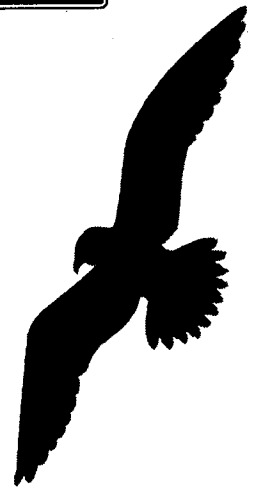


*"They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."*

Isaiah 40:31



AERY NUGGETS

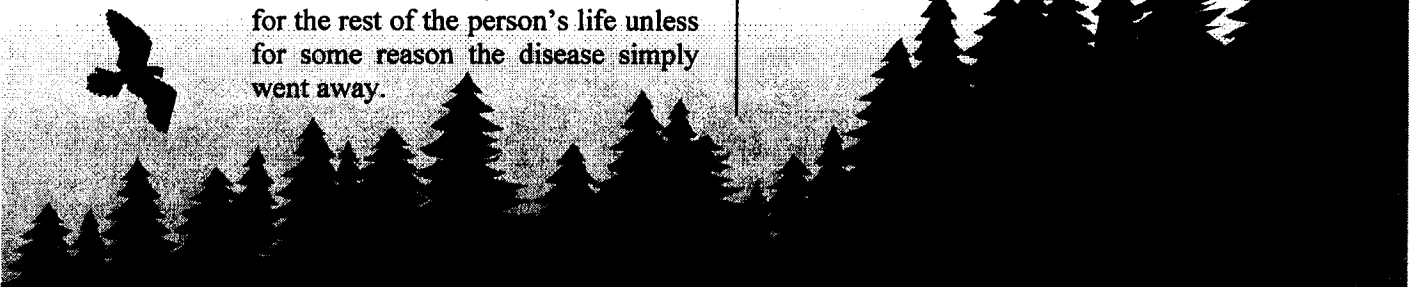
The Ten Lepers
Steven J. Faulkner
Luke 17:11-19

Were you ever in a situation that seemed hopeless? If you brought the matter before the Lord in prayer, and He delivered you, were you thankful? In this portion in Luke 17, the Lord Jesus was traveling toward Jerusalem along the borders of Galilee and Samaria. Somewhere in this region, He entered into a certain village, and we read that He encountered there some men who had a very serious problem—they had leprosy. Leprosy was that dreaded and loathsome disease that was so prevalent in Bible times. While leprosy did not usually mean death for a person, it did lead to a kind of walking death for someone living in those days. The person with leprosy was generally restricted from close association with others, so they had to live apart from the rest of society. In Bible times, those with leprosy could no longer be around family and friends, could no longer carry on business or hold a job; and when approaching others, the affected person had to call out "unclean" so that others would be warned. If the one with leprosy was poor or a working class individual, it generally meant that they became a beggar. And as there was no cure for leprosy in the

world of that time, this all went on for the rest of the person's life unless for some reason the disease simply went away.

In Scripture, leprosy is often considered a type of sin due to its association with uncleanness. It is like sin in that there was no human cure, so those that had leprosy experienced a most helpless and hopeless condition, and one from which there was no deliverance in this world. Additionally, in ancient times, a person was a leper whether they had one small lesion on the arm, or whether they had lesions all over the body. Regarding sin, we read in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." One sin shows us to be a sinner, and we are all sinners according to Romans 3:23.

On this particular day, Jesus encountered ten men who were lepers; they must have known about Jesus, because when they saw Him, they called to Him immediately. Typically, they would have called to someone to warn them off, but not this time—this was Jesus, and somehow they *knew* that He alone could help. In verse 13 we read: "And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Like many others in those days, they would have heard about this One who healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, and set the lame upon their feet. I'm sure they were excited when they found that they had Jesus nearby, and far from shrinking back, their great need propelled them to call to Him for mercy.



If you know this One who alone can truly heal, then do you know that whatever the impossible circumstance of your life, He is the One who always hears and can really help? He is in glory today at the right hand of the Father, but He is the same Jesus who was called upon by these men and who responded in love and compassion so long ago. Jesus hears and is always ready to bless when He is called upon in faith, and that never changes.

“Though in glory I am seated,
E’en the softest word I hear;
And the voice of little children,
Soundeth sweetly in Mine ear.”

In verse 14 we read, “And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.”

When the Lord Jesus saw the faith of these men, He lovingly ministered to their great need, though at first, it might have seemed that He was merely sending them away. But the words, “go show yourselves to the priest” were in this case the same as saying, “you are healed.” The priests had no power to heal a man of leprosy, and these men probably realized that. That’s where faith came in. They obediently followed the Lord’s instruction even though when He bid them go, they were still lepers. The priest could only declare them clean—but, only God could heal a man of leprosy. Still, in faith they went, and as they went, they suddenly discovered that each and every one of them was healed! Can you imagine their amazement and excitement as they inspected themselves and one another looking for those dreaded spots, only to find clean, healthy skin? In a moment of inexpressible joy, they must have realized that they were healed; and in very short order, the priest could certify their fitness to return to society. Soon, they could return to their families and their jobs—they had their lives back—what a day!!

In all their excitement, though, it appears that most of these men forgot about their Benefactor, the Lord Jesus. He was the One who had made their joy possible, but it would seem that their preoccupation with returning to the world they knew overshadowed any thought about the mighty power of God which had been demonstrated in their midst. On this day, nine men found healing for their bodies, and as far as we know, they returned to their world and pursued their interests. But one man, and him a Samaritan, apparently saw something greater than this world in Jesus: “And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan,” (verses 15, 16). I believe that this lone returning man, Samaritan that he was, found healing for more than just his body on this day. We read that he came back to Jesus and threw himself down in the posture of worship before Him, and He praised God. Jesus then inquired about the others, “And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto

him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole,” (verses 17-19). All of these men were healed by Jesus, but apparently only this one man realized that he had encountered God in this miraculous work, and I believe that changed everything for him. This Samaritan not only got his life in society back, but he found Christ!

My dear friend, if you are already a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have access at all times to this One who always hears and acts on your behalf. Sometimes, like in the case of these ten men who still had the signs of leprosy on their bodies when they were directed to go show themselves to the priest, it might not seem like He is hearing or answering quickly. But we have this assurance: we can approach the throne of grace day or night and know that this same Lord Jesus hears us, understands our situation, and acts to help. In Hebrews 4: 16 we are invited, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

But, my dear friend, what if you are reading these words and are not a Christian? If that is your case, I must let you know that you too have a disease from which there is no cure on earth. That disease is sin, and it is a disease that does lead to death. The Good News is that God has seen us in our need and has sent His Son to save us from this terrible problem which separates us from God, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). Will you accept God’s remedy which is being offered to you right now? That remedy is Jesus, and He is the only One that can help. In Acts 4:12 we read, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Finally, my dear friend, let’s be *thankful*. All of the men who petitioned Jesus in this portion of scripture which we have read were healed of leprosy, but only one of them was *thankful* to God. Do we remember to *thank* God for answered prayer? *Thankfulness* should be the signature characteristic of the Christian as we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In every thing give *thanks*: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Sometimes, when the heart is broken, it can seem difficult to show that thankful spirit; but, I believe that a *thankful heart* will actually help bring about healing for the troubled Christian; that sorrowful heart can be encouraged when we meditate on the wonderful God who loves us, and whose *ear* is ever inclined toward us. Considering the mighty works of God will lead to rejoicing as we read in Psalm 63: 5,6 “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”

“*And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,*”

(Psalm 50:15).

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