

True Gratitude

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

*Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.
If desired, bring a screw and a hammer to class for the demonstration under the second teaching point.*

Introduction: Especially when compared to other countries, Americans live in a country of abundance. Although we have poverty, the overall evaluation is that Americans have what we need. Even more than that, we have an abundance of food, clothes, and stuff. While it is enjoyable to live in this blessed environment, it comes with a problem: we tend to not think about all that we have been given. We just take it all for granted. The truth is, and what Luke will explain in today's passage, we should have an attitude of gratitude because of all that we have been given.

1. Gratitude begins with brokenness (Luke 17:11-13).

Biblical Background: While Jesus continued His trip to Jerusalem to give up His life as a sacrifice, He had an encounter somewhere between Galilee and Samaria (v. 11). The specific town is not mentioned, but it is important to note that it was an area where both Jews and Samaritans lived. Ten lepers called to Him from afar (vv. 12-13). While it is clear that they knew of Jesus—calling Him by name—they did not dare approach Him because their disease, leprosy, made them unclean. They were not allowed to approach Jesus because Jewish law required them to separate themselves from everyone else (Lev. 13:45–46; Num. 5:2–4). Having heard the stories about Jesus' miraculous power, and knowing they were hopeless without His help, the lepers cried out, "Have mercy on us!"

Illustration: Knowing that we cannot fix our problems can really alter the direction of our lives. What happens in a basketball game when you are down by one with three seconds left on the clock? No matter where you are on the court, you shoot the ball. While you would never take a shot from half-court under normal circumstances, you have to when the game is on the line. Desperate times call for drastic measures, so you try whatever it takes to win the game.

Application: The first step in really living in gratitude is to understand that we cannot function on day-to-day basis on our own abilities. We are in desperate need of someone stepping in and helping carry us through.

2. Jesus is the only answer to our brokenness (Luke 17:14).

Biblical Background: Hearing the lepers' very brief, but very desperate request, Jesus had mercy on them. He simply told them to go and show the priests they were clean (v. 14). There was no dramatic action on Jesus' part, just the simple command to go. With no visible proof of their healing, the lepers had to demonstrate their trust in Jesus' word that they would be healed. The lepers showed this faith by obeying Jesus' command. They left to show themselves to the priests **before** they were healed. They had suffered for so long and had probably tried numerous cures to no avail. Their obedience to Jesus' words finally brought their healing.

Illustration: Have you ever tried to build something or watch someone build something? Show the group a screw. Ask the students basic questions about screws: **What is this? What is it used for? How would I screw it in to something?** Now, hold up a hammer. Say: **what would happen if I tried to screw in the screw with this hammer?** (*Instead of screwing in, it will be driven into the wood. It will no longer grip into the wood. It becomes useless.*) Every tool is needed for a specific task. If the final goal is to screw in a screw, you have to use a screwdriver. Nothing else will work no matter how hard we try.

Application: All of us have one major problem we need to deal with. We can use a bunch of different words to describe it, but ultimately we all have some sort of brokenness that needs to be fixed. The only tool that can fix our brokenness is Jesus.

3. The healing of our brokenness should bring gratitude (Luke 17:15-19).

Biblical Background: Even though all ten lepers were healed, only one returned to thank Jesus, and he did so loudly (v. 15). He fell at Jesus' feet to thank Him. Luke told us that this man was a Samaritan (v. 16). It could be that this man was even more grateful because, as a Samaritan, he did not expect a Jew to take care of his brokenness. Jesus' questions to the leper revealed that He expected those He healed to show their gratitude (vv. 17-18). Essentially Jesus asked, "Are you the only one coming back to give glory to God?" Because this man came back to show his gratitude to Jesus, Jesus said his faith had healed him (v. 19). While unclear in the text, Jesus' statement implied that the man was initially healed physically, and then was healed spiritually because in his gratitude, he glorified God (Stein, p. 434).

Reflective Questions: Have you ever considered how much God has done for you? What are some ways that He has healed your brokenness? What was your response after each of those healings? Is gratitude a natural part of your life?

Application: Whatever your situation, Jesus loves you and wants to heal your brokenness. After He does so, you should live a life of gratitude because of how great your Savior is.

Conclusion: Because of Jesus' power and desire to heal our brokenness, we should accept that healing and praise Him for doing so.