

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“ONE GRATEFUL LEPER”

For individual study or group discussion

Throughout our studies in the *Gospel of Luke*, we have seen Jesus' love for outsiders and the marginalized. Starting with his inaugural sermon in Luke 4:16-27, he announces he has come to proclaim good news to the poor, deliver the captives, and proclaim his favor to the outcast and the broken. If ever there was a picture of being “outcast and broken,” it would be those with leprosy like the ten lepers we encounter in Luke 17:11-19. They are a band of miserable, outcast brothers standing on the outskirts of town when Jesus passes by. Pleading for mercy, the ten receive miraculous healing. But only *one grateful leper* is made whole.

A merciful healing in response to distant cries (vv. 11-14)

At the opening of the passage, we are reminded that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, passing along the boundary area between Samaria and Galilee (v. 11). Jesus is well acquainted with the outer boundaries, as he regularly visited them, restoring dignity and value to those on the fringes of society. As he approaches a village, ten lepers call out to him to have mercy on them (v. 13). Jesus responds to the distant cries by mercifully healing them all.

- How do you think ten lepers in a remote boundary area knew about Jesus? (cf. Mark 1:28)
- What would it have been like to be removed from friends and family for a lifetime due to an incurable disease? Has God allowed you to experience a time of hardship? Read Psalm 143. Compare David's cry for mercy to that of the lepers.
- Skim Leviticus 13-14. Why was it important for the cleansed lepers to go and show themselves to the priests?

A grateful response from a surprising source (vv. 15-16)

Out of the ten lepers, only one turns to Jesus with thanksgiving. But the surprising twist to the story comes in verse 16, when Luke tells us that the grateful leper was a Samaritan, a man unfamiliar with the Torah, from mixed ethnic and religious background, and shunned by the Jewish community. But he is the only one that stops, turns back, and praises Jesus. The Samaritan rightly responds and worships him (v. 16).

- In 2 Kings 5:14-17 and Luke 4:20-30, we read of another outsider who was healed from leprosy. Describe Naaman's response after he was healed. What were the responses of the Jews upon hearing Jesus speak of outsiders being more receptive to him than his covenant people?

A piercing question for recipients of mercy (vv. 17-19)

“Where are the nine?” asks Jesus. Only the Samaritan has returned to thank him. The others rush to the temple in order to be declared clean and possibly even to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. But what they are missing is that the true temple of God stands before them (Colossians 2:9). Sadly, their worship is not redirected to Jesus, and unlike the Samaritan, they are not made whole.

- Read Ephesians 5:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, and Colossians 3:15-17. Why are faith and thankfulness an essential part of true worship?
- According to 2 Timothy 3:1-5, what type of person can appear godly but deny the power of the Gospel? Discuss how you have been convicted by today's lesson.
- Tim Keller noted, “It's one thing to be grateful. It's another to give thanks. Gratitude is what you feel. Thanksgiving is what you do.”¹ Why is the practice of giving thanks to God a mark of true faith? (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Psalm 7:17, Psalm 86:12, and James 1:22-25)

DATE: January 28, 2024

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 17:11-19

Family Dinner Table

“We are all beggars. This is true.”

The social stigma and prejudice of society towards those with leprosy in the ancient world would have made the ten lepers of Luke 17:11-19 the lowliest outcasts in their community. And in Jewish society, a Samaritan leper would have been the lowest of the low. The special directive by Jesus to “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (v. 14) only made matters worse, because the Samaritan leper would have had no priest to whom he could present himself. He could not go with the other nine into the temple. But in a moment of over-whelming gratitude, he realized Jesus was the only Temple and Priest he needed.

Shortly before Martin Luther died, a piece of paper containing his handwriting was found on the table next to his deathbed. Among other words on the paper were these: “We are all beggars. This is true.” During his lifetime, Luther had come to see his total need for and dependence upon God. Luther, like the Samaritan leper, needed only Jesus. And in having Jesus, they had everything they needed.

- Read aloud Psalm 103:1-14. This week take time to journal, pausing to reflect on each verse, thanking God for the wondrous things he has done for you.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Metanoia Prison Ministries,
strategic partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

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¹ Keller, Tim. “It's one thing to be grateful...” X, November 25, 2021. <https://twitter.com/timkellernyc/status/1463898720429297667?lang=en>