

AUGUST 23, 2020

LESSON 11

MIRACLES OF JESUS

JESUS HEALS TEN LEPERS (LUKE 17:11-19)

After his visit to Bethany (John 11), Jesus then headed northeast of Jerusalem (cf. John 11:54) and was traveling east and west along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Along the way, he was approached by a group of 10 lepers. They pleaded with Jesus to heal them. He simply said, “Go and show yourselves to the priest,” in accordance with the Law of Moses (Lev 13-14). As they went, their leprosy miraculously left them.

When they noticed, only one of them stopped and went back to thank Jesus for healing him. He was a Samaritan. After accepting his gratitude, Jesus then asked, “Where are the nine?”

The healing of the lepers was not just a lesson about gratitude. It revealed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who saw Jesus perform numerous miracles yet deny he is the Messiah. They were like the nine ungrateful lepers who never returned to glorify God. The Jewish leadership did not accept him, but a Samaritan did.

What can we learn from this Samaritan leper’s example?

We Have Been Blessed, Too

This man’s life had been changed. The disease that afflicted his body had now been removed. Don’t you think that he would spend the remainder of his days filled with gratitude?

Here’s the question: Do we see what the leper saw, that we are richly blessed? Leprosy is an awful disease, but it does not begin to compare with the tragedy of sin. Leprosy afflicts the body, but sin afflicts the body and the soul.

Leprosy cut a man off from society, but sin separates a man from his God (Isa 59:1-2). Leprosy ultimately led to death, but sin leads to spiritual death (Rom 6:23). Sin is the greatest human tragedy.

But here’s the good news: Jesus provides a cure (Rom 5:8-10). We have been delivered from a disease far worse than leprosy. We have been saved from sin and its dreadful consequences (separation from God, an eternity in hell).

Our gratitude should empower us to be thankful, even if life's circumstances are not so great. Whatever life throws my way—good or bad, I'm at peace with God. I've got the Bible to guide me. I live with the hope of heaven. I am blessed beyond measure.

But rather than being filled with gratitude, we allow ourselves to complain about the details ("God should give me more money, better health, a bigger house, a better car"). We should be ashamed.

Jesus is the Source of Our Blessings

He understood that Jesus was the source of this blessing. Do we see that too? Sometimes we don't. We prefer to think of ourselves as self-made. Our accomplishments and rewards are the product of our intelligence, hard work and sacrifice. As we fill up with pride over our success, there is a corresponding drop in our gratitude toward God.

God is the source of all our blessings (James 1:17). Whatever we may accomplish, we accomplish with his stuff. He has done great things. The little things we do are nothing in comparison.

Gratitude Matters to God

The nine lepers who were healed never came back and thanked Jesus. It's startling to see how much this bothered Jesus (vv. 17-19). After all God has done, it breaks his heart when people are filled with ingratitude and treat his blessings lightly. So the question confronts us: into which class do we fall? Are we with this one who was grateful, or numbered among the nine?

We Need to Express Gratitude

Certainly there would have been other things he would want to do urgently, perhaps see family or friends and tell them what has happened. But before he does any of that, he is driven back to Jesus.

Aren't you impressed with his passion. It does not appear that he slowly walks back to Jesus and says, "Oh, by the way, thanks for healing me." As soon as he realizes that he has been healed, he shouts for joy. He turns and runs back to find Jesus. He falls at his feet, pouring out expressions of gratitude and praise.

Think about what has been done for us. Jesus has forgiven our sins, made peace between us and our God, and given us the hope of heaven when this life is over. How should we express our gratitude for such an amazing gift?

Such expressions should be a priority. I should thank God every day in my prayers (Phil 4:6). Every day we take our blessings for granted is comparable to the nine who didn't come back. Let's instead be like the one who expressed gratitude wholeheartedly and passionately.

