

Daily Devotional, June 19, 2020

17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." Luke 17:17-19 (NIV)

How often do we stop to realize that both the mercy and the grace of God that we receive each day are absolutely priceless!

Ten men met Jesus on the road between Galilee and Samaria and begged Jesus for mercy. They were lepers, and therefore society's outcasts. If they approached someone or another person approached them, they were required to declare loudly, "Unclean! Unclean!" to warn those around them. Leprosy is not a sin in and of itself, but here, as was the thought process of ancient cultures, one could make the conjecture that it is used here as a representation of sin, and I would say that the lepers, in using this assumption were a type of those who will gladly accept salvation. All ten were lepers just as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The gift of healing was given to all ten. All ten were then told to go and present themselves to the priests to show that they had been cleansed. All ten were healed on the way as they walked faithfully to show themselves to the priests. On their journey they had to continue on, trusting in faith that Jesus' words would bring their anticipated healing. Imagine their joy as they looked down to see their skin cleansed and whole again! A few of them may have not seen that sight in years.

But one of the ten on seeing that the leprosy was gone turned back to find Jesus, "praising God in a loud voice" (v.15). When Christ asked where the other nine were, he has no answer. Jesus pointed out that this man who had returned was a Samaritan - a foreigner. Luke is pointing out to us that God's grace is freely available to *anyone*. Imagine Jesus looking at you, saying, "Your faith has made you well." What an amazing thing to hear! Wouldn't you fall on your face at Jesus feet in worship?

But where were the other nine? Were they ungrateful? I don't think so. I'm sure they were very thankful as they went forward to the priests and were indeed found to have been cleansed. There isn't much doubt that they would have identified Jesus as their healer. They were obedient to their instructions from the Master and blessed for being faithful enough to believe that this miracle could happen. I don't think they completely missed the value of the grace they had been shown at all.

But the tenth man seems to have grasped the depth and impact of this grace at a much deeper level. In his heart and mind, he caught a fuller measure of the gift that had been poured out in him. We're told Jesus had healed many lepers. Some Jesus passed by may have remained silent feeling doubt or unworthy in asking. Some may have even scoffed at the stories of healings by this itinerant Rabbi. This one Samaritan reached out from his desperation, believing and pleading, knowing that there was nothing he could do but ask in his own strength. When the leprosy vanished on the way to see the priests he knew beyond all doubt, that he had come face-to-face with the divine and had been given something that was far beyond his comprehension. His life was completely changed in an instant.

His act of faith was met by an unfathomable response of grace. His faith has made him an example to untold millions of people through the centuries.

The idea that we could place any finite value on the gifts that have been made available to us, free for the asking, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, would be laughable at best. The value of knowing that in faith, we can intercede for a friend or ask for prayer, the moments when we rise from prayer knowing we have been forgiven and healed are incalculable - and in many cases, barely describable with words. What grace!

Think of prayer as an open door to talk with the God who created the universe, and who loves us so much - think of it and catch a glimpse of the gift of God's grace, freely offered day after day. Open your eyes, your heart, and your mind, and then—be the one out of ten who falls at God's feet and praise God with all that you have—for all you have been given!

Prayer: Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see. Help me O God, because like all your children, I need your daily grace. Yesterday's blessings can encourage but will not take care of today's burdens. May my fears be dissolved by my faith in you. And through the power of Your love, help me to love all people in all circumstances, and may my life give glory to You, and be a help to all that I meet. In Jesus' name, Amen.