

**Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”**

**<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.**

**<sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.**

**<sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.” (NIV84)**

Theme: Live a Life of Thankfulness

Nowadays there are “specialists” or experts in all kinds of different fields. If you need to do something, why bother taking the time and spending the effort learning how to do it yourself, when you can just hire someone else to do it. If you are sick, you go to a doctor—and there are many specialized doctors today, focusing on all sorts of different treatments and body parts. If you want to use your money wisely, you hire a financial planner. If you want to lose some weight you might hire a personal trainer or a dietician or nutritionist. If you don’t want to drive you can use Uber or Lyft. If you don’t have the time to change your oil you take your car to a mechanic.

There are all sorts of experts out there that will accomplish certain tasks that we don’t have the time, knowledge, desire to do so ourselves. And many of those services are great and beneficial; because of WebMD many people think that they are doctors, yet I don’t suggest you try to diagnose yourself or perform surgery on yourself! We are grateful for these services. When complete you probably thank the expert and of course, you make sure to pay them! But the problem is that many people make Jesus simply out to be an expert who is there to do what they want him to do.

Toward the end of his ministry Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to pay for our sins and was about to enter into a village when he came across a group of 10 lepers. These men had some sort of contagious

skin disease. They were forced to live outside of town, away from everyone. They weren’t allowed to be near anyone who was “clean” since their skin disease made them “unclean.” They were apart from their families; they couldn’t hold a job; and some of them would have died from their disease. So they called out for Jesus mercy. So he told them to go and show themselves to the priests; because only the priests could declare someone clean who previously had a contagious skin disease.

On the way to the priest they realized that they had been healed. But only one man—a Samaritan, a foreigner, who typically did not associate with Jews (and Jesus was a Jew), came back and thanked Jesus and gave glory to God. Only one.

Why is that? Maybe they were too excited, maybe they went to go see family members they hadn’t seen for years, or perhaps some went to go see if they could get their old jobs back. The truth is, we don’t know—we are never told. But we can say that these 10 men all got what they wanted out of Jesus. They called out for help—for mercy, and that is what they got. Jesus took away their deadly disease; he saved them from a miserable life! And after they got what they wanted from Jesus, they didn’t even say thank you.

What do you want out of Jesus? What is Jesus to you? Many see Jesus as the 10 lepers did—as a doctor. As one who is able to do amazing things—who can heal diseases and take away pain. So we pray to God, asking him to take away our sickness, to remove our cancer, to heal our diseases. There are many who turn to God in prayer while in the hospital or in the doctor’s office. And if and when they are healed, they essentially forget about God until the next time they face some sort of physical ailment.

Maybe you see Jesus as a friend or companion. It seems as if no one cares about you. You may have close friends and family, but no one really understands you. No one sees eye-to-eye with you. But God promises to be with you, to never forsake you or leave you. He is your friend who you can trust with everything, someone on whom you can rely and lean upon.

You think to yourself that everything would be so much easier if you only had more money. You want the Lord to be your boss—to give you a good, high paying job with nice benefits. Or perhaps you simply

want more money—so you ask God to bless your investments, that he may bless financially so that we don't have to worry about finances but can provide for your family everything that you want. Or you see him as a parent to provide for your every need.

Perhaps you are lonely. You don't have a significant other. There is someone you like, but you aren't sure if the feeling is mutual. So you pray to God that you may fall in love with each other. You pray that the Lord would lead you to find someone so that you may be together and get married. You want God to be a matchmaker.

Some want Jesus to be a protector or a guardian when we face dangers of all kinds—maybe on our drive home, from enemies who want to kill us, or when we face persecution such as when people make fun of us or pass laws that hinder us from obeying the Lord. The devil also attacks us, trying to get us to sin. So we turn to God for protection. We ask him to guard us and defend us against all attacks against body and soul.

Some only turn to God during Christmas and Easter. They see God as someone who can help them complete their idea of a perfect holiday—that it just wouldn't seem right to not attend worship on Christmas Eve or Easter. Doing so allows them to carry out their traditions and have a “complete” holiday.

Some see Jesus as someone whom you can use to get family members off your back. They have been urging you to attend worship for a while now, so if you do you won't have to worry about them bothering you for a bit. Or you go every week because your parents and your spouse wants or even demands it. Maybe you enjoy it, maybe not. Maybe you just sit there, maybe opening up your hymnal, but probably not paying much attention or singing hymns and songs of praise to the Lord.

For others, Jesus is entertainment—something to do on a Sunday morning; church is a place to catch up with some friends. Many may worship the Lord on a regular basis—and it makes them feel good about themselves: “I'm a good person because I went to church today, God is pleased with me for taking the time out of my busy life. Especially when there are so many who haven't worshiped him for a while.” We become self-righteous and think highly of ourselves because of our worship attendance.

B. 1. What do you want out of Jesus? When we make an “expert” out of Jesus—when we see him simply as someone who can help us

through certain situations—how does it play out in our lives? A number of different ways. But we often turn to him only in our time of need. If and when he takes care of our problem we may remember to thank him and then essentially forget about him until next time we need something from him. We can see this in our prayer life, or worship life, or how often we actually open up his Bible to see what he says in his Word. Jesus, prayer, the church, worship—they became a means to an end—a way to get something that we want, like going to a doctor or hiring a financial planner.

So, what is the Lord to you? Here's the thing: Jesus is all those things. He is like a doctor who is able to take away your diseases or cure you of cancer. He is the one who gives the gifts and knowledge to the doctors who care for you. He is a friend who is always there for you, a protector who guards you from all harm and danger. He is our Heavenly Father who provides for our every bodily need. He gives you gifts and abilities to get and sustain a job. He may bless you financially; and he is the one who gives you everything you have in this life. Yes, the Lord is all these things—but is so much more.

Jesus isn't just a man who can help us in time of need. But he is also true God. True God and true man at that the same time. He had to be in order to save us. He had to be true man so that he would be under the law and suffer and die as our substitute. He had to be true God so that he could live a perfect life and give that perfect life to us. So he isn't just man, he isn't just the son of God, but God himself. The Lord of Lords.

So then he is also our Savior. He is the Promised Messiah, the Christ, the one God promised to send in order to crush Satan's head. And he did just that by his suffering, death, and resurrection. It was Jesus who forgave all our sins but suffering their eternal punishment. It was Jesus who made us righteous in the eyes of God by giving us his perfect life. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Passover Lamb who sacrificed himself on the cross to pay for our sins.

He is then our Redeemer. He is the one who paid the ransom price for our sins. The price that God demanded for our sins was death—Christ paid that price, not with gold or silver, but by giving up his holy precious blood. And so he reconciled us back with God—he restored

us into a right relationship with God and made us at-one with him again

He is the sanctifier, the one who brought us to faith through the gospel. And by that faith we receive everything he has done to save us. As Jesus told the one who returned to thank him, **your faith has saved you**, so it is through faith in Christ that we are saved. Therefore we don't have to do anything to be saved, because Christ has taken care of everything for us already—including bringing us to faith! He is the light of the world that shines the light of the gospel on our sin-darkened hearts. He is the Good Shepherd, whose sheep hear his voice through his Word.

He is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. He has always existed and will live forever. And he will take us with him. His resurrection is proof that we too will rise from the dead and we will live with him forever. We have a perfect life with our Savior—waiting for us in heaven.

That is who our Lord is. He isn't just some expert that we turn to in our time of need. Sure he is a guardian, a Father, our caretaker and provider. But more importantly, he is our Redeemer, our sanctifier, our Savior. The Lord, prayer, church—they aren't just means to an end, something we do in order to get something from God; we worship the Lord, pray to him, and believe in him because we have already received the best thing—salvation! Being a Christian is more than just thanking him through Word and song on Sundays, or at meals, before we go to bed, and so on. It's about living your entire life as one of thanksgiving. That is what faith does—it lives for Christ. Our entire lives are dedicated to him. So everything we do, we do out of love and thanks to God. We don't live for ourselves but for him who saved us. Sure Jesus did serve us by dying on the cross, but Jesus wasn't created to do what pleases us, we were created to love and serve him! So we thank him—like the one leper, loudly singing his praises and giving glory to God. But there is so much more—we thank him by living our lives for him, everything we do to his glory. This is something we do willingly, for Christ isn't simply someone who can help us in our time of need. But most importantly he is our Lord, our God, our Redeemer, and our Savior. Amen.