SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

# Luke 17

*Faith That Forgives, Thanks and Watches — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive*

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

*"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11*

CHAPTER THEME

On the road to Jerusalem Jesus teaches His men to live as forgiven people — forgiving without limit, serving without boasting, and coming back to thank Him. Then He tells them the kingdom is already standing in front of them, and that the Day He is revealed will come as suddenly as the flood, so they must not look back.

## 00 The Text

LUKE 17 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but
woe to him through whom they come!

2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.

3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

7 "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'?

8 "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'?

9 "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?

10 "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

11 While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

12 As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;

13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed.

15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,

16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?

18 “Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?”

19 And He said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.”

20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

21 nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

22 And He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

23 “They will say to you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ Do not go away, and do not run after them.

24 “For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

25 “But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

26 “And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 “It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 “It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

31 “On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.

32 “Remember Lot’s wife.

33 “Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

34 “I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.

35 “There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.

36 [“Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.”]

37 And answering they said to Him, “Where, Lord?” And He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.”

## Marked in the text

- **v1** “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come” — Time / place / contrast
- **v1** “woe to him through whom they come” — Sin / warning
- **v3** “Be on your guard” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “rebuke him” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “if he repents, forgive him” — Command / instruction
- **v4** “seven times a day” — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** “Increase our faith” — Command / instruction
- **v6** “faith like a mustard seed” — Promise / blessing
- **v10** “We are unworthy slaves” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “on the way to Jerusalem” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “stood at a distance” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “as they were going, they were cleansed” — God — His character & actions
- **v15** “turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice” — Command / instruction
- **v16** “giving thanks to Him” — Command / instruction
- **v16** “And he was a Samaritan” — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** “But the nine—where are they” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “your faith has made you well” — Promise / blessing
- **v21** “the kingdom of God is in your midst” — God — His character & actions
- **v23** “do not run after them” — Command / instruction
- **v24** “just like the lightning” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “first He must suffer many things and be rejected” — God — His character & actions
- **v27** “destroyed them all” — Sin / warning
- **v29** “destroyed them all” — Sin / warning
- **v30** “the Son of Man is revealed” — Time / place / contrast
- **v32** “Remember Lot’s wife” — Command / instruction

- **v33** “whoever loses his life will preserve it” — Promise / blessing
- **v34** “one will be taken and the other will be left” — Time / place / contrast
- **v35** “one will be taken and the other will be left” — Time / place / contrast

- **v3** “forgive” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “faith” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v22** “Son of Man” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “kingdom of God” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

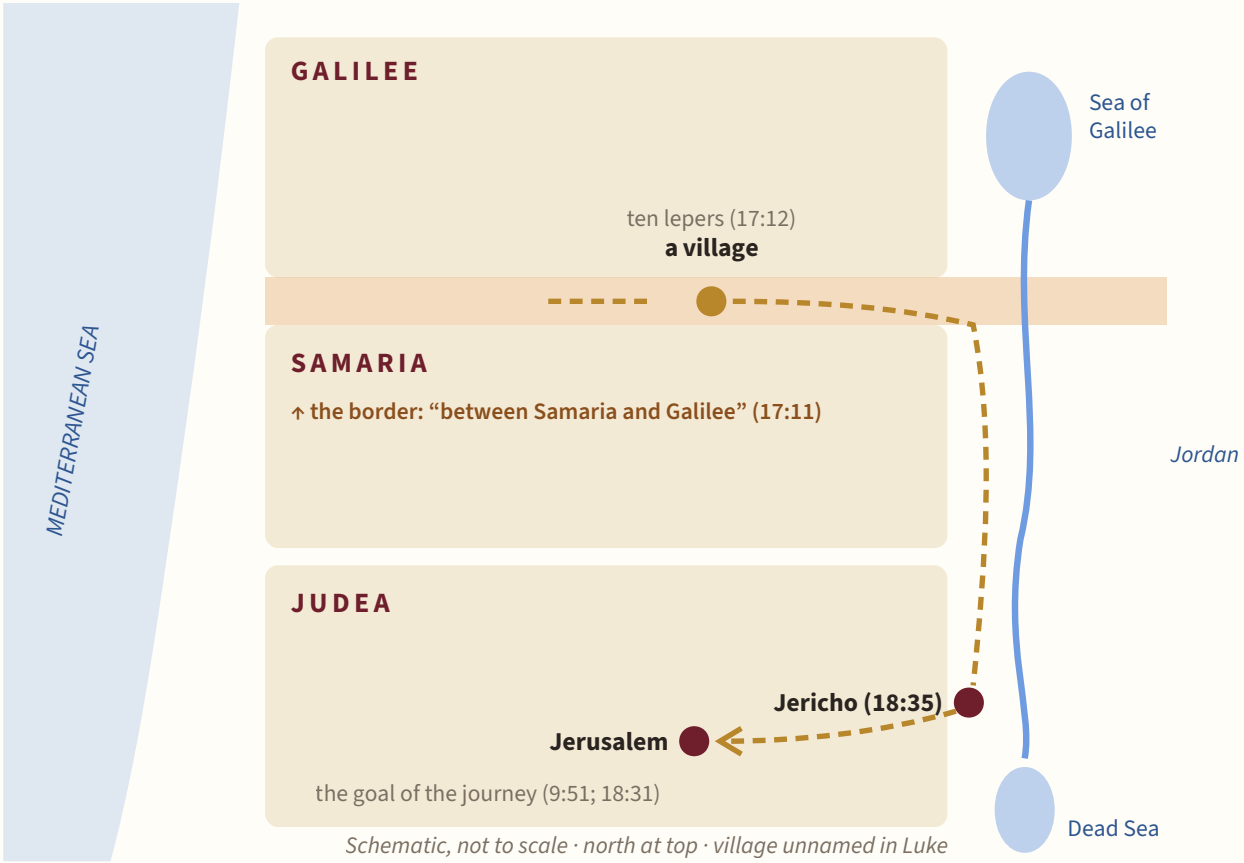
# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 17:15

"Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,"

FIGURE · THE ROAD ALONG THE BORDER




*Jesus is moving along the line between Samaria and Galilee on His way to Jerusalem; Luke's next stops are Jericho (18:35) and the city itself.*

**Setting.** Jesus is still on the long road to Jerusalem (9:51; 17:11), now passing "between Samaria and Galilee." He has just told the Pharisees about the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31); now He speaks "to His disciples" (v1). In a border village ten lepers meet Him (v12). Then the Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God is coming (v20), and He answers them and then His disciples (vv22–37).

**Structure:**

- vv1–10 — **forgive, believe, serve:** stumbling blocks will come — woe to the one who causes them; the millstone (vv1–2); rebuke and forgive, even seven times a day (vv3–4); "Increase our faith!" — the mustard seed and the mulberry tree (vv5–6); the slave who serves his master first, and "We are unworthy slaves" (vv7–10).

- vv11–19 — **where are the nine?:** between Samaria and Galilee; ten lepers stand at a distance and cry for mercy (vv11–13); "Go and show yourselves to the priests," cleansed as they went (v14); one turns back, glorifying God, falls at His feet, gives thanks — a Samaritan (vv15–16); "where are they?" (vv17–18); "your faith has made you well" (v19).
- vv20–25 — **the kingdom in your midst:** the Pharisees ask when; not with signs to be observed — "the kingdom of God is in your midst" (vv20–21); the days when the disciples will long to see the Son of Man; do not run after "Look there!" (vv22–23); like lightning (v24); but first He must suffer and be rejected (v25).
- vv26–37 — **remember Lot's wife:** as in the days of Noah and of Lot — eating, drinking, building — until judgment (vv26–29); so on the day the Son of Man is revealed (v30); do not go down, do not turn back; remember Lot's wife; lose your life to preserve it (vv31–33); one taken, the other left (vv34–36); "Where, Lord?" — the body and the vultures (v37).

**Repeated words, with counts:**

- "day / days" ×11 — vv4, 22 (×2), 24, 26 (×2), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.
- "eat / eating / eat and drink" ×8 — vv7, 8 (×5), 27, 28.
- "God" ×5 — vv15, 18, 20 (×2), 21; "kingdom of God" ×3 — vv20 (×2), 21.
- "Son of Man" ×4 — vv22, 24, 26, 30.
- "Lot / Lot's" ×4 — vv28, 29, 32 (×2); "Noah" ×2 — vv26, 27.
- "turned back / returned / returns / turn back" ×4 — vv4, 15, 18, 31.
- "faith" ×3 — vv5, 6, 19.
- "slave(s)" ×3 — vv7, 9, 10; "commanded" ×2 — vv9, 10.
- "Lord" ×3 — vv5, 6, 37; "Look" ×3 — vv21, 23 (×2).
- "one will be taken and the other will be left" ×3 — vv34, 35, 36 (v36 bracketed).
- "forgive" ×2 — vv3, 4; "sins" ×2 — vv3, 4; "repent / repents" ×2 — vv3, 4; "seven times" ×2 — v4.
- "cleansed" ×2 — vv14, 17; "glorifying / glory" ×2 — vv15, 18.
- "destroyed them all" ×2 — vv27, 29; "life" ×2 — v33.

**Contrasts:** The one who causes stumbling ⟷ the little ones (vv1–2). A huge request ("Increase our faith!") ⟷ a tiny seed (vv5–6). What the master is owed ⟷ what the slave can claim (vv7–10). Ten cleansed ⟷ one came back; the nine ⟷ the foreigner (vv17–18). Cleansed ⟷ made well (vv14, 19). Signs to be observed ⟷ the kingdom in your midst (vv20–21). "Look there! Look here!" ⟷ lightning across the whole sky (vv23–24). Suffering first ⟷ His day (vv24–25). Ordinary life ⟷ sudden judgment (vv26–30). Seek to keep your life ⟷ lose it and preserve it (v33). Taken ⟷ left (vv34–35).

**Shape of the chapter:** two halves on one road. The first half (1–19) is about how disciples treat each other and how they answer grace — forgive, serve, give thanks. The second half (20–37) is about time — the kingdom present now in the King, and the Day still coming. The hinge is a Samaritan on his face at Jesus' feet: grace received now, before the Day comes.

**Chapter theme (my words):** Faith forgives what it is told to forgive, obeys before it sees, comes back to say thank you, and keeps its eyes forward. The King has come; the Son of Man will be revealed; there is no going back to Sodom.

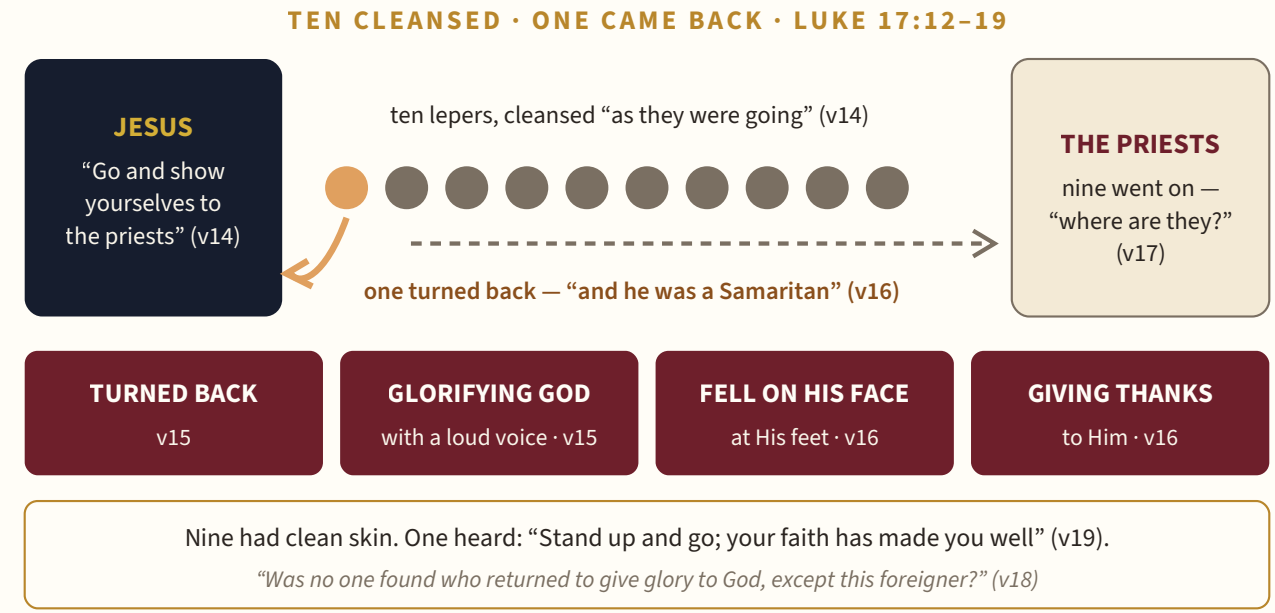
# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 17:21

"nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, △the kingdom of God is in your midst."

FIGURE · TEN CLEANSED, ONE CAME BACK

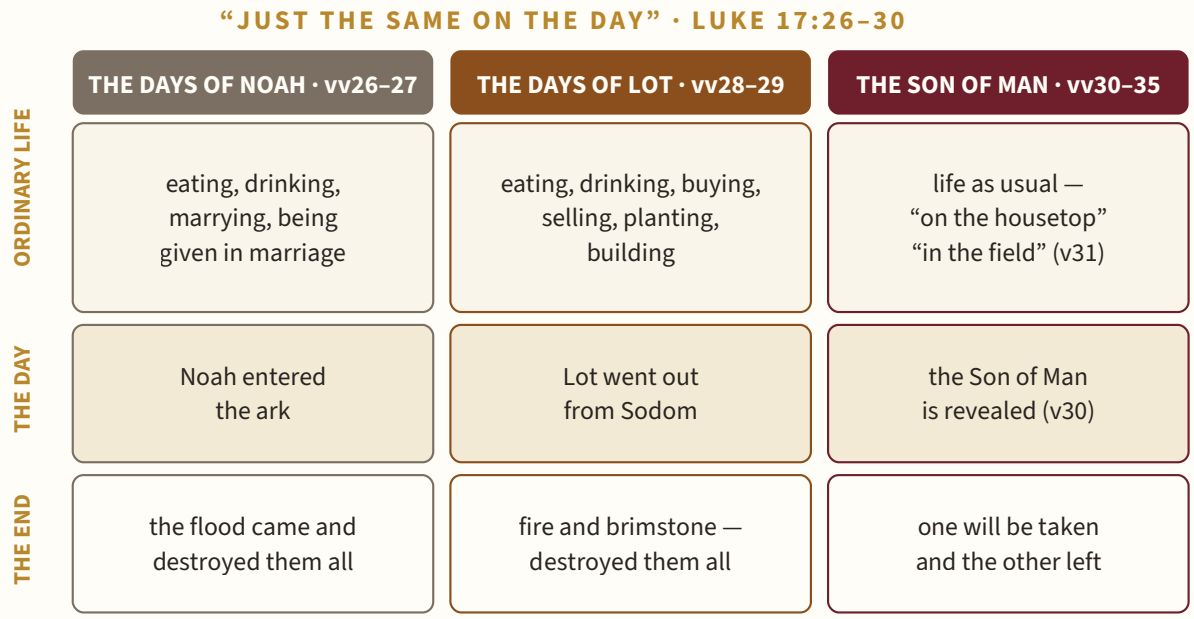



Nine had clean skin. One heard: "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well" (v19).

*"Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" (v18)*

*Follow the nine to the priests and the one back to Jesus; four verbs in verses 15–16 show what a thankful man does.*

FIGURE · THE DAYS OF NOAH, LOT AND THE SON OF MAN




*Nothing was wrong with eating or building. What was wrong was that no one was ready (v27; 12:40).*

*Read across each row: the same ordinary life, a sudden day of separation, and an end no one prepared for.*

**Why does forgiving seven times a day need more faith?** Because it feels impossible. The apostles heard verses 3–4 and said, "Increase our faith!" Sproul's answer is bracing: "You do not need a lot of faith to forgive." Guzik: we cannot keep a record of every offense, and "we are not permitted to judge another's repentance." Henry allows honest rebuke — "Smother not the resentment, but give it vent" — but always toward pardon. A mustard seed of faith in a great God is enough to pull up a mulberry tree of bitterness (Guzik).

**What is the point of the unworthy slave?** Not that God is harsh, but that obedience never puts God in our debt. Sproul: "We have added nothing to the assets side of the ledger," and Christ "and He alone is the profitable servant." Henry: "God cannot be a gainer by our services, and therefore cannot be made a debtor by them." Spurgeon, preaching Luke 17:10 with Matthew 25, warns that pride in service is dangerous — "a dizzy head soon brings a fall" — and that "the best are still unprofitable servants." I note that Jesus is not describing how a sinner is saved here; He is teaching servants how to think about their service.

**Why send the lepers to the priests?** The law gave the priest authority to declare a leper clean (Lev 13–14; Sproul). Jesus sent them before anything had changed — "The lepers had not been cleansed yet, but they obeyed" (Sproul); "The one condition of healing was obedience" (Morrison, in Guzik). Spurgeon: "We are to believe first, just as we are."

**Why does Luke tell us he was a Samaritan?** Luke loves the outsider — the good Samaritan (10:33), Naaman the Syrian (4:27). The word *allogenēs* (v18) was carved on the temple barrier that kept foreigners out. The man barred from the inner courts is the only one who returns "to give glory to God." Henry: "ingratitude is a very common sin."

**Cleansed vs. made well.** All ten were cleansed (v14, *katharizō*); to the one Jesus said, "your faith has made you well" (v19, *sōzō*, the word for "save"). Guzik: the nine "had whole bodies, but sick hearts." Sproul draws it out: "We are lepers by nature," and Christ makes us clean.

**"Within you" or "in your midst" (v21)?** Henry reads the KJV inwardly — the kingdom changes "their hearts and lives." Guzik and Sproul read it of the King standing among them: "Where the King is, there is the kingdom" (Sproul). Jesus is speaking to Pharisees who rejected Him, so I lean to "in your midst" — the kingdom was present in the person of the King. Both are true elsewhere in Scripture.

**What "Day" is this, and who is "taken"?** Here our teachers part ways, and I want to say so plainly. Sproul, a partial preterist, hears much of verses 22–37 fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 — "The Christians, however, did not go to Jerusalem" — and he rejects the rapture reading: "the point is that one will escape and one will not." He is candid: "I candidly confess that I am not completely sure." Guzik notes, "This passage is often applied to the rapture," and ties it to 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18. Henry reads it of Christ's coming in judgment. I read "the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (*apokalyptō*, v30) as His future return, the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 coming in glory (Luke 21:27). Some who share that view see "taken" as caught up (1 Thess 4:17); others see it as taken in judgment, since the disciples ask "Where, Lord?" and hear of vultures. Either way the command is the same — Sproul: "This message is plain: be ready."

**Why Lot's wife?** She was led out by the hand, and still her heart stayed in Sodom (Gen 19:16, 26). Spurgeon: "ALMOST SAVED, BUT NOT QUITE." Guzik: she lingered, she doubted God's word, she looked back. Verse 33 is the key: the one who clings to his life loses it.

**Word study (Greek):**

- **stumbling block — *skandalon* (G4625):** the trigger of a trap; anything that makes a man fall (v1).
- **mulberry tree — *sykaminos* (G4807):** the black mulberry, deep-rooted; only here (v6).
- **unworthy — *achreios* (G888):** unprofitable, bringing no gain; only Luke 17:10; Matt 25:30.
- **foreigner — *allogenēs* (G241):** of another race; only here (v18); the temple warning word.
- **giving thanks — *eucharisteō* (G2168):** to be grateful for grace; root of "Eucharist" (v16; 22:19).
- **signs to be observed — *paratērēsis* (G3907):** close, watchful (even hostile) observation; only here (v20).
- **in your midst — *entos* (G1787):** within, inside; only here and Matt 23:26 (v21).
- **revealed — *apokalyptō* (G601):** to unveil; the Son of Man unveiled (v30).
- **taken — *paralambanō* (G3880):** to take along to oneself (vv34–35; John 14:3).
- **vultures — *aetos* (G105):** eagle or vulture; Matt 24:28 (v37).

**Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):**

1. **Forgiveness is a command, not a feeling** (vv3–4; Sproul).
2. **Do not audit a man's repentance** (Guzik).
3. **Faith's power lies in its object** — a seed and a deep-rooted tree.
4. **Obedience puts no one in God's debt** — *achreios* (Henry).
5. **They were cleansed as they went** — obey before you see (Sproul).
6. **The foreigner came back** — *allogenēs* (v18).
7. **Nine were cleansed; one was made well** — 17:19 and 18:42.

8. **The King was standing in front of them** — the kingdom in your midst.
9. **First the cross** — v25 (Guzik).
10. **Almost saved, but not quite** — Lot's wife (Spurgeon).

**Cross-references:** Gen 6–7; 19:16–26; Lev 13:45–46; 14:1–32; 2 Kings 5:1–15; Dan 7:13–14; Matt 18:21–22; 23:26; 24:28, 37–41; 25:30; Luke 4:27; 9:22–24, 51; 10:33; 12:40; 18:42; 21:27, 34–36; John 14:3; Eph 4:32; 1 Thess 4:16–17; 2 Thess 1:7; Jas 1:22.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 17:4

"And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

**Command to obey — forgive him.** Jesus said it twice in two verses. There is a man I have "forgiven" three or four times and I am tired of it. Jesus didn't tell me to trust him blindly or to stop telling the truth — He said rebuke, and if he repents, forgive. This week I will stop auditing his repentance (Guzik) and forgive him again, and I will ask for faith the size of a mustard seed to do it.

**Sin to confess — keeping score with God.** Some days I act like the slave who expects to be thanked for doing his job — like my sobriety, my service, my years in ministry have put God in my debt. They haven't. "We have done only that which we ought to have done." I confess the pride, and I thank God that Christ "and He alone is the profitable servant" (Sproul).

**Example to follow — the man who came back.** He was the foreigner, the one nobody expected, and he turned around before he went anywhere else. Loud voice, face on the ground, "giving thanks to Him." Many of the men I serve know what it is to stand "at a distance," unclean and alone. Grace has cleansed us. I don't want to be one of the nine. Today I will go back and thank Him out loud for one specific thing, and I will tell another man what He did.

**Warning to heed — remember Lot's wife.** She got out of Sodom and her heart never did. I know men who walked out of addiction, out of prison, out of the old life — and kept looking back until they went back. There are things on the housetop and in the field I am tempted to go down and get. Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." I will name the thing I keep looking back at, and I will turn my face forward.

**Promise to trust — whoever loses his life will preserve it.** The Son of Man will be revealed, as sudden as lightning, and no one will need to be told. Until then I do not run after every "Look here!" I lose my life for His sake and He keeps it.

**Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):**

1. Who has sinned against me more than once — and what would it cost me to forgive him again today, without checking whether his repentance is "real enough"? (17:3–4; Eph 4:32) *We are not permitted to judge another's repentance (Guzik).*
2. Do I quietly believe God owes me something for my obedience, my sobriety, my service? What would "we have done only that which we ought to have done" sound like in my mouth? (17:7–10) *God cannot be made a debtor by our services (Henry).*
3. The lepers obeyed before they saw any change. What is Jesus telling me to do that I am waiting to "feel" before I obey? (17:14; Jas 1:22) *The lepers had not been cleansed yet, but they obeyed (Sproul).*
4. Name one specific mercy God has shown me this year. Have I gone back to thank Him out loud — or am I one of the nine? (17:15–18; Ps 103:2) *Feeling and doing are not the same thing (Sproul).*

5. If the Son of Man were revealed tonight, what would He find me busy with? What is the "house" I would be tempted to go back into? (17:26–31; 12:40) *Nothing was wrong with eating or building; no one was ready.*
6. What does Lot's wife's backward look look like in my life — the old place, old people, old habits my heart still turns toward? (17:32–33; Gen 19:26) *Almost saved, but not quite (Spurgeon).*

**Worship.** Jesus is the Master who has mercy on lepers, the One who cleanses with a word from a distance, the King standing in the middle of His enemies, the Son of Man who must first suffer and be rejected and who will one day be revealed like lightning from one end of the sky to the other. He keeps count of His mercies, and He still receives the one who comes back.

**Prayer.** Lord Jesus, Master, have mercy on me. Increase my faith — enough to forgive the brother I am tired of forgiving. Keep me from thinking You owe me anything; I am an unworthy slave, and You are the profitable servant who earned everything for me. Thank You for cleansing me. I come back to say it out loud. Turn my face forward; don't let me look back at Sodom. Make me ready for the day You are revealed. Amen.

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