



ST. PATRICK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

4797 Curtis Rd Port ST John FL 32927

The 14th Sunday in Trinity
September 5, 2021

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
and of The Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Luke 17:11-19

As you probably know, Leprosy is a bacterial infection which causes all sorts of sores to the skin and muscles. If left untreated it can lead to gross deformities, horrible rashes, a degradation of the vocal cords, trouble seeing, and trouble walking.

During the time of Christ there was no cure or treatment for leprosy. It was thought to be very contagious since so many suffered from it. Today it is treatable and curable in most cases and is now preventable. Most people are immune to the bacteria which causes leprosy.

But for those who lived in Jesus' time, It was biblically mandated, that anyone with such a disease should be separated from the rest of society, and remain that way until such a time as a priest declared the "unclean" person "clean".

Those with leprosy were not allowed to offer their sacrifices to God, they were considered outcast, even cursed by God. They could not study the Scriptures or worship in the synagogues.

This is how these 10 lepers had spent their days. People would see them and take a wide path around them.

The lepers were required to say "unclean, unclean" so that everyone knew to stay away.

But these 10 lepers had heard about Jesus. They know that He has the power to heal people. So, they seek out Jesus and when He is far off, they call out to Him to have mercy on them. Perhaps they expect Jesus to touch them. Perhaps they expect Him to raise His hands, - to say to them "be clean" or "be gone, evil leprosy". Instead, Jesus simply tells them "go and show yourselves to the priests".

In those days, it was the duty of the priests to scrutinize the condition of anyone suffering from a disease like leprosy and to determine if they had recovered or if they were still infected. It was very uncommon for a priest to announce "clean" to anyone with leprosy because, again, there was no effective cure for this infection. These ten lepers follow the instruction of Jesus, and as they go they are healed.

One of the lepers returns to Jesus to thank Him, to praise and worship Him. Instead of following the other nine, he recognizes what God has done for him. He recognizes WHO Jesus is, and he falls at the feet of Jesus in thanksgiving. The other nine should have returned to glorify God on bended knee for what He has done, but they do not. The miracle Jesus performs, a miracle done in order to bring glory to God, escapes the hearts of these nine lepers, these nine Jewish lepers, and only the Samaritan leper returns, and by faith, believes. A Samaritan, who is deemed a half-breed by the Jews, an outcast, and looked down on by the Jews. Jesus proclaims that not only is his body healed, but his heart is healed because of his faith, a faith which was planted and watered by the very words of his Lord and God.

What do we learn from this? That faith in God, - trusting in God, is more important, - actually, - more necessary than anything else. Not a faith that says “I want something so I’m going to try and believe,” but a faith that says “no matter what the situation is, I believe that Christ loves me, and died for my sins.”

And faith is not about physical healing. It’s not about material things. The nine lepers obeyed their law; they were obedient all the way to the grave. They did not give thanks for their blessing. But the 10th leper had faith, - and by his faith, he was healed – his heart was healed, - he thanked Jesus. The nine did not return and give glory to God. They rejected an opportunity to find faith. Just as the Pharisees will do in rejecting Jesus as the Word of God, and crucifying him.

The love of God already has given us mercy in Jesus Christ – God already has granted us true deliverance by saving us from our sins, - by forgiving us with His love, - and giving us His Holy Spirit to comfort us, - If only we accept His gift of faith.

We know God has been with us and has protected us and given us countless gifts of mercy and grace each and every day. Do we return and thank Jesus for all the blessings He has bestowed on us, - for everything He has done for us? Do we have true faith in Jesus?

What does produce faith? What produced faith in the 10th leper who returned?

What produced faith in the man who said, “Lord, I believe, help me with my unbelief” when his boy was brought back to life? What produces faith in you?

Is it not the Word of God which speaks into you, speaks into your heart, which produces faith within you, - and which draws you back to His feet - if only we listen?

Yes, and in fact it was the same Word of God which spoke to you and entered into your heart when you were baptized, washed and buried with Christ and raised up into a new life, lived by faith and not by works. - Such a simple thing.

This is the message, the Gospel that we have been hearing and reading week after week. It is the message, - the Gospel which says to us that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come in the flesh to save sinners just like you and just like me. He has come to die in order to destroy the power of sin and the consequence of death. And He has come to speak faith into your heart, so that against all that you see, and against all of the nature within you which says “you have to work” and “you have to get it all right, you have to have perfect health, - you have to have wealth. - Against ALL of this, He has come to speak into your heart...through faith, and to say to you, “I am your Lord and Savior, now go, your faith...the faith which I have given to you...has made you well.”

It is the same faith that we now profess in our creed. It's the same faith that we now express in our confessions. It is the faith that we learn of and express our thankfulness for...in our liturgy and in our hymns.

It is a simple but profound gem, a light which draws people back to the feet of Christ. It is the same faith which has drawn YOU back to the feet of Christ in thankfulness and worship; in fear, and in reverence.

It is a faith which speaks to you in the Eucharist: "here is my body, here is my blood", and you receive it for the strengthening of that faith and the forgiveness of your sins, - and we give thanks to God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ for that gift.

Glory be to God.

And may God continue to speak His Word, so that faith might find its way into the hearts of all who shall receive it.

Amen.