

Title: **CLEANSED, BUT NOT HEALED**

Text: Luke 17:11-19

Subject: *Ten Lepers Healed*

Date: Sunday Evening — June 6, 2004

Tape # Y-25a

Readings: *Rex Bartley and James Jordan*

Introduction:

Have you just been cleansed, or have you been healed? Have you merely been changed, or have you been made whole?

During the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, there were many who enjoyed the temporal, outward benefits of his works who never knew him. Many who touched him never touched him. Many who drank the wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee never tasted the wine of his grace. Many ate the loaves and fishes who never tasted the bread of life. And there were multitudes who knew the power of his word to heal their bodies who never knew the power of his grace in the healing of their souls. We have one glaring example of this in the passage before us tonight — Luke 17:11-19.

(Luke 17:11-19) “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 show 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.”

How many there are, like those nine lepers who want no more from Christ than power to correct their woes. Because that is all they seek, that is all they get. I have known many who in times of great danger, or great difficulty, or because they have brought upon themselves great misery, pray, profess faith in Christ, join the church, and become very religious (at least for a while). Their lives have been radically reformed. They have made great changes. Their troubles were healed. And once they got what

they wanted, like the nine lepers in this passage, they “*are not found.*” They were cleansed, but only outwardly. They were cleansed, but not healed. There is a difference.

Then there are others, like the one leper who “*when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at Christ’s feet, giving him thanks.*” There are many, many lessons for our souls in this passage. May God the Holy Spirit be our Teacher and seal to our hearts the things revealed in these ten lepers.

Luke 17:11-19

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

The Lord Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. He was going there for the blessed purpose of laying down his life in the room and stead of his sinful people, to finish the work for which he had come into this world of sin and woe. There he would lay down his life for his sheep. There he would pour out his life’s blood unto death, bearing our sin in his on body on the cursed tree. There, he would suffer all the horrid wrath of God as our Substitute, all unmitigated fury of divine justice to the full satisfaction of justice, until at last he would cry, “*It is finished!*” He was going to Jerusalem to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

As he made his way to the place of sacrifice, “*he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*” Much speculation has been made about this, but the simple fact is that the nearest way to get from Galilee to Jerusalem was by going through Samaria. And our ever faithful Savior had an appointment at Jerusalem that he must now keep, an appointment with God’s offended justice, an appointment of grace and redemption for us, and an appointment of death for him. His time had now come. His hour was now at hand. And the Lord Jesus would not turn back. — “*Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved us to the end!*”

- Isaiah 50:5-7

Verse 12 — “*And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.*”

We are told in verse 16 that one of these lepers was a Samaritan. I find that interesting. The Samaritans and Jews despised one another. Normally, they would never be seen in company with one another. But affliction and misery, poverty and need often make men friends who in times of health and prosperity despise one another because of stupid prejudice. If misery will cause lost men to put aside such proud strife and division, how shameful it is when those who profess to know the grace of God cannot put away social, racial, and class distinctions!

On the outskirts of one of the villages ten leprous men were gathered to meet the Son of God, united in a community of deadly misery. They were far off, because they dare not approach, since their approach was pollution, and they were obliged to warn away all who would come near them by the shameful, heart-rendering cry, “Unclean! Unclean!”

No doubt these ten lepers had heard that the Lord Jesus was passing their way. Why else would they have come to meet him? They had heard his fame, how that he had healed other lepers. So they came to the Son of God, desiring that he might heal them.

These men were lepers. There was something in that living death of leprosy – recalling as it did the most frightful images of suffering and degradation, corrupting as it did the very fountains of the life blood of man, distorting his appearance, making his touch loathsome, slowly incrusting and infecting him with a plague far more horrible than death itself – which always seems to have aroused our Lord’s heart with keen and instantaneous compassion.

LEPROSY

I doubt that any of us, having never seen a man in the condition of these men can imagine the scene before our Lord. Here are ten men who are lepers.

- Their voices are hoarse and raspy.
- They are covered with sores and scabs.
- Their faces like chunks of burned coal, bloated, but hard, cracked, and scabbed.
- Their flesh is rotting on their bodies.
- Their eyes bloodshot and burning, their noses sunken because of decaying cartilage, their tongues black, swollen, and ulcerated, they are dying a miserable death together!

OUR LEPROSY

Transfer the picture in your mind, to another. You are looking now into a mirror. Oh, what miserable, deplorable objects we are. You see, you and I are all lepers by nature. Leprosy stands before us in Holy Scripture as a vivid picture of sin.

- Leprosy was, according to Old Testament law, a disease that made a person unclean. He was pronounced unclean by the priest (the law), put out of the camp of Israel, and isolated from society.
- Everything the leper touched was defiled and unclean.
- Leprosy, like sin, is a spreading disease, corrupting the whole life of a man, until he is destroyed by it altogether. — It corrupts the entire human race. — It is spread through all our members.
- Sin, like leprosy, has shut us outside the camp and made us far off from God (Eph. 2:11-12).
- It is, like sin, an incurable disease, incurable by any earthly, human means.

Lepers were never sent to a doctor. They were sent to a priest. But all the priest could do was look at his condition, declare him unclean, and shut him out of the camp. He could do nothing for him. The whole Levitical law concerning lepers and leprosy are intended to show us the nature and use of the law. It identifies our leprosy, concludes that we are lepers, and declares that we are unclean, but does nothing to change or help our condition. Nothing but the precious, sin-atoning blood of Christ, nothing but the stripes inflicted upon him by the whip of God's holy law and justice can heal us of our disease and cleanse us of the plague of our hearts.

CLEANSING

As leprosy portrays our sin, the cleansing of a leper under the law portrayed the healing of our souls by Christ. In order for the leper to be ceremonially clean, two birds were to be taken clean and alive. Both were both typical of Christ.

One of the birds was killed, in an earthen vessel over running water, showing that Christ must be killed, his blood must be shed for the cleansing of leprous sinners. The earthen vessel denoted his human nature, his flesh, in which he was put to death. The running water signified the purifying nature of his blood, and the continued virtue of it, to cleanse from all sin.

The other bird, after it was dipped with the cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop in the blood of the slain bird, was let go alive, typifying the resurrection of Christ and our resurrection with him, declaring redemption accomplished, acceptance assured, and sin put away.

Ten men who were lepers met the Lord Jesus on his way to Calvary. Now, watch this...

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

These men knew full well that no mere man had ever healed another of leprosy. But they had heard that this Man had. So they called upon him, the Man who stood before them in human flesh as God, asking him to have mercy upon them.

- *“Jesus!”* — Jehovah-rophi, God our Healer, Jehovah our Savior.
- *“Master!”*
- *“Have mercy on us!”*

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

Do not miss this. When these lepers begged him to show them mercy, the Lord Jesus said, *“Go show yourselves unto the priests.”* In the Old Testament law those who thought they might be lepers were required to go show themselves to the priests, so that the priests (The Levites — The Law) could confirm that they were indeed lepers (Lev. 13:2-3). Obviously, these men had already been through that procedure. They were already declared to be and identified as lepers.

Why, then, did the Lord Jesus command them to go show themselves to the priests again. You will find the answer in Leviticus 14:2-3. There the leper who was clean was required to go show himself to the priest (The Levite — The Law), not to be made clean, but to be pronounced clean.

In other words, the Lord Jesus said, *“You are clean,”* and sent them on their way to be ceremonially pronounced clean. These men believed his word. They headed straight to the priests to be pronounced clean.

“And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.” — As they started to the priests, they looked upon themselves and realized that they were clean. Their leprosy was gone! — Healed by the mere sovereign will of the sovereign Savior!

Verses 15-18 — *“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.”*

These verses are full of instruction. Why did the other nine go on to the priests? And why did this one Samaritan stranger return to the Lord Jesus, glorifying God with a loud voice, as he fell down on his face at the Savior’s feet? The answer should be obvious.

The other nine called the Lord Jesus by his name, Jehovah-Jesus, God our Savior, and acknowledged him as Master, and were cleansed of their leprosy in their bodies; but this man, being both cleansed of his physical leprosy and healed of the leprosy that plagued his heart came back to worship the Lord Jesus as God his Savior. He was not only cleansed of his leprosy, he was made whole.

Now, look at verse 19.

Verse 19 — *“And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”*

When the nine were cured of the ailment of their bodies, they had obtained all that they wanted. They needed and wanted nothing else. But this Samaritan stranger had a experienced something else. He was healed of his leprosy and grace was poured into his soul. The nine were content to go on just as the had, living under the yoke of bondage and ceremonialism. But this man was forever done with Jewish priests, religious ceremonies, legal sacrifices, and carnal ordinances. He fled away to the Son of God, the Author and Finisher of his salvation.

Countless multitudes, like those nine lepers, being healed only outwardly, in their bodies, by a religious encounter of one kind or another, never know or worship the Son of God. But poor, wretched sinners, knowing the leprosy of their souls, as soon as they are made whole by the Lord Jesus,

fall at his feet, glorifying God with thankful hearts. They go no more to the law of carnal commandments, but ever come to the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, made our Priest forever after the power of an endless life (Heb. 7:16).

To all who thus believe on the Son of God, he declares, “*Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*” Did the Lord Jesus actually say that? Surely, not! Oh, but he did, didn’t he? He did not just say it here; he said it many times.

- In Matthew 9:22 he said to the woman with an issue of blood who touched him, “*Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.*”
- In Mark 10:52 he told Bartimaeus, whom he had just healed of his blindness, “*Thy faith hath made thee whole.*”
- In Luke 7:50 our Savior said to the woman who was a sinner, who worshipped him as her Savior, “*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*”
- In Luke 18:42 the Master gave sight to another blind man and said, “*Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.*”

I know many who would cringe if they heard a preacher say that to any sinner. They are scared to death that the plain statements of Holy Scripture will utterly destroy their wonderful system of doctrine. Any system of doctrine that cannot bear the plain statements of Holy Scripture is a corrupt system and needs destroying.

Such statements as this, “*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*” must never be explained away, but delightfully embraced. No, faith is not our Savior! We are saved altogether by the work of God’s omnipotent grace, without our aid. But there is no salvation without faith in Christ!

Yes, Christ gives us faith. It is the gift and operation of God the Holy Spirit. But having wrought faith in us and given it to us, it is our faith. And we receive all the bounteous blessings of God’s rich, free grace by faith in Christ.

Will you hear me? The Lord God promises eternal salvation to faith in his dear Son, declaring that all who believe on Christ have everlasting life. — “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*” And every sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ glorifies God, falling at the

feet of his all-glorious Savior, worshipping him alone as his Savior, with a heart of never dying, deeply felt gratitude, crying, “*By the grace of God I am what I am! — Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*”

Illustration: “*Help me! Help me! Somebody, please, help me!*”

(1 Corinthians 6:11) “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Now, I ask you again — **Have you just been cleansed, or have you been healed?** Have you merely been changed, or have you been made whole? May the Lord Jesus now make you whole for his own dear name’s sake.

Amen.