

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

January 29, 2020

The Gospel of Luke

Luke 17 – The Ten Lepers

Topics – Luke 17; the Ten Lepers; forgiveness; faith; faithful service

Text – Luke 17

Introduction

Jesus is travelling toward Jerusalem, heading for the cross. He is apparently near Samaria in these beginning verses, as He will be passing through Samaria in vs. 11 – 19. He is teaching His disciples and preparing them for future ministry at a time when He would not be physically present with them.

I. Helps for His Disciples (vs. 1 – 10)

A. Regarding Forgiveness (vs. 1 – 4)

Jesus makes it very clear that in a sin-cursed world there will be offences. People are going to do things that will be hurtful to other people. The disciples needed to be prepared for this. They should expect it. But, He is also very clear to point out that His disciples, though bearing the brunt of offences at times, should never be the cause of offences. The “little ones” in verse two could be a reference to children, but it could also be a reference to young believers:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21)

See also Matthew 18:1 – 6

In verses 3 – 4, the Lord is clear that if the disciples are sinned against, or offended themselves, they are to forgive.

The Lord also gives principles regarding settling disputes (or offenses – Matthew 18:15 – 17).

“We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive.” —William Arthur Ward, *Thoughts of a Christian Optimist*¹

“Once president Lincoln was asked how he was going to treat the rebellious Southerners when they had finally been defeated and returned to the Union of the United States. The questioner expected that Lincoln would take a dire vengeance, but he answered, ‘I will treat them as if they had never been away.’” —William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*²

B. Regarding Faith to Forgive (vs. 5 – 6)

The disciples ask the Lord for help with their faith as it regards to forgiveness. We should forgive

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 Other Stories* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 216.

² Ibid.

people because of our faith in the Lord. The greater our faith in the Lord, the easier it will be to forgive. This verse is not teaching that we can somehow increase our faith to the point that we can do miraculous works unless those miraculous works are specifically part of the will of God for our ministry.

C. Regarding Faithful Service (vs. 7 – 10)

Don't be looking for an "attaboy" for doing what you are supposed to do anyway.

Don't be looking for praise from men either:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:1-4)

II. Healing of Ten Lepers (vs. 11 – 19)

[From a Previous Message]

Illustration - Remember At Least Some

When Mr. Moody was once reading the One Hundred and Third Psalm, and came to the verse, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," he stopped short in his inimitable way, "You can't remember 'em all, of course, but don't forget 'em all. Remember some of 'em."³

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem apparently at the very end of his public ministry. The text does not tell us precisely where He was, but only that He was passing through Galilee and Samaria. (read v. 11) The Scripture is also silent as to who was with Him, but it is safe to assume that He was with at least some of His disciples, if not all of the 12.

In this account, we see the cleansing of ten men who were lepers, yet we also see that only one of these ten men glorified God, by giving thanks to the Lord for his cleansing.

There are two main viewpoints concerning this passage:

1. The first is that all ten of these men were healed of their leprosy, but only the one who returned to give thanks actually became a believer, or was saved. The logic behind that theory is that the one that thanked the Lord demonstrated a transformed heart.
2. The other theory is that because leprosy is a picture of type of sin in the Bible, the cleansing of leprosy is at least a type or picture of the cleaning from sin, which comes when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Thanksgiving is not a fruit of the Spirit. In the Old Testament most of the sacrifices were commanded, but the offering (or sacrifice)

³ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 1456–1457.

of thanksgiving was not commanded, but was voluntary.

*"And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will." -
(Leviticus 22:29)*

If you really think about it thanksgiving is the only thing that we can really give back to God. You have nothing to give Him that He hasn't given you first. Your money belongs to Him. He gave your talents. The only thing that you can really give God is your love and appreciation for what He has done for you.

The Psalmists understood this:

"That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." - (Psalm 26:7)

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:" - (Psalm 50:14)

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." - (Psalm 69:30)

"Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." - (Psalm 95:2)

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." - (Psalm 100:4)

*"And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." -
(Psalm 107:22)*

*"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD." -
(Psalm 116:17)*

"Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:" - (Psalm 147:7)

The lesson for us tonight is that we who are saved should express our appreciation for the Lord.

A. Jesus Encounters the Ten Lepers on the way to Jerusalem. (Luke 17:12 – 13)

Notice that they stood afar off – Leviticus 13:45 – 46

They were far enough away that they had to lift up their voices.

B. Jesus Edict for the Lepers to Tell the Priests and Heals Them while they are on their way. (Luke 17:14)

Notice – Jesus does not specifically say that they were healed. He tells them to go to the priests (see Leviticus 14).

They obeyed what the Lord told them to do.

C. The Samaritan's Expression of Thanksgiving to the Lord. (Luke 17:15 – 16)

The one that turned back was a Samaritan. Those that were probably from the nation of Israel didn't seem to appreciate what the Lord had done for them.

Illustration – often those who grow up around the things of God, don't always appreciate what the Lord does for them.

See [Luke 7:36 – 48](#)

Illustration - One Letter In Thirty-Five Years

A soldier in the American Third Army was sent to a rest camp after a period of active service. When he returned to his outfit, he wrote a letter to General George Patton and thanked him for the splendid care he had received. General Patton wrote back that for thirty-five years he had sought to give all the comfort and convenience he could to his men, and added that this was the first letter of thanks he had received in all his years in the Army.⁴

There is a lesson to the nine – Make sure you go back and praise God for what He does for you.

There is also a lesson for the one – don't worry about the nine. You keep your focus on the Lord.

Principles on Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Should Be Standard – natural

Thanksgiving Should Be Spoken - praise

Thanksgiving Should Be Shown – service

Illustration - Thankful After Robbery

Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:

“Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”⁵

⁴ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 1460.

⁵ Ibid.