SCRIPTURE:
Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.” Luke 17:11–19 NIV

MEDITATION:
On Jesus’s way to Jerusalem, he chose to walk through the borderlands between Samaria and Galilee taking his disciples through hostile territory that was composed of populations of people filled with anger and strife toward their next-door neighbors over a history of religious disagreement and pain.

As they were walking, Jesus and his disciples met ten men who had leprosy. These ten would have been seen as outcasts, unfit to be associated with, and a disdain to society (Lev. 13:45–46). The men stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us.” Seeing them and having compassion, Jesus tells the ten to go and show themselves to priests. In turning to walk, the men are healed of their infirmities and are made whole once again.

After this command, only one returns, a Samaritan, to fall to the feet of his savior and give thanks and praise to the one who healed him of his infirmity.

REFLECTION:
In the steady sequence of our days, we often become dulled to the expansive range of blessings that we receive from our creator. They may not appear to be as grand as the lepers who were healed of their skin diseases and made justified before their society. However, the breath that we take, the ability to think and reason, the ability to share in relationship with those who are closest in our lives are evidence of the permeative love of Christ that is present within the moment.
The Samaritan of our story recognized that Jesus not only healed him, but also gave him new life. He was so overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude that he turned back and praised this man who had healed him. In doing so, this man had given him a second chance to have a career, to be seen with respect, and to have value again in his community.

But my question today is, do we live our lives in the state of gratitude at Jesus’ feet or do we make a straightaway pursuit to show ourselves to those around us what confirms our value? When we pray, are we continually asking for God’s fortune and for certain events to take place in our favor or are we in a state of gratitude for the infinite blessings that we are unable to comprehend?

So, regardless of where you are physically as you read this devotional, know that you are loved, cared for, and that Christ Jesus wants nothing but to share with you in all of your accomplishments and in your failings. I pray that today you all are able to stop, take a moment, and feel the warm embrace of God’s presence and thank him in whom all blessings flow.

**PRAYER:**
Almighty and Forgiving God,

We, your unworthy servants, give you most humble thanks for all your goodness and lovingkindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Give us such an awareness of your mercies, that our hearts may be thankful, and that we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but also in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Jeremy Hopper, ASA Member, is the Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Walnut Ridge, Walnut Ridge, AR and Hoxie United Methodist Church, Hoxie, AR. Jeremy is an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Lawrence County as well as the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. Jeremy holds degrees in music, theology, and education and is actively involved in various United Methodist Initiatives and roles. He enjoys researching historical theology, the cognitive development of faith and reason, and the conversation between science and theology. He is the husband of Laken who is a doctoral student in Community Counseling, and the father of two wonderful children, Hensley and Elijah.