



Daily Reflections

November 11, 2020

Scripture

Luke 17:11-19

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

Our Scripture Reflection

Leprosy in Biblical times was a terrible thing. We're not exactly sure what Biblical leprosy was. While it may have described what is known today as "Hansen's Disease," the word probably

included other skin diseases, as well. Whatever it was, once a person caught it, it was considered incurable, and those diagnosed with leprosy were banned from society. "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp" (Leviticus 13:45-46)." Notice two things:

(1) Jesus is just outside of the village and

(2) he meets a group of lepers. It wasn't uncommon for lepers to group together. They can't have social contact with the "clean" members of society, so they form their own society of the "unclean," the "untouchables." Being just outside a village would be common, since they probably obtain food from family members or those in the village who have pity on them. Since they have no land to till, no livestock to look after, they are dependent upon others.

The lepers ask for pity, a familiar cry that they have been uttering ever since they were diagnosed with leprosy and cast out of the village. The word falls easily from their lips, they are used to voicing it. The phrase "have pity" translates the Greek verb *eleeo*, "to be greatly concerned about someone in need, 'have compassion/mercy/pity' for someone." They don't ask for healing but for pity, for whatever Jesus might give them -- food, clothing, shelter, whatever he decides to offer. They know Jesus' reputation for compassion. But do they really ask for and expect healing? The text, at least, doesn't indicate so.

Jesus' command to them is simple and direct. The significance of the priests in Jesus' instruction, is that only priests, according to Jewish law, can declare a person healed of leprosy -- clean, and fit to re-enter society (Leviticus 14).

On the way, they observe they have been cleansed but only one of the ten returns to thank Jesus. The surprise is that the only thankful one is a non-Jew, a bitterly despised Samaritan. Jesus tells him that it was his faith that made him well.

Food for your Journey

On his way to church, a scholar was surprised to see a man in tattered clothes and barefoot. Nevertheless, as a good Christian, he greeted the poor man: "May God give you a good morning!"

The poor man replied cheerfully, "I have never yet had a bad morning."

"Then may God give you good luck!"

"I have never yet had bad luck."

"Well, may God give you happiness!"

"I have never yet been unhappy."

The scholar then asked the man, "Could you please explain yourself to me? I do not understand."

And the poor man replied, "With pleasure! You wish me a good morning, yet I have never had a bad morning. For when I am hungry, I praise God; when I feel cold, or when it is raining or snowing, I praise God; and that is why I have never had a bad morning.

"You wish that God may give me luck. However, I have never had bad luck. This is because I live with God and always feel what he does for me is the best. Whatever God sends me, be it pleasant or unpleasant, I accept with a grateful heart. That is why I have never had bad luck.

"Finally, you wish that God should make me happy. But I have never been unhappy. For all I desire is to follow God's will; I have surrendered my will so totally to God's will that, whatever God wants, that is what I also want. That is why I have never been unhappy."

—Attributed to Meister Eckhart.

A Prayer from the Heart

Gracious Father, I thank You and praise You for the many gifts that You have showered and continue to shower on me. I thank You, most especially, for the gift of my Lord Jesus. May I show my gratitude by following your Son wherever He leads me in this life. Amen