

Luke 17:11-19; Lev. 13:45-46; Healed and Grateful I. The Overwhelming Need II. The Subtle Cure III. The Partial Praise

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, last week we began to consider this concept of entitlement. Entitlement is defined as the unrealistic or unmerited expectation of favorable living or favorable treatment at the hands of others. This unmerited expectation of favorable treatment from others is exactly what we find today. In the short story from last week we saw that the proper attitude of a member of God's household is humble obedience- to see yourself as an unmerited and unworthy servant. So do we find this sense of unworthiness today- or do we rather find a spirit of entitlement in the healing of the 10 Lepers. Today we see that our master Jesus is surprised at the ingratitude of those who are healed. So the call upon us remains- those who are healed must be grateful!

I. The Overwhelming Need

We begin by considering the overwhelming need made evident in our text. Jesus has been taking a round about way to Jerusalem and we find him in one of the small villages between Samaria and Galilee. Here, well north of Jerusalem, Jesus is met by a band of outcasts. Now this is not the first time Jesus has been in the area- we remember the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4- who became a witness to her whole village concerning the identity of Jesus as the Messiah. So the news has spread throughout the area at this time concerning the power of this man. So in v. 12 Jesus is met by 10 lepers. Now we know that leprosy covered a broad type of skin disease. It was hated and feared as sickness. There was no known earthly cure- and those who had this disease were stigmatized. It would be like our present-day Aids or Ebola- those who have it were kept away from others for fear of transmission. When you had leprosy, your skin would rub raw. Eventually, your extremities would lose feeling and even fall off. It was disfiguring. These 10 men would be kept away from the rest of society. As we read in Lev. 13:46- they could not mingle with the rest of the Israelites. They had to live in a special tent outside of the community- and added to this fact they could not attend the worship ceremonies at the temple. So they are both a social and religious outcast! As we find in v. 12- they stood at a distance- with their mouths covered- they cried out for mercy. With uplifted voices- not only because they were standing at a distance- not just to make their voices heard- but because of their wretched situation and desperate need! There was no cure- no salve to put on their

skin- no pill to pop in your mouth- no treatment that could be found. No- you were stuck with this disease unless God directly intervened! So they shouted- raising their voices to their highest level- crying out with unrestrained passion- have mercy on us! Now this was a pretty large group of 10 men- not just a single person but a rabble- a band of traveling infected people who have only one hope- this man Jesus Christ! Note also what they call him in v. 13- master! Remember what we saw last week in 17:7- that we are servants or slaves that belong to a master! Well here we find out who this master is- our master is Jesus! Master- owner- lord- Jesus- heal us- they cried! We also note that leprosy is perhaps one of the clearest pictures of man in their sin. We are by nature wasting away- we are dead men walking. It is only a matter of time until both our body and our soul become so polluted that we drop to the ground and enter our eternal grave. There is no hope- no cure for this disease called sinful nature and flesh! So let us learn from these men- to cry out to Jesus as the only source- the only one who has a cure to heal our diseases and forgive our sins!

II. The Subtle Cure

As we come to v. 14, we find that Jesus hears and answers their cry for help. He issues two commands- go and show. Depart and display. Notice that there is no process of cleaning, washing or purification. Normally in the OT economy, someone who was cured of Leprosy needed to be visited by the priest, washed, put in a quarantine for 7 days- and then inspected again by the priest. It was often a long process of being inspected, washing, waiting, and then being inspected again. But Jesus jumps right to final step- go and show yourself to the priests! This would serve as a witness to the priest- there is one in Israel who can do what man alone cannot! It would be testament to the power and work of Jesus Christ- as these men came to be inspected- having all been cleansed. And for those who were healed, imagine the joy of being able to go the temple area for the first time in ages! After years of suffering alone- isolated from the temple and from fellow man- they are given opportunity to go to the temple again! And as these 10 men depart- all 10 of them are miraculously cured on the way. We see that this is a very subtle cure. As they walked their skin would have slowly recovered. Like Naaman in II Kings 5- the cure comes over time- after washing not once but 7 times. So these 10 men begin their journey, and on the way they are all fully

healed and restored. Jesus is able to cleanse them immediately, but He chooses to heal them on the way- no longer in Jesus' presence to test their gratitude. Would they come back in thanksgiving? It is fitting to remember that an effective cure for leprosy was only discovered in 1940. Before that time, there was not any consistent form of relief! But God's hand is not shortened! He gives the command- and these 10 go and are made well. V. 14 seems so anti-climatic- as they went, they were cleansed. But I imagine that these 10 men did not find this cure ordinary at all! I assume that they were each filled with joy- and an excitement to be reunited with their families again!

III. The Partial Praise

But even though they may have been glad or relieved to be healed- our text only focusses on the response of 1 of the 10. That is because only one came back! The other 9 went on with their day- went back to their pre-sickness life- and settled down in their new freedom. Only 1 came back to Jesus. Jesus points to this shocking fact in v. 17- were not all 10 healed, where are the other 9? The praise that Jesus receives for healing is only partial- because 90 percent of those healed forget to thank the healer! This is very telling- instructive concerning our nature! For example, when we pray for something and we receive what we ask for- how long do we usually praise and thank God for granting us what we asked for? If we are sick- we fill God's ear with our constant cry for mercy. But as soon as we are better, we tend to go on with our lives after a few moments of thanksgiving. How short our thanksgiving tends to be! Even in our prayers- do we spend more time giving thanks to God for what He has given or asking God for what we do not have? Well, these 9 who did not come back display what we have been calling the spirit of entitlement. They think they deserve what good they receive- or at least fail to see the grace and mercy in their answered prayer. They fail to give thanks- and in failing to give thanks they miss out and the full blessing as we will see! They do not praise God nor do they fall down in the thanksgiving in the presence of Jesus- as they are too busy getting on with their lives! Now this should be shocking to us- and we can even see the shock or sorrow on Jesus' face! Were not all 10 healed? As Rom. 1:21 puts it, hard hearted man does not honor God nor give Him thanks! What has God not given to us? Do we deserve to be healed- or blessed? Is prayer truly the most

important part of thankfulness that God requires of us? Are we thankful for not only what we have- but what we have been promised? It is always danger- to rejoice in the gift while ignoring the giver! To be so happy with what we receive- that we neglect to acknowledge the source of this good gift! As we saw last week, since Jesus is our master- both obedience and thanksgiving are the expected response! If it is true that Jesus remains the Lord of all- and the owner of all in the house including us and our lives- dare we not obey and give Him praise? Well, even though 9 failed to come back, there was 1 man who did. This one, lone thankful man has come to see His place as an undeserving servant- an unprofitable slave who is filled with joy simply to be in His Father's house! Obedience to God's commands includes obedience in giving thanks to Jesus Christ for all His benefits! So what do we know of this man who came back? Well, as v. 16 reveals, the one who came back was a Samaritan. Now this makes sense, one the one hand, because Jesus was in the land of Samaria. But it is shocking on the other hand- because this one who came back is not a full-blooded Jew at all! It might have been expected for this Samaritan to be the last to praise a Jew- but he is the first and only one to come back! Although Jews and Samaritans only associated with each other when forced, this man cannot be hindered from praising God and giving thanks to Jesus his master! In crying out for mercy, this man had not specified what kind of mercy he would like to receive! Jesus is so full of compassion that He not only heals the body- He also heals the soul. Look at what this man receives in 19. Your faith has made you well- literally the word Jesus uses is "sotzo." Your faith has saved you- made you whole! Not only was his body healed, this leper enjoyed the forgiveness of sins and restoration with God. He was made whole, good and new again! We know that we are saved by grace through faith. By faith this man saw and believed- and by faith He was justified. True faith evidences itself in both obedience and gratitude. And the promise we have is this- for those who cling to Jesus as their master by faith- these will receive both the forgiveness of their sin and the physical blessing of being made whole!

To conclude, consider what Jesus has given to you? How has your master blessed you? We owe Him both obedience and thanksgiving- for He has given us all that we have and all that we will be one day! True faith evidences itself in obedience and gratitude! May we never sadden Jesus by our lack of thanksgiving- but rather may we strive to do all that is asked of us- offering our lives as a living sacrifice of praise!