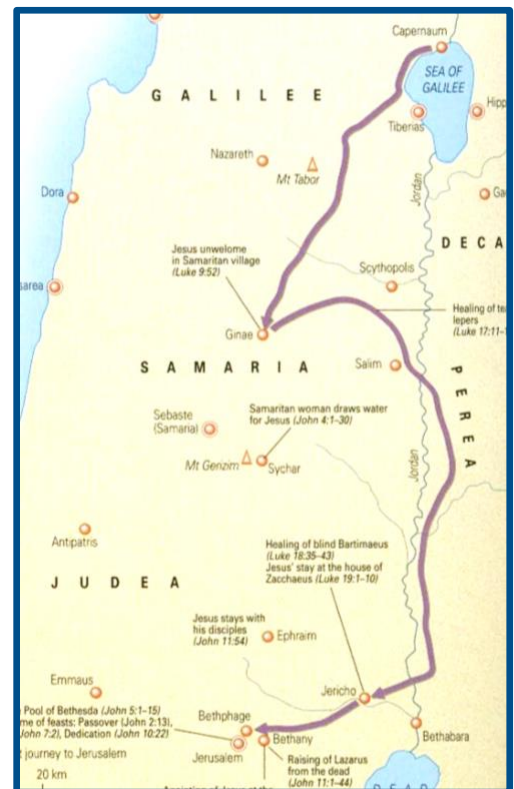
*Luke 17:11-19* On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "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?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

**Where and Who** caught my attention today

Where was Jesus before and after he met the ten lepers? Luke says: "On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee." But recall: before this leg of the journey, Jesus had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Up there he had been radiant, shining with glory, and talking with Moses and Elijah. But after "shiny time," he came straight down into the mess with a demon-tormented child and conflict. No time to bask. He even tried to enter a Samaritan village, only to be turned away like a door-to-door salesperson.

This rejection ricochets him on a circuitous route around Samaritan territory. It is on this detour that he meets ten lepers. The lepers cry out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He heals them and sends them to the priests. But one, a Samaritan, turns back. *He doesn't do what he was told!*

Who were the Samaritans. The Samaritans had their own priests and their own holy mountain: Mount Gerizim. For the one man, "go show yourself to the priests" would have been confusing. Would he go to a Jewish priest who might not receive him? Or, to a Samaritan priest in Gerizim? Either way, it didn't fit neatly. So instead, he comes back to Jesus.



The other nine were probably did exactly what Jesus said and showed themselves to the priest. This is where I went down the rabbit hole and have not definitively found a way out. This is the same rabbit hole scholars go down:

### *Jewish Priests*

Levitical law required those healed of leprosy to present themselves to a priest to be declared clean. Most scholars think Jesus is invoking that law, so the “priests” would have been Jewish priests. Since the setting is “on the way to Jerusalem.” The context is oriented toward Jewish religious practice. But Luke likes irony when Jesus encounters outsiders.

### *The Samaritan Problem*

Samaritans did not recognize Jerusalem’s temple priesthood and vice versa. Samaritans had their own priestly system centered on Mount Gerizim. So, if Jesus literally expected the Samaritan leper to obey Jewish Torah law, it would have placed him in an awkward situation — a Samaritan showing himself to Jewish priests.

### *Samaritan Priests*

Perhaps Jesus’ words could have been heard by the Samaritan as “go to *your* priests,” since Samaritans had their own. But this seems unlikely. There is intentional tension of a Samaritan is being measured by Jewish law, but the man’s faith transcends this levitical practice and he returns to Jesus.

### *Jesus Priest*

Several stories about Samaritans are positive. You know, the Good Samaritan. In today’s story, the Samaritan fulfills the “priestly” mandate not by going to a Jewish or Samaritan priest but by returning to Jesus, who seals the deal by declaring: “Your faith has made you well.” I think this is a recognition of Jesus’ authentic priestly role even as he laments the nine. The Samaritan showed himself to Jesus who became his “priest.”

Enough of the rabbit hole, what about us?

---

*If I were one of the nine, I probably would have done the same:  
go to the priests, get declared clean, rush home to my family. It  
might never occur to me to go find Jesus again.*

*If I were the Samaritan, I might feel out of place, confused about  
where to go. And that confusion could drive me right back to the  
one who made me whole.*

---

I pray that gratitude becomes my “law” and maybe I could hear Jesus say the same word he spoke to the Samaritan:

“Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.” **Todd**