***Luke 17:11-19 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” 14So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” 19And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”***

Leprosy, a disease that we don’t hear much about anymore, though there are about 20,000 cases in the US each year. Today, it’s known as Hanson’s Disease and, with early diagnosis and treatment, it’s curable.

In Jesus time, leprosy was highly feared, and most likely deadly. People were treated as social outcasts and lived in areas away from the general population. The men we encounter this morning are away from their families, their friends, can’t work, and are dependent on handouts and family or friends to survive. It would’ve been a miserable, desperate, and hopeless existence. Miserable. Desperate. Hopeless. These are the ten men Jesus encounters in our scripture.

Verses 11-13 *Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”* Jesus traveled through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten lepers – ten desperate, ten miserable, ten hopeless men – stood **afar off** – distant from Jesus and lifted up their voices. Desperate, miserable… see a Great Hope. Hope for Healing, Hope for Mercy, Hope for a return to their families, friends, and life. Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Many today call to Jesus from a place of desperation, misery, and hopelessness. Separated from God, living with ruined relationships, sick bodies, tortured minds, wrecked finances. No other hope, they call out to the One that gives Hope and Healing. Just like in our scripture, Jesus answers, even when we stand afar off.

Verse 14 - *So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.* Jesus spoke – nothing here says He walked to them – He cleansed from Afar Off. In keeping with Jewish Law, Jesus told them to show themselves to the priests and, as they went, as they took the instructed steps, they were cleansed.

Verse 15 & 16 - *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.*Gratitude! Ten were cleansed of leprosy. What a miracle! Jesus spoke and their disease disappeared! Yet, we find only one returning, glorifying God. He fell down at Jesus feet, no doubt sobbing in gratitude. Ten stood afar off. Nine remained afar off. One drew nearer to Jesus, seeking to understand, know, glorify the Son of God. No longer afar off, now with gratitude and love, bowed at Jesus feet. And he was a Samaritan.

Many want the healing of Jesus, the mercy of Jesus, the Hope of Jesus, but few draw near to Jesus. As long as they can continue in their current worldly ways – just enough Jesus and not too much - Jesus is welcome. They don’t leave the path of the world, the wide way that leads to destruction. Jesus remains afar off. Many encounter the Master, only a few will draw near, only a few will enter by the narrow gate. Jesus offers Hope to all. Only a few will turn their eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.

Verses 17 & 18 *So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”* Were there not 10 that received My mercy, received Hope, were physically cleansed? Glory to God is owed by all 10, but 9 went back to life as usual, and the one that came back – a Samarian, the one that the other nine would have called defiled, lower than them, less. 9 Jews forget to glorify God, 1 Samaritan remembers.

And so it goes today. Gratitude, Glory to God, humility at the Hope given, too often miracles taken from granted.

Verse 19 - *And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”* Your Faith has made you well. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Faith in His Saving Power. 10 had leprosy, ten were cleansed, only one is made whole. The word for well in Greek means saved, whole, delivered. Ten receive Jesus Love and Mercy. Only the one that humbles himself and kneels, glorifying God for the miracle is made whole. Ten cried from afar off. Nine remain afar off. One draws near, is made whole, will never be the same.

This week, let’s decide to, every day, kneel at the feet of Jesus, seek to draw nearer, and nearer still, thanking Him for making us whole. Many cry to Jesus from afar off. Many are healed from afar off. Many remain afar off. Each must choose to draw near. Let’s resolve to draw near to Him today.