

17th Sunday after Trinity: Luke 17:11–19

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

You know, today's Gospel sounds a bit like something every parent has said at least once: "Didn't I heal ten of you? Where are the other nine?" Jesus doesn't scold them harshly, but you can almost hear the surprise in His voice. Ten people received a miracle, ten! and only one came back to say, "*Thank you.*" And that one? A Samaritan. A foreigner. The least expected one of the group.

Here in Norway, we live in a beautiful corner of the world. The air is clean, the houses are warm, the fjords sparkle, and, let's be honest, life is pretty good! We may grumble about the rain, but we have peace, safety, and stability. And yet... sometimes peace can make us forgetful. When life is comfortable, we can start to live on autopilot. We stop noticing how blessed we are. We forget to look up and say, "Thank you, Lord."

The nine healed lepers were probably just excited to get back to normal life, to family, work, maybe even a good meal. They weren't bad people. They were just busy. But the one who returned, he stopped. He turned around. He realized something sacred had happened. Sometimes we need to stop and turn around too, to look at our lives and whisper, "Wow, God, You've been so good to me." I find it beautiful that the grateful man in the Gospel was a foreigner. He was the outsider, and yet he became the teacher.

Here in Norway, we are seeing more and more people coming from places torn by war, refugees and families who've lost so much. And if you listen to their stories, you'll notice something remarkable: so many of them are deeply thankful. Thankful for peace, for a safe bed, for their children being able to walk to school without fear.

Sometimes they remind *us* how to say thank you again. Their gratitude wakes us up, it stirs something in our hearts. Because peace is not ordinary. Safety is not automatic. They are gifts, and gifts deserve thanksgiving.

When Jesus says to the thankful man, "*Your faith has made you well,*" He's talking about more than just physical healing. He's saying, "Your gratitude has opened your heart to God." And that's the real miracle: thanksgiving makes us whole. It reconnects us to the Source of life. It turns ordinary days into sacred ones. When we live with gratitude, we become kinder, humbler, more patient. We start to see others, especially those who are struggling, with compassion. Gratitude changes how we look at the world. It even makes our prayers lighter, more joyful. So maybe, this Sunday's message is simple: Let's be the one who comes back. Let's be the people who remember to say, "Thank you, Lord" for peace, for family, for the beauty of Norway, for the laughter of children, even for the rain that makes everything green! And let's let our gratitude overflow. Let's share it in how we welcome newcomers, how we reach out to those who are lonely, how we pray for people living in war. Because gratitude isn't just words, it's a way of living. It's contagious. And it's joyful.

So as we come to the altar today, to the Eucharist, which literally means *thanksgiving*, let's do what that Samaritan did. Let's turn our hearts back to Jesus. Let's fall at His feet in gratitude, and say, from the bottom of our hearts: "Thank you, Lord, for everything."

And then, let's go out from this church with smiles, with peace, and with hearts that keep saying thank you all week long.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.