

WHO IS FOUND TO WORSHIP JESUS?

Those who see that they've been healed -- Those who believe Jesus has healed them.

Luke 17:11-19

TEXT: *Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

I wonder what these ten men who were suffering from leprosy said to each other as they were one their way to show themselves to the priests.

According to Old Testament Ceremonial Law: *The person to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe with water; then he will be ceremonially clean. After this he may come into the camp, but he must stay outside his tent for seven days. On the seventh day he must shave off all his hair; he must shave his head, his beard, his eyebrows and the rest of his hair. He must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, and he will be clean.* Lev 14 Not only were the priests to serve as the equivalent of the Health Department, they were to teach and instruct the people to thank God for his grace and mercy toward sinners.

Jesus wasn't going to overlook this important aspect of their spiritual education! *Go, show yourselves to the priests.* Jesus doesn't heal them immediately so I wonder what these men were saying to each other as they went. Had Jesus rejected their plea? Would they show up to the priests only to be scolded or even arrested for being so bold as to come to them full of leprosy? But the Bible says: *And as they went, they were cleansed.*

One thing stands out in this historical account of this particular miracle. He is the Samaritan who came running back to Jesus when they saw that they were all suddenly cured. Of these ten men, our Lord Jesus points out that there was one who had faith. His return to give thanks was a demonstration of that faith: *Jesus said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*

Let's consider this and ask ourselves: **WHO IS FOUND TO WORSHIP JESUS?** Those who see that they've been healed; Those who believe Jesus has healed them.

Leprosy was a most feared disease because the ancients didn't know how it was contracted or spread. Since they believed it was by physical contact, leprosy people were ostracized from society. That's why these men prayed to Jesus from a distance: *...ten men who had leprosy met Jesus. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"* People with leprosy often lost their voices over time, along with their finger, toes, and even their faces as the leprosy caused them to be grossly disfigured.

Because of this, preachers and hymn-writers have often used leprosy as an illustration of sin. The leprosy of sin that affects us all, and contrary to what people like to believe, sin ostracizes us from God. God will not share space and time with sinners. That is clear throughout Scripture. Even if someone wants to come to God, the Bible says: *Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart...* Ps 24 So just as Jesus mercifully healed the leprosy of these ten men, so God in His grace and mercy has, in Christ, healed us from the leprosy of our sin.

Unlike leprosy, however, sin affects us from the moment of our conception in the womb. This is clearly revealed in Scripture. We come out of the womb and its effects are seen immediately. But since we grow up with a sinful nature, we tend to ignore it until it reveals itself through acts of disobedience. Sometimes it's like acne, or a cold. It all seems to go away. But it doesn't. It's embedded in our heart and soul. It's our nature from conception so that God would point to any one of us and declare that the heart of man is only evil all the time.

That Jesus would have to die on the cross to save us is something few people believe or consider. That's why when Jesus looks down from heaven at those who gather to worship His saving name He probably is saying: *Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?* Where are those for whom I have suffered and died? They say: "thank you Jesus

for your work, but God's not going to damn the world for just being humans who make mistakes!

The fact is that those who worship Jesus, who worship him in spirit and in truth, are those who do see their sin and the hell from which our God has saved us! Hell is real. Just before Jesus was crucified he said: (on Judgment Day) ***The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*** Mt 13 Is not this single reference enough for us to drop everything once a week to run to the House of the Lord just to worship and to thank him?

May we be among those who see that we are healed from sin! And may we be among those who run to Jesus, the One who has healed us!

What Jesus experienced that day is not uncommon even today. After graciously answering the plea of these ten men, Jesus sadly declares: ***Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?*** Did something go wrong with the miracle? No, nothing went wrong. It's just that only one of them had saving faith that erupts in joyous worship and praise. Even those the other nine also were miraculously cleansed, they did not have it in their hearts to worship. That's because they had no faith. Not the kind that the Lord discerns as faith that saves.

Faith that saves is more than just knowing the historical Jesus. Faith that saves us more than acknowledging that there is a God of love and forgiveness. Faith that saves is unique insofar as it is also a miracle of God. It is the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus described it as being "born again." Jesus said: ***I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*** Jn 3 Can our Lord be any more clear? If you have saving faith it is because our Lord Jesus has graciously sent His Holy Spirit to you, who through baptism have had this miracle of faith worked in your heart!

That's also why when believers gather together to worship, it's all about Jesus and what God has done for us through him. Our praise is not about ourselves and how much we love him because our love is flawed by sin. It is often shallow and easily gives way to temptations of all kinds. You know how true this is! So when we gather to worship, it's more than an opportunity to say "Thank you Jesus!" It's our time to sit at Jesus' feet to hear his Word and to receive His blessed Lord's Supper. It's our time to receive more from him and the Holy Spirit's power that enriches the faith that we have been given.

What a blessed reminder Jesus have this Samaritan who returned to give thanks and to praise Jesus! ***Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*** The Author and Creator of this man's faith tells him: While I have done a great miracle for ten men, you are one in whom the greatest miracle has been worked: ***"Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*** While many who live among us also enjoy the open hand of God's many blessings, even miracles that God performs according to His own gracious will, only you in whom God has worked saving faith understand this blessing so that when you leave here today, you do rise and go and live another week of blessedness and joy.

Who is found to worship Jesus? You who know and believe what Jesus has done for you. Amen.