LESSONS FROM THE LEPERS

THE MIRACLE OF A THANKFUL HEART

Luke 17:15,16 ¶ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

This is one of the great miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible. If you are not observant you may miss the real miracle. Of course the healing of leprosy was spectacular just as all of God's miracles, but the greatest miracle was not so spectacular. It was more of a hidden, mysterious miracle. It was the miracle of a thankful heart. All of the lepers were physically healed and got to return to their lives. Only one saw Jesus for who He really is. Who is He? He is not only the healer of bodies but the healer of broken hearts. Our hearts are all broken, paralyzed by sin. This one leper understood what had happened and Who Jesus is. Leprosy was a picture of man's sinful condition. The physical healing was a picture of the miracle of Calvary. He bore my sins as well as my sicknesses in His body on the cross. Only one leper got the real miracle, the miracle of a thankful heart. Here is how Matthew Henry describes it.

"How rich Christ is in doing good: Were there not ten cleansed? Here was a cure by wholesale, a whole hospital healed with one word's speaking. Note, There is an abundance of healing cleansing virtue in the blood of Christ, sufficient for all his patients, though ever so many. Here are ten at a time cleansed; we shall have never the less grace for others sharing it. How poor we are in our returns: "Where are the nine? Why did not they return to give thanks?" This intimates that ingratitude is a very common sin. Of the many that receive mercy from God, there are but few, very few, that return to give thanks in a right manner (scarcely one in ten), that render according to the benefit done to them. How those often prove most grateful from whom it was least expected. A Samaritan gives thanks, and a Jew does not. Thus many who profess revealed religion are out-done, and quite shamed, by some that are governed only by natural religion, not only in moral value, but in piety and devotion."

The Samaritan was a picture of the unchurched crowd today. Often the lost get it sooner than church folks, Christ died to save sinners. When you see it you too will receive the heart of Thanksgiving.
I. TOTAL DEPENDENCY ON THE MERCY OF GOD - LEPROUS HEART & LEPROUS BODY

Lk.17:12,13 - 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”.

They were standing in front of the personification of the mercy of God. His coming death would deal with their leprous heart and their leprous body.

OUR LEPROUS HEART IS THE ROOT OF ALL OF THE PROBLEMS - THE UGLINESS IN OUR LIVES

II. HEALED BY FAITH IN HIS WORD - ACT LIKE YOU BELIEVE GOD’S WORD

Lk.17:14 - When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed.

GO SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIEST
III. THE TRUE SIGN OF CONVERSION - HE RETURNED WITH A THANKFUL HEART

Lk.17:15,16 - Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

THANKSGIVING AND WORSHIP WERE A SURE SIGN OF HIS CONVERSION. HIS SALVATION WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS HEALING

IV. THIS IS WHAT THE MIRACLE WAS ABOUT - THE GLORY OF GOD

Lk.17:15,16 - Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

THIS BECOMES THE VERY CENTER OF OUR LIFE - THE GLORY OF GOD

SEEING GOD’S GLORY ON DISPLAY IN OUR CHANGED LIVES
V. UNTHANKFUL

Lk.17:17,18 - Then Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine — where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?

What have you done for me lately? That is kind of the attitude the children of Israel had that kept them wandering for forty years. They had seen the plagues on Egypt that launched their deliverance. From there they saw the Red Sea part and then drown the Egyptian Army. They experienced the cloud by day and the fiery pillar by night. Then there was the manna from heaven every day and the water from the rock that followed them in the desert. The Lord had met them at every turn but their hearts were filled with unthankfulness. Failing to appreciate the daily supernatural nature of God’s provision all they could see was what they didn’t have. They missed the onions and leeks in Egypt. Thankfulness brings us into an awareness of God’s goodness, ingratitude closes our hearts even further. Ellicott speaks about ingratitude in his comments on the ten lepers who Jesus healed.

“Were there not ten cleansed?”—There is, it is clear, a tone of mingled surprise, and grief, and indignation, in the question thus asked. Looking to the facts of the case, an ethical question of some difficulty presents itself. If the nine had had faith to be healed—and the fact that they were healed implies it—how was it that faith did not show itself further in gratitude and love? The answer is to be found in the analogous phenomena of the spiritual life which are found at times in cases that are as the cleansing of the soul’s leprosy. Men have the faith which justifies; they are pardoned, and they have the sense of freedom from the burden and the disease of sin, and yet their lives show no glow of loving gratitude. They shrink from fellowship with those who, having been sharers in the same blessing with themselves, are separated from them by outward lines of demarcation.”

We can learn a lot about thanksgiving from the Samaritan who returned to give thanks. It wasn’t religious ceremonies or even a healed body that he needed, what he really needed was found at the feet of Jesus. What all of us need can only be found at Jesus feet. Don’t fall into the trap of “what have you done for me lately?” Thank Him for all He has done and then you will see clearly to see all He is doing right now in your life.
VI. CROWNED WITH MERCY

Ps.103:4 - who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.

Redemption is not the end of the story, it is where everything begins. God’s plan for you is not just to fix you so you can be a better version of you in this life. His plans are far more aggressive. His plan includes crowns and glory and other such things. He lifts us out of our hopeless condition and loads us with His benefits. Mercy crowns our life and our story brings glory to the Lord. Whatever pit you were wallowing in just becomes a crown of mercy on your head. Your life is filled with the fruit of mercy, the joy of the Lord. Your story declares and displays the glory of the Lord. Here is how Spurgeon describes it.

“Redemption will ever constitute one of the sweetest notes in the believer’s grateful song.... Our Lord does nothing by halves, he will not stay his hand till he has gone to the uttermost with his people. Cleansing, healing, redemption, are not enough, he must needs make them kings and crown them, and the crown must be far more precious than if it were made of corruptible things, such as silver and gold; it is studded with gems of grace and lined with the velvet of lovingkindness; it is decked with the jewels of mercy, but made soft for the head to wear by a lining of tenderness. Who is like unto thee, O Lord! God himself crowns the princes of his family, for their best things come from him directly and distinctly; they do not earn the crown, for it is of mercy not of merit; they feel their own unworthiness of it, therefore he deals with tenderness; but he is resolved to bless them, and, therefore, he is ever crowning them, always surrounding their brows with coronets of mercy and compassion. He always crowns the edifice which he commences, and where he gives pardon he gives acceptance too.”

We started in a pit, we end up on a throne. Paul said we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What started as a nightmare ends up in a fairy tale. I had no hope, Christ found me, extended His hand of mercy, He then crowned my life with His endless love. Everyone who sees what happened to me is struck by the magnificence of His glory on display in my life.

VII. YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WHOLE

Lk.17:19 - And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.