**“One Returns”**

“Stories of Gratitude”

Sunday, November 8, 2020

**Gratitude is defined as:** The state of being grateful or thankful. A warm and friendly feeling in response to a favor or favors received; thankfulness.

**We all would like to think of ourselves as thankful.**

* During this thanksgiving season, we are reminded of how blessed we are here in America. **The blessing of freedom to live and worship.**
* We are free to live our life as we see fit without fear of oppression from tyrannical rulers who abuse their power.
* During this season especially, we give God thanks for health, opportunities to work and prosper.
* **But what if you had to live without any hope for a better tomorrow?** **What if you lived today, knowing that tomorrow you would be worse off that you are today, no hope, nothing better, only worse than today?**

That’s where we begin today, with 10 men who had no hope for a better tomorrow. Really nothing much to be thankful for. They are isolated from their family, from their homes, no way to work because their bodies are decaying daily. As I read the text, you can visualize from the **photo**, what these men must have looked like. They looked like, “**Dead men walking.”**

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**Luke 17:11-19**

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.”** (Luke 17:11-19 NKJV)

**Description**

Leprosy was a terrible disease that affected the skin and nerves. It was highly contagious so those who contracted it were forced to move away from the general population and live in “**leper colonies”.**

God instructed the Children of Israel about this disease. First, a priest had to be the one to confirm the disease and the healing. This is why Jesus tells them to show themselves to priests.

Out of 10 lepers, only 1 came back to thank Jesus. So this morning, I have to ask, **would I have been the one to say; “thank you?”**

I would like to think that I’d be that **one**, but how often has **God blessed me,** and I didn’t pause to appreciate the blessing and say, “thank you?”

God does amazing things for us each day and the **beginning of gratitude** is **recognizing** those **special moments**.

1. **The Transformation from Sickness to Health**

Here were 10 men who needed to be changed, they were lepers. Among the Jews, several skin diseases were classified as **leprosy**, including our modern Hansen’s disease.

In spite of modern medical advances, an **estimated** **10 million** people around the world have leprosy. One form of leprosy attacks the nerves so that the victim cannot feel pain. Infection easily sets in, and this leads to limbs becoming deformed and eventually falling off.

It was the task of the **Jewish priest** to examine people to determine whether they were lepers according to Leviticus 13. Infected people were **isolated** and could not return to normal society until declared “**cleansed**.”

**Leviticus 1:1-2**

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a **defiling skin disease**, they must be brought to **Aaron the priest** or to one of his sons who is a priest.

1. **Leprosy was used as a picture of sin**

Like sin, leprosy is deeper than the skin and cannot be helped by mere “**surface**” methods.

**In Leviticus 13:3**

The priest is to examine the sore on the skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be **more than skin deep**, it is a **defiling** **skin disease**.

To **defile** means to **corrupt or ruin** something. To be **dirty or polluted**.

Like **sin**, leprosy spreads; and as it spreads, it **defiles** and because of this defilement, a leprous person had to be **isolated** outside the camp.

**It is the perfect picture of sin**. **Sin only looks like fun** but in reality it **dirties and pollutes the soul**. **Sin ruins any hope of spiritual health** and **isolates us from God.**

I love the picture in my mind of Jesus, walking up to these 10 lepers. Men who knew no human contact with those who are **whole, especially, a Rabbi like Jesus**. Can you imagine the loneliness and desperation these men must have felt while they suffered.

It reminds us of what the scripture says about the coming judgment and that one day **lost sinners will be cast into outer darkness**, **isolated**, **in a place called hell.**

1. **People with leprosy were looked on as “dead.”**

As God punished Miriam with leprosy for opposing Moses, Aaron cried out in **Numbers 12:12**, and said….

“Do not let her be like a **stillborn infant** coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.”

Of course, Moses prayed to God and God healed her and made her whole again.

Lepers were required to keep their **distance**, but Jesus was a friend to the outcast so **they could come to Him for help**. These men humbled themselves and **cried out for mercy**.

By the grace and power of God, **this man was changed**! In fact, Jesus even **touched** the man, which meant that **He became unclean Himself**.

This is a beautiful picture of what **Jesus** has done for lost sinners,

1. **He became sin for us that we might be made clean.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the **righteousness of God (or, right with God)**.

1. **He is not only willing to save, He is able to save**

**Hebrews 7:25**

Therefore he is able to **save completely** those who come to God through him, because he always lives to **intercede for them**.

1. **And Jesus can save you now**

**2 Corinthians 6:2**

For he says, “In the time of my favor **I heard you**, and in the day of salvation **I helped you**.” I tell you, **now** is the time of God’s favor, **now** is the day of salvation.

* For those who choose to remain “**dead in their sins**,” isolated, away from a holy God, it is simply because they **refuse** **to call out** **to the healer** (Jesus) **for help and mercy**.

Nine of the men called out to God and were **satisfied with physical healing,** however, one man (a Samaritan) not only received **physical** healing, but **spiritual healing** as well.

This man’s healing freed him from his **confinement** and **isolation** **both** **physically and spiritually**. This Samaritan seems to be **full of thanks** and with a **LOUD VOICE** **glorified God**. Those who receive Jesus mercy should give praise to God (Amen)?

**He fell down at his feet**, put himself into the **most humble reverent** posture he could.

Do you remember what Jesus asked the man? **Were there not ten cleansed?** Those nine speak a truth to us this morning that we need to hear. **The truth for many is:**

**How poor we are in our return to give thanks!**

**“Where are the nine?** **Why did not they return to give thanks?”** It is because of the “**sin of ingratitude**.”

Of all the blessings we receive, it seems **very few return** to give thanks in **humility** and a **LOUD PRAISE** to God.

Many times we find that those who are the most grateful, are those from whom we **least expect it**.

**This man received a “word from God” that** **we should “all” want to hear**;

**““Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”**

* Let’s just tell the truth this morning; **most of the world is satisfied** to be **physically well**.
* **But those who know the true identity of the Rabbi** (who is Jesus) **will fall down in worship and praise because Jesus does what no doctor can do.**

**Jesus makes the sinner completely WHOLE**, **inside** and **out**, fit to enter the presence the HIGH PRIEST who is Jesus, who leads the healed, into the presence of God.