

THE TEN LEPERS

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Reading: Luke 17:11-19

In this story from the Lord's Word, the Lord was passing by a certain village when ten lepers met Him and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13). They were very sick and longed to be well again, healed of their leprosy.

Leprosy was a terrible disease. It made the skin white and sore. People were so afraid of this disease that lepers were often made to live outside the villages so that they would not come near anybody. Relatives and kind people brought them food. They were lonely and homesick, but they could not go home unless the priests examined them and found that they had recovered.

The Lord now simply said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests" (Luke 17:14). And as they went, they were restored to perfect health.

Now we are told that nine of these lepers were Jews. The Jews, the Children of Israel, were the chosen people. The Lord had given them the Ten Commandments and revealed Himself to them as the One and Only God. He had helped them with many miracles and had taught them through prophets. So the Jews had everything to be thankful for. And now the Lord Himself had come down to earth among them.

You would think that these nine lepers would be especially thankful to the Lord when they saw that they had been healed. And, of course, they must have been glad. But they went right on their way, without even saying "Thank you."

The tenth leper was different. He was a Samaritan. The Jews looked down on the Samaritans, because the Samaritans did not sacrifice in the beautiful Temple at Jerusalem, and they did not have any prophets to teach them. It might seem like the Samaritans did not have much to be thankful for.

And yet, when the Samaritan leper saw that he was healed, his heart was filled with thankfulness. He returned to the Lord and fell down at His feet and worshipped Him.

This often happens. People who have a lot of blessings take things for granted. They don't think about how fortunate they are. Do you ever think about how blessed you are? You live in good homes and are given warm clothes and plenty of food. If you are sick, you have doctors and hospitals to go to.

The Lord gives you such blessings, not because you deserve them, but because He wants you to do useful things for others and share your happiness with them. Only by doing that can anyone learn to be happy. And only in this way can we really show the Lord that we are thankful to Him.

Family Talk

The Samaritan leper returned to the Lord after he had been healed. Then, “with a loud voice [he] glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks” (Luke 17:15-16). And we should remember to thank the Lord too, by doing useful and loving things for other people.

Amen.