

SERMON STARTERS

LESSONS FROM LEPERS Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ “Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ¹² Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. ¹³ And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” 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. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ 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?” ¹⁹ And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.” (NKJV)

Nothing recorded in the Word of God is incidental or insignificant. John’s statement concerning the writings in his gospel, not only applies to his writings but to the entirety of divine revelation. In the end of his gospel he wrote: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31).

The account of Jesus healing ten lepers underscores the truth that John articulated and that is that this is “written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Luke alone records the encounter of the Lord Jesus with the ten lepers. There are many lessons we can and should learn from this episode in the life of the Lord. There are at least five developments that unfold in this drama that will profit us if we will concentrate upon them. They are:

1. The Diseased Outcasts.

- a. What they were - “there met Him ten men who were lepers” -
- b. Where they were - “who stood afar off” -
- c. Why they were there - (The law concerning lepers stated that “he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp” Leviticus 13:46).

Lesson: Sin is like leprosy—sin also separates from God. However, “In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13).

2. Their Desperate Outcry.

- a. How they called out - “And they lifted up their voices” -
- b. To Whom they cried - “and said, “Jesus, Master”
- c. For what they cried - “have mercy on us!”

Lesson: Sinners who truly discern their dilemma call out in desperation. They call to the only One Who can deliver them, the Lord Jesus. They call for the mercy of salvation.

3. The Divine Outreach.

- a. He heard them - "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1).
- b. He looked at them - "He saw them..."
- c. He spoke to them - "He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." (In the O.T. the law concerning lepers stated: "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest" (Leviticus 14:2). This was for confirmation that the leper had been healed.)

Lesson: When we turn to Him for salvation He will hear our faintest cry and speak cleansing, healing and forgiveness. God is attentive to mankind's plight—mankind is not always sensitive to God's provision.

4. The Desired Outgrowth.

- a. They were healed - "And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed."
- b. The principle that Jesus commended - "Your faith has made you well." (v.19)

Lesson: "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near..." (Isaiah 55:6) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

5. The Disappointing Outcome.

- a. Ingratitude is evident - "Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"
- b. Gratitude is evidenced - "One of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks."

Lessons:

- There is no case too hard for Jesus, be it a diseased or a degenerate person.
- Deliverance from the leprosy of sin is available only through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Through divine intervention those who were lepers were spared from a cruel, lingering death and given new life. So with sinners saved by the Savior: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Christian gratitude is sincere appreciation expressed Godward for blessings received. Scripture repeatedly teaches the virtue of gratitude both by precept and example. Two examples in the psalms are: "O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever," and "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart" (9:1 and 30:12).
- Unexpressed gratitude is also ingratitude! The expressed gratitude by one merited the Master's blessing; the ingratitude shown by the nine, His disappointment.
- Martin Luther referred to gratitude as "The basic Christian attitude."

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