

Cleansing Ten Lepers

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Luke 17:11-19

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, He performed various miracles to demonstrate His divine power. The miracle we are discussing here was when Jesus healed ten men of leprosy. What one of them did afterward was remarkable. As we study this miracle, as with every Bible passage, it is important to understand the context. This miracle teaches us certain things about Jesus and provides an important lesson for us.

The Context

- The chapter begins with Jesus teaching about forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4) – be willing to forgive, even if it is repeatedly necessary; God is willing to repeatedly forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15)
- He then compared our service to God to that of a slave to a master (Luke 17:7-10) – we earn nothing through our service; we are simply doing what we ought to do; “unworthy slaves” (Luke 17:10)
- We also need to understand just how terrible leprosy was – a skin disease that was visible, painful, and contagious; one with leprosy had to dwell outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46), or later the village/town
- Jesus will tell these men to show themselves to the priest (Luke 17:14) – required under the law (Leviticus 13:1-3); this was to determine the status of this affliction

The Miracle

- In a village in the region of Samaria/Galilee (Luke 17:11) – ten leprous men saw Jesus and cried out; they could not come to Him (because of the leprosy), so they called to Him to have mercy on them (Luke 17:13)
- Jesus instructed them to show themselves to the priest (Luke 17:14) – as they were going, they were cleansed; it took a degree of faith to begin the trip
- One of them turned back, glorified God, and gave thanks to Jesus (Luke 17:15-16) – a Samaritan; not the first time a Samaritan was used as an example (cf. Luke 10:30-37)
- Jesus questioned where the others were (Luke 17:17-18) – they obeyed His instructions, but neglected to show gratitude; this man's faith made him well (Luke 17:19), which must have been more than physically (this happened to all of them) but spiritually too

The Lesson

- Two things we noticed in the context (forgiveness and unworthiness) – we must be willing to forgive others, especially as we remember how God forgives us; the terrible nature of leprosy (physically and socially) is a parallel to the terrible nature of sin; we

must recognize our unworthiness, even when we do all that Jesus wants us to do; salvation is not earned; we can never undo the sins we have committed

- The lesson is that we need to be always grateful to the Lord for cleansing us of our sin – by our sins, we have earned death (Romans 6:23); eternal life is a free gift (by grace); it is possible to follow Christ's instructions and forget or fail to appreciate what He has done for us; it is through gratitude that we can offer an acceptable service to God (Hebrews 12:28)

Conclusion

- This miracle shows us Jesus' power to cleanse a terrible physical ailment – it reminds us that He can cleanse us of a terrible and otherwise incurable spiritual ailment as well (sin)
- Let us never take this for granted – let us serve with gratitude, recognizing our unworthiness before Him