

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

DOES GOD PLAY FAVORITES?

PRIVILEGE ALONE FALLS SHORT (ROM. 9:1-5)

MAY 1-7, 2016



MAIN POINT

When we have unused privileges and blessings, we miss God's purpose for our lives.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. We throw around the term blessings a lot, but if you have a relationship with Jesus, then the blessings God gives you are innumerable. Begin by taking some time to discuss how God has blessed you through Jesus.

2. What does God expect us to do with the blessings He gives us?

Leader: In Romans 9:1-5, Paul expressed his grief that people who mattered greatly to him—his fellow Jews—did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah. Their lost condition was not because they were ignorant of God's Word or His ways. In fact, they had so many advantages and tragically still were far from God. As biological descendants of Jacob, they received many blessings and had more religious advantages and clear communications of the truth than any other ethnic group. Despite such privileges, they were still lost. We, too, can take great pride in the ways God has blessed us. However, when we fail to use those blessings for God's mission in the world, then we miss out on His purpose for our lives.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 17:11-14.**

3. Read Leviticus 13:42-46 also. How did the Jews treat people with leprosy and other skin diseases? With this in mind, would the lepers have felt like they deserved Jesus' attention or His healing? Would they have felt like they had any rights or privileges?

4. In the sermon this week, we learned about Paul's grief for his Jewish brothers and sisters who failed to recognize God's blessings in Christ (Rom. 9:1-5). The religious privilege they felt meant they didn't see the bigger picture of God's work in their lives. How did the lepers' actions in Jesus' presence differ from the people Paul grieved over?

Leader: Entering Samaria and encountering Samaritans made Jesus unclean under the Jewish law. As if He were not “unclean” enough, Jesus met ten men who suffered from a terrible skin disease. The men knew any contact they had with other people would make those people unclean. Still, they knew Jesus’ reputation for healing, so they shouted from a distance. Calling Jesus “Master,” they begged for mercy and healing. They believed in Jesus’ power, even though they did not have a complete picture of who He is. These men likely felt neither blessed by God nor privileged, but they seized the opportunity to have their lives changed by Jesus.

5. How were all ten lepers blessed by their encounter with Jesus? Think about the specific ways Jesus has brought healing to your life—physical and spiritual. How have you been changed by Him?

Leader: Jesus uttered a simple command: “Go let the priests see you.” All ten exercised faith in Jesus’ command by starting for the priests. When they did, healing came. Part of the grace we receive from Jesus is that He is willing and able to heal us. Sometimes, like the lepers, the healing is physical, but every believer receives spiritual healing from Jesus’ hands. That gift of grace in our lives is the basis for all of the ways God blesses us.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 17:15-19.

6. Of the ten men who were healed, one had a unique response. What stands out to you about the Samaritan’s response to Jesus’ healing? What did he do with Jesus’ blessing?

7. What did the one leper understand that the rest of the men did not? What should it help us understand about our own response to the blessings God has given us?

Leader: Healing sent nine of the lepers scurrying to the priests at a rapid clip. But one of the men reversed direction. The text tells us he returned to Jesus, “praising God in a loud voice.” The man knew what Jesus had done came directly from God, and that he did not deserve it. We are no more deserving of the blessings God has given us, and our response should be the same as this man’s. God blesses us so that we will make His name and His power known in our relationships, communities, and around the world.

8. The one man who returned understood that he did not deserve to be healed by Jesus, something Jesus attributed to his faith. Think about what you are doing with the blessings God has given you. Are you more like the 9 lepers who accepted Jesus’ healing but left it at that, or are you like the one who took the time to publicly praise God? Explain.

Leader: Jesus saw a direct connection between the one leper’s faith and his praise of God. The more our faith in Jesus grows, the more we realize just how much we have been blessed in Him. This man’s individual response to the gift of grace is instructive for us today. Let us not waste another minute of our lives squandering the blessings God wants us to use for His own glory.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- 9. Our response to God's gift of grace must always begin with belief. Have you responded to God's gift of grace in your own life? Why does the grace of God always call for a response?**

- 10. When it comes to using God's blessings for His glory, there is always room for improvement, whether you feel like the 9 or the 1 leper today. What next step do you need to take this week to put a particular blessing—good health, money, your testimony, parenting, job, wisdom, Scripture—to use for God's glory and mission?**

- 11. When we grasp the magnitude of God's blessings, we can't help but want to share them with others. What individuals or people groups do you feel particularly burdened for with regard to their salvation? How can we as a group combine our resources and efforts to help reach them with the gospel?**

PRAYER

Close in prayer by giving your group members the opportunity to voice their own prayers of gratitude to God for who He is and all He does for us.

MEMORIZE

¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." – Luke 17:18-19

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

LUKE 17:11-19

17:11. Jesus apparently walked along the border between Samaria and Galilee, then crossed the Jordan River at the nearest point, proceeding down the eastern bank of the Jordan toward the crossing point opposite Jericho, which is the next location mentioned in the narrative (18:35).

17:12-13. As if he were not unclean enough, Jesus met ten men who suffered from a terrible skin disease (see 5:12). The men knew their condition. Any contact with them made other people unclean (Lev. 13:42-46). Still, they knew Jesus' reputation for healing, so they shouted from a distance. Calling Jesus "Master" (5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49), they begged for mercy. Mercy, in their case, would mean empathy and pity that would lead to an act of healing.

17:14. Jesus pronounced no great healing formula. He did nothing dramatic. He uttered a simple command: Go let the priests see you. Such a command demanded action from the sick men. To run to the priests meant to show them that they were no longer infected and so could return to normal human contacts. But they had to start to the priests before they were healed. All ten exercised faith in what Jesus said. They started for the priests. When they did, healing came.

17:15-16. As they proceeded to the priests, they were healed. One of the lepers upon observing his healing returned to give thanks to Jesus. It is then pointed out that this leper was a Samaritan. This one had been not only physically healed but spiritually healed as well (17:19). Whereas the other nine received God's word and believed for a time, they fell short of the ultimate healing, i.e., experiencing the divine salvation. They had "been enlightened ... [and] tasted the heavenly gift" (Heb 6:4) in their experience of divine healing, but they fell short of saving faith.

17:17-19. Jesus responded to thanks giving and praise with a surprising question: Where are the other nine who were healed? Did only this foreigner return to show what God had done and let God get the glory for it? Note that on Jesus' lips "foreigner" was not a word of scorn and contempt but one of fact to bring to the attention of the town and especially of the disciples the identity of this man. By identifying the foreigner, he showed the "superiority" of the foreign man of faith to the Jewish men who lacked faith..