

**Trinity 14**  
**September 4-5, 2010**  
**Luke 17:11-19, Galatians 5:16-24**

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The works of the flesh are evident: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.

The works of the flesh are evident all around the world, but so too are they evident in this Church, and even more significantly, around all of our dinner tables. Wherever two or three fallen souls, inside or outside the Church, gather together there will be hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, and the like. Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. We may be experts in them, but are we still practicing. *Do we dare take an examination of our lives? Who has not looked with lust in his eye? Who has not grown angry in his heart? Who has not felt the pang of jealousy or covetousness?* These are the works of the flesh, of our flesh, our own, disease-ridden, inwardly-turned flesh. And those who practice them do not inherit the kingdom of God. So repent.

*And what of the fruits of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,*

*self-control? Is that what the reporters from the Virden Recorder observe around town? How about the neighbor children always rooting around in our bushes and tormenting our cats, whose playground seems to be the street and our drive? What do they find when they come knocking, while their ball rests in a pile of broken glass on our dining room table? Love, joy, peace? I know you love your friends. What about your enemies? What about those who mistreat you? What about those whose piercings and tattoos disturb you? Repent.*

The Samaritan leper returned to worship Jesus. He was a foreigner, doubly cursed by birth and disease to be an outsider. He was healed by the Word of Jesus and faith sent Him back for more. He knew the works of the flesh in his rotting skin and his broken heart. He knew love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control not in himself, but in the Temple not made with hands, in Jesus who healed Him with a Word.

The life of faith we live is not a life of perfect works for all the world to see. The works of the flesh are evident in us to the eyes of men. Our life of faith is an on-going healing, forgiveness, and thanksgiving. We are not those who say we have no sin. We are those who confess our sins and receive forgiveness. We wait on God and trust His Word. He says we are His children, that we are sealed in His Name and resurrection, that He is our God. We glimpse the fruits of the Spirit and receive occasional foretastes of them. We have known love, joy, peace, and the like. But often they are invisible both to us and to our neighbors. We confess them by faith, not by sight. The creation groans in eager expectation of the time when you will be revealed,

when the good works in you and all the fruits of the Spirit will be evident in you, when the works of the flesh will be destroyed and forgotten forever. Until then you live by faith. That is what faith expects, why faith prays and waits.

But Our Lord asks **“Where are the nine?”** It is not that they forgot to send a thank-you note or were somehow unappreciative or rude. They were surely thankful and thrilled that they had been healed. But they thought they had enough. That was all they needed. They took healing from Jesus like teen-agers taking the keys to the family car, full-speed ahead and no looking back. They'd been healed. They were eager to see their friends and get back to the party

The Samaritan knew better. He found a family in God. He believed. So he returned to Jesus. Faith always wants more. Faith always returns to Jesus. For faith lives and moves and has its being in Jesus. You know too. The Spirit is alive in you. He has brought you here today. Those who follow Jesus are where He is. He is here where He commands the sins of His people to depart; here, where He speaks through His Word; here, where He gives His Body and His Blood for healing and cleansing. He may even attend the occasional family table. After all, you're not so great, not much better than the leprous Samaritan, but God loves you. He speaks you righteous. You are His beloved and spotless Bride. He provides the faith that makes you well. He sends the Spirit who sanctifies and keeps you. Against such there is no law.

In ✠ Jesus' Name Amen.