

Were You Not Cleansed?

Thanksgiving 2017

Pastor Josh Frazee

Luke 17:11-19

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

What has God done for you this year? Has He brought you through surgery? Has He helped you through a sickness or disagreement with a friend? Did He keep you from being fired? Did He keep you from losing your car or house? Have you gone without missing a meal because of Him? Do you have most or all of your body parts or senses?

The men calling out for Jesus in our text did not have their health. They did not have the freedom to live among others. They were lepers—men with a terrible skin disease. Even in calling out for Jesus, they were not permitted to approach Him for fear of spreading their leprosy: they had to stand at a distance as they called out to Him.

These men called out to Jesus, “‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.’”

Jesus looked at them and simply said, “‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’” Jesus didn’t say, “Your faith has made you well.” He didn’t say, “Be clean.” He only said, “‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’”

In this way, the men with leprosy had nothing more than we do: God’s Word. Doing what Jesus said, they were all cleansed along the way. Much like when we pray and God doesn’t part the skies and answer us out loud, we only find that He has answered our prayers as we continue about our lives. We’re answered “on the way,” so to speak.

God has healed many of you; He has helped many of you to keep your vehicles and homes; and He has given all of you all that you need to sustain this body and life. All this He does out of Fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in you.

God does this for all people, whether they recognize it or not. And this is not all that God has done for all people, either. God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to pay for the sins of all people of all time, including all the people alive and living among us today. How many recognize that God has done this?

Getting back to the text, all ten of the lepers were cleansed, and surely all of them noticed that their skin had been cleansed. So the important thing is not just noticing that one has been cleansed, it is also living the faith that God has done this. For that one leper, he didn’t need anyone to tell him who had done it; he didn’t attribute his healing to anything that had happened to him along the way—no, he places the credit and his thanks directly to Jesus, going all the way back to Him to thank Him.

The text says, “one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.”

Jesus answered his return, saying, “‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’”

Were not all of you cleansed, dear brothers and sisters in Christ? Were you not cleansed of your sins? Have you been returning praise to God? Have you been returning praise to Jesus for taking your sins on Himself?

Have you been praising God for all your material blessings? Have you been thanking Him for healing you from your sicknesses? Or have you been showing ingratitude?

None of you—none of us—have shown as much thanksgiving and gratitude as we should. And God has noticed. He knows who has faith and who has returned thanks to Him and who has not. Don’t think I’m preaching to the choir. You’re here to hear the Word and to sing praise to God, but again, none of us, not one of you has thanked God the way you should.

But all thanks are due to God in and through Jesus Christ for all time and forevermore. Though those nine did not return to give Jesus thanks, Jesus went on to the cross from our text. On those pieces of wood, Jesus suffered the hell that each of us deserves for not giving thanks and for rebelling against God. He gave His life for you and for those nine, that should you or they repent, there might be forgiveness. Forgiveness for all sins for all people—including you for your sins.

So what has God done for you this year? Has He kept you healthy? Has He continued to provide house, home, and mode of transportation? Has He continued to take care of you physically? And even if none of those, has He not provided forgiveness for you? Yes, yes He has; and He has even given you His Spirit that you might believe it.

For that reason, the closing words Jesus has given are the words you can receive on your way out tonight: “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.” In Jesus’ Name. Amen.