

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS

BIBLE TEXT : Luke 17 :11-19

LESSON 127 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

¹² And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

¹³ And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

¹⁴ And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

¹⁶ And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

¹⁹ And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Through Samaria

Jesus did not always take the route through Samaria as He went to Jerusalem. More often He went another way. No doubt He went through Samaria for the sake of those who needed Him — the lepers whom He met. "The eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy" (Psalm 33:18).

As Jesus was about to enter a village, He was met by a band of ten men. They stood afar off, for they were lepers. According to the Law, they could not live inside the city. They were outcasts. No one wanted them near — that is, no one but Jesus.

Leprosy

Leprosy was and still is a terrible disease. One can become a leper by continued contact with a person who has it. That is why the lepers were not wanted in the city. They had to live outside the camp (Leviticus 13:46). When a person came near, they were to warn him by calling, "Unclean!" (Leviticus 13:45).

Leprosy is a type of sin. They are similar in many respects. One does not become a leper by the mere exposure to it, nor does a child of God become a sinner when he is exposed to sin. But the Bible warns us against evil companions, lest they advise us that sin is not so bad and break down our resistance to it. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men" (Proverbs 4:14). "Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods" (I Kings 11:2). "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). There is a familiar song which tells us to "shun evil companions."

Leprosy and Sin

These ten lepers were outcasts. Men wanted nothing to do with them, and were almost cruel. Jesus was kind to them. In showing mercy, He set a good example for us to be kind. A Christian does not treat a sinner cruelly, but kindly tells him of Jesus who can heal his sickness of sin.

We are told that leprosy begins as a mere spot. It spreads until sometimes the whole body is afflicted. How dangerous it is for one to let sin get a little spot in his life, too! Satan may try to make him think that since it is such a little thing, surely God will overlook it. Once sin gets a start it begins to grow. In another lesson we have learned that leaven, too, is like sin, and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). We read in the Word of God that Jesus will have a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should *be* holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:14).

Unaware of Condition

The ten men whom Jesus met knew that they were lepers.

From afar off they called to Jesus for mercy. Before a sinner is saved he must realize his condition. We are told there is a stage of leprosy which makes a numbness in the victim. How like sin, which often produces a spiritual numbness so that the sinner does not feel his sin. If one feels that he is not so bad, Jesus does not help him. He can be cleansed when he admits that he is sinful, and, like the lepers, from afar off calls unto Jesus for mercy. Many sinners have been saved by the same prayer that these lepers prayed, "Have mercy on us!"

Obedience

Just as a leper was sent away from people who did not have the disease, so a sinner is spiritually cut off from God and the household of faith. In the eyes of God, he is spotted as a sinner and is not a member of the congregation of the righteous. The lepers were permitted to be with others when they obeyed Jesus. According to the Law, they were to show themselves to the priest before they went to their homes. The ten lepers were given something to do — they obeyed Jesus as well as the Law. They showed obedience, reverence, and faith in Jesus. They started off to the priest; but before they had gone that far, they were healed! A sinner, too, with faith can be healed as he sets out to do as Jesus bids him.

Perhaps you have read about another leper, called Naaman. Even though he was a captain for the king, a great and honorable man with wealth and courage — yet he was a leper (II Kings 5:1). One may have many good things in his favor, but if he has not been to Jesus for forgiveness there is sin in his life. Some people, like Naaman first did, go to the wrong person for help. Confessing one's sins to a man, and joining a church, do not forgive his sins. Jesus is the only one who can forgive our sins. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Naaman was told to dip seven times in the Jordan River in order to be healed of his leprosy. He thought he would be healed in a different manner, and refused to obey. Naaman went off in a rage. He wondered why he could not dip in the clear rivers of his homeland rather than in muddy Jordan. Finally, his servants persuaded him to try the remedy, since it was not a hard thing. He humbled himself, for into the river he went as he was told to do. He was not healed gradually. The work was done when he dipped the seventh time. A sinner has the same experience. His sins are forgiven when he humbles himself in true repentance and obeys the Word of God. He finds that all his sins are gone, not one remains. He is healed, and like Naaman, can say, "Now I know" (II Kings 5:15).

Thankfulness

Of the ten lepers who were healed by obeying Jesus, only one returned to thank Him. The others knew that they were healed but failed to give glory to God. No doubt their hearts were so hardened and indifferent that they had no thought of thanking the Lord. Some people let miracles like this become commonplace. They would like to be healed of their sickness but want to continue in their sins. Perhaps the nine lepers were concerned about the healing of their bodies but not their souls. The one showed evidence of the double cure — healing and salvation.

This may not always be the case, but often healing and salvation go together. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins,

they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). The leper who returned was one who experienced both. Through faith the healing touched even his soul. From his heart and lips came praises to God for the great things that had been done for him. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Jesus go through Samaria?
- 2 Of what is leprosy a type?
- 3 Why did the lepers stand afar off?
- 4 What did they do to be healed?
- 5 How can one be healed of his sins?
- 6 In what ways are leprosy and sin alike?
- 7 Why did only one return to glorify God?
- 8 By obeying Jesus, what did this man receive?