

The Rock: 10-16-2022**A year with the Master**

Title: The thankful Samaritan

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

(Black bible Pg. 823 ESV)

Theme:

Learning to have a grateful heart not only changes one's outlook on life, it can transform a heart.

The crux of the narrative which Dr. Luke gives us is one of gratitude versus ingratitude.

Introduction:

(Let the congregation know that we are starting the Lord's prayer next week and that will bring us to Advent and the Christmas season)

This morning as we look at our last encounter of the year, we find Jesus once again stepping in and reaching out to the lost and the last and the least of society.

In it all we discover a Samaritan, a foreigner, saved by faith and healed by grace. Gathered together with nine others in mutual misery they shout out to Jesus for help.

One of the most important themes of the Scriptures, and in these encounters with the Lord Jesus, is this aspect of spiritual healing and heart transformation.

Jesus, while He healed those He came in contact with, and met the physical and practical needs; He was far more concerned about the inner man, our eternal soul and the relationship with God in Heaven.

That, for me, as a pastor who wants us all to grow in that grace of Christ, in order that we may all be equipped for ministry in our places of influence, is much more important than a physical healing.

The Story:

Many come to God in times of need, to get. We see that throughout the Bible. There is nothing wrong with that, provided that it does not stop there.

Sometimes looking for help out of a situation, looking for a need to be met or a mess to be fixed. Yet, too often not wanting to do the hard work of changing or growing beyond the current circumstance. Or, not even wanting to acknowledge our own part and responsibility within our situation.

There are certainly things which happen that are out of our control, but the deeper question for me, and I want for you as well, is to be this:

How is my daily walk with God, in Christ?

Because that will make all the difference in the world when it comes to positioning ourselves before Him in an attitude of gratitude, or one of ingratitude.

Am I in His word and learning each day?
Am I praying and applying the things I am learning to my life, at least to the best of my ability?

Am I acknowledging that I am a broken human being who is being put back together by the grace of God and the power of His Holy Spirit.

If we are going to be life-long followers of Jesus, seeking out the lost, we have to be practicing and building the habit of long-term faithfulness to Him and His calling upon our lives.

Long-term faithfulness as a follower of Jesus is the only thing which will keep us through all the ebbs and flows of life. He is with us in all of the valleys, all of the mountain tops, as well as all of the in-betweens.

The steadiness of Christ in our lives, and the daily help and hope of His Holy Spirit is what will make us stand.

But we've got to be willing to go back, and do so daily. Back to Him who healed us and saved us from the beginning and made us well, and the set us on our way.

This encounter is one of the few which Jesus had with the leprous community. A sad group of people actually, gathered together, as I said in mutual misery. A horrible disease which broke down all the barriers of race, gender, ethnicity and social status.

This group of people were required by the Law to not only stay away from all of society as unclean, but they were to announce themselves whenever they were in the public arena.

-Leviticus 13:45-46 (ESV)

"The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, Unclean, unclean.' He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp."

Think this through for a minute, as we live in such a day and age where we are

entirely and militantly all about the self. These poor folks could not see family, friends, spouses, children.

They just banded together as they wasted away as societal outcasts whom no one wanted to be around. This disease it seems was reserved, at least in the Jewish mind, for those who were most cursed of God.

One commentator put it like this:

"The leprosy was a disease which the Jews supposed to be inflicted for the punishment of some particular sin, and to be, more than other diseases, a mark of God's displeasure."

-Matthew Henry: Pg.618

It is no wonder people lost their minds when Jesus broke every Law and violated so many rules in another instance with a leprous man:

-Matthew 8:1-3 (ESV)

"When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

He then tells this man to do two things. First; Say nothing and go and show yourself to the priests at the Temple. The same thing He instructs these ten men.

That too comes from Leviticus, and the cleanliness Laws. So much for a guy who was constantly accused of not obeying the Law.

-Leviticus 14:1-7 (ESV)

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look. Then, if the case of leprous disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two live clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop. And the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh water. He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall

let the living bird go into the open field."

This is weird stuff to us today, or perhaps it isn't. Let's remember what we learned a few months ago, Jesus didn't come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.

Back to Luke and our text:

-Luke 17:11-14 (ESV)

"On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed."

It's interesting to me that they weren't instantly healed. Rather, they left it seems in faith and obedience - and along the way all of a sudden, they saw they had been healed.

At some point along their journey, God's grace was poured out upon these ten, given to the outcasts, the cursed, the stranger.

This too is a lesson for us all in relation to how we treat or respond to others.

It is an area we all need to work on, myself included, as it is a place of struggle. Why? Because it is easier and more comfortable to default to ourselves, our comfort zones and to our tribe.

Others treat us Christians in much the same way. Accused of being racist, bigots, and all kinds of other things because of the stance we take on so many issues which do damage to those who are created in the Image of God.

We have to figure out how to love anyway. Thinking this through, because it is a huge challenge for all human beings. What does this look like today?

We may not deal with lepers, those with Hansen's disease. But we may respond to some as though they were. Perhaps not always, but I suspect each of us has at least one "people group", political party, socially constructed unit, that we have decided are beyond our bounds of comfort.

That we can't come in contact with them because it is too uncomfortable, or it violates "The Law".

Yet, one of the main patterns we have seen all year with Jesus is that He has zero concern or issue coming in contact with those whom the temple deemed unclean and sinful according to the Law.

Samaritans were always right at the top of that list; a Samaritan leper is a double whammy. Think too about the woman at the well. Jesus broke every barrier there in order to make whole a broken woman. A daughter of the King.

Again, that leper whom Jesus reached out and touched in Matthew 8. He didn't need to do that, yet He did. It is one of the many times Jesus seemingly violated the letter of the Law in order to get to the heart of the matter. The weightier matters of the Law. We have learned these things throughout this year with the Master:

-Matthew 23:23 (ESV)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

That is what Jesus is always after. Outward healing, provision, and things

like that are a means to the end.
Restoration, reconciliation,
transformation. We must grow to learn and
apply that delicate and sometimes
difficult balance.

We see this is every encounter, and here
is no exception. Ten go away, and one
returns. Sad really, as Jesus asks the
questions. He hears this one man singing
the praises of God:

-Luke 17:15-18 (ESV)

"Then one of them, when he saw that he
was healed, turned back, praising God
with a loud voice; and he fell on his
face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.
Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus
answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where
are the nine? Was no one found to return
and give praise to God except this
foreigner?"

This one man, full of gratitude
recognizes the importance of
thankfulness. He returns to thank Jesus.
Now, before we get to upset with the
nine, we have to remember that they did
just what they were told. Box checkers.

Perhaps they became too excited with the
fact that they could now go home, see
their families and celebrate that they
had been restored.

All of these things are possible, perhaps even probable. However, does that matter? Thinking back all the way to the blind man. The boldness he had.

To the woman, Sarah, who acknowledged that she was the one who attempted the drive by healing. Her humility and faith publicly acknowledged. Salvation for her as well, once the physical was tended to.

Even the perpetual victim by the pool. Woe is me, there is always someone who beats me into the pool, no one ever helps me. Even he eventually acknowledged Jesus before the people.

All fringe people, outcast, unclean, lost. Yet found by Jesus, the one who sought them out! This is so important to see and understand. Jesus sought them out.

Even the woman who acted in faith was sought by Him who had made her whole. We need to see and acknowledge something that is clear in the gospel writers.

They seem always to be very quick and clear to point out, to recognize those who are the most grateful and thankful. Amazingly, if we take note, it tends always to be the outsider most in need.

Think on Simon the Pharisee and the instance when a sinful woman came into

his home to anoint Jesus. How did he respond? Let's look:

Back in Luke chapter seven, this woman with a poor reputation party crashes Simon's house and dinner.

-Luke 7:37-38 (ESV)

"And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. "

It's a powerful and shameless moment. She does not care one bit about process, dignity or what anyone in that room thinks. She just needs to get to Jesus. Her heart knows who He is and she wants to anoint and acknowledge Him.

A lesson many of us need to learn.

Look at Simon's response:

-Luke 7:39 (ESV)

"Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is

who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

Just so dull in his understanding. Her heart however, is as full of gratitude and thankfulness, as Simon's is empty of justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Jesus asks him a question which opens Simon up within his own assumptions and prejudices, challenging him to think about the bigger picture of redemption:

-Luke 7:41-47 (ESV)

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much.

But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

So powerful a message. This woman, the one Samaritan leper who returned. Grateful, thankful, saved and redeemed. Restored image bearers because they believed and gave praise.

Much had been forgiven, and therefore much thanks was given to Jesus who changed both the inside and the outside.

Our Samaritan friend outshined his Jewish companions. This person who was the least likely to "behave in a Godly way", showed that God's love and forgiveness knows no bounds and is no respecter of persons.

-Luke 17:17-19 (ESV)

"Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

I want to close with a few excerpts from Chuck Swindoll's journal entry called: My time in the leper colony. O do so because I cannot say it any better by way of application and hope:

"When I served on the island of Okinawa...we were invited to a leprosarium

on the north end of Okinawa to play a concert...there we sat in precise rows, decked out in our dress blues...there they sat, slumped under the weight of pain and fatigue. Mangles bodies bearing the remnants of human faces...Many of them tried to cover their deformed faces...in an attempt to cover their shame and unworthiness. It broke my heart to see them feeling so unworthy because of a condition they neither caused nor deserved.

I could barely play my instrument through the sadness weighing upon my heart, seeing bodies horrifically distorted by the disease we now call Hansen's...I would have given almost anything to have the power of healing that day.

What a joy it must have been for Jesus to reach down into the sea of human depravity and snatch a soul from the clutches of disease! One day soon, Jesus will empty the hospitals, the leper colonies, and even the graveyards of the world. Then we will live in a world without darkness, sin, suffering, disease, and death. We have His promise on that. And I for one cannot wait for Him to return."

-Living Insights: Pg.455

No wonder this Samaritan was so full of gratitude.

Amen