



Day 2:

Whether you are a follower of Jesus or a person who does not even believe in God, the fact is, God has blessed you far more than you realize and far more than you deserve. Most people are oblivious to the fact that God has blessed them or, even worse, they take credit for His blessings as if they earned them by their own efforts. Reflecting on all that God has given to us should cause us to respond by glorifying God from a thankful heart. These two responses are illustrated for us in this story of Jesus cleansing the ten lepers. Only one of the ten responded properly.

As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria. As he entered a village there, ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you."

Luke 17:11-19

As Jesus is traveling somewhere along the border between Samaria and Galilee, He enters a village and encounters ten leprosy men. According to the Law, they keep their distance but they recognize Jesus and cry out to Him for mercy. Rather than drawing near and touching them, as He did with the leper in Luke 5:13, Jesus simply instructs them to go and show themselves to the priests. There would be no point in showing themselves to the priests unless they were cleansed of their leprosy, and yet at this point they were not cleansed. They had to act with obedient faith. As they were going, they were cleansed.

But only one of the ten, a Samaritan, turns back to glorify God and give thanks to Jesus for His great mercy and power. Don't miss an important lesson here...we all should see ourselves as these lepers were: unclean before God and others.

In the Bible, leprosy is a dreaded disease that is a picture of sin.

While the physical disease was horrible, the terrible social consequences in ancient Israel only added to the misery. Lepers were treated "as if they were, in effect, dead men". The Law prescribed that the person be cut off from society, including his family. He had to wear torn clothing, have his head uncovered, cover his lips and shout "Unclean! Unclean!" wherever he went to warn others to keep their distance (Lev. 13:45).

Jesus encounters ten such men who had banded together. They were all outcasts, separated from the common Jewish way of life and separated from their own people, seemingly under God's curse.

Now, here's the challenge for us today: Jesus wants all of us to see ourselves in our natural state as spiritual lepers in His sight. God wants us all to see that our hearts are deceitful and desperately sick (Jer. 17:9), sick with sin, unclean before the holy God. Furthermore, just as this awful disease of leprosy separated the leper from the community, so sin causes distance and rupture in human relationships, often among family members. Just as only God could heal this dreaded disease, so only God can heal and cleanse the human heart from the awful disease of sin.

The proud refusal to acknowledge our true condition, as spiritual lepers is one of the main reasons people do not receive Jesus' gift of salvation. We all are prone to say, "I may have my faults—after all, I'm only human—but I'm not a sinner. I'm basically a good person." Indeed, who needs a Savior, if you're a basically good person? If these lepers had thought, "We may be sick, but we're not all that bad," they wouldn't have cried out to Jesus for mercy. They knew that they were goners unless God in His power had mercy on them. An important step in your relationship with God is acknowledging your ongoing need for Jesus in your life.

Prayer:

God, thank you for everything you have blessed me with! Help me to see your blessings in my life in a fresh perspective. Help me to recognize my ongoing need for Jesus in my life. I cannot do this without you!