

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 17:11-19
September 22nd, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Ten Men Who Were Lepers

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who by Thy blessed Word and Thy Holy Baptism hast mercifully cleansed all who believe from the fearful leprosy of sin, and daily dost grant us Thy gracious help in all our need: We beseech Thee so to enlighten our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may never forget these Thy blessings, but ever live in Thy fear, and, trusting fully in Thy grace, with thankful hearts continually praise and glorify Thee; through Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

In last Sunday's Gospel we heard the parable of our Lord regarding the "Good Samaritan." Or, this is at least what that parable has come to be called. If one were to look at the Propers, he would see that a more apt title of that parable is the "Merciful Samaritan," or the "Compassionate Samaritan." For when the Samaritan saw the man badly beaten and left for dead by thieves, he had compassion on him; he showed him mercy. This Compassionate, Merciful Samaritan is an image of our Lord + Jesus Christ, for in His compassion and mercy for mankind, who had been beaten and left for dead by the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh, He left His heavenly realm and came down to Earth and took upon Himself our whole flesh, but without sin, in order that He might deliver us into the hands of holy, Mother Church, and be cared for by the healing Word and Sacraments given to us by the innkeepers—the ministers of the Lord.

Today's Gospel from the Evangelist St. Luke, is connected to last Sunday's Gospel, in that once again we hear of a Samaritan. Last Sunday's Compassionate, Merciful Samaritan, as was said, was an image of our Lord + Jesus. Today's Samaritan, who in contrast to last Sunday's could be called the Thankful Samaritan, is an image of mankind. For, mankind on account of sin within him is covered with the leprous disease of sin. The leprous Samaritan (and all ten men who were lepers in this parable) cannot save himself from his disease. He cannot heal himself. No matter how hard he tries to heal himself—no amount of good works; no amount of believing in his heart that if he just believed hard enough, he would be saved—he is not going to remove the disease from himself.

The same is true of our sinfulness. Sin adheres to us because we were conceived and born in sin. We inherited it from our first parents, Adam and Eve. We may be able to stop doing certain sinful acts, but we cannot cure ourselves of our disease of sin. Therefore, we need a Savior, just like these ten men who were lepers needed someone to save them from their disease.

Only the Lord + Jesus Christ can heal this Samaritan leper and the other nine. It is only through the Lord's mercy; His compassion, just like He showed last Sunday for the beaten, naked, robbed, and half-dead man that these ten men who were lepers can be healed of their leprosy. The same is true of fallen, sinful mankind. It is only through our Lord's compassion; through His taking upon Himself our

flesh that had been corrupted by the effects of the leprosy of sin that we are healed of our sin, and are given new flesh before our Lord. He took upon Himself our leprous flesh, but without our sin in His incarnation, in order that He might purge it of the eternally harmful effects of sin and death by His perfect obedience to His Father's will, and by His innocent suffering and death at the hands of evil men.

Upon the tree of the holy cross, our Lord + Jesus Christ defeated the disease of sin caused by the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, and won for us a victory that gives us the reward to be healed and washed from all the impurities of sin in the holy waters of Holy Baptism. For it is in Holy Baptism where the leprous disease of sin is washed away; the old sinful flesh of the Old Adam is cleansed and purified and washed away, and we are given a new flesh; a new Adam to dwell within us all of our days, who is righteous and holy before God, because it is the flesh and righteousness of our Lord + Jesus, Who is perfect and without sin. We are credited with His righteousness, and His righteousness covers over our sin, through faith, as we grasp onto the promises of our Lord.

This is illustrated in our Gospel for today by our Lord's command to the lepers to "*go, show yourselves to the priests.*" For, as we learn from Leviticus 14, a leper who was healed of his leprosy was to "*be brought to the priest*" and the priest would take two live birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop; kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over water; and then he would take the live bird with the cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over fresh water. Then the priest would take the blood and sprinkle it seven times upon the cleansed leper and pronounce that he was now clean, and then he would release the living bird into the open field to carry away the man's sins. Then the person, who had been cleansed of their leprosy, would wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and then he would be clean in the sight of God and of all the people.

In short, this was rite of Holy Baptism. The leprous person was cleansed of his leprosy through the shed blood of the innocent victim, and the leper would be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice and be washed and become clean. In Holy Baptism, we do not obviously kill birds or sprinkle blood on the one being baptized, but the element of water is used as an image of washing away sin. The one being baptized is spiritually sprinkled with the Blood of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, which He shed on the tree of the holy cross for the salvation of mankind. The one being baptized is buried with Christ in the grave; his Old Adam being drowned and killed and laid eternally in the grave, so that a new Adam, with new flesh, and a new spirit (which St. Paul talks about in the Epistle reading for today) which walks according to the will and according to all the ways of our Heavenly Father on account of the living faith created by the Holy Ghost dwelling in him.

The baptized, that is, you and me, have put off the old flesh, and now walk in a new spirit; a spirit which desires to obey God's commands, and live according to His will. Those who claim to be Christians, but still walk according to the flesh, that is, who live and believe that now that they are forgiven, they can continue in the same old sinful behavior that they lived in before they were made a new creation, are lying and deceiving themselves. When lepers were cleansed of their leprosy, they did not desire to return to being a leper, but took every precaution to not become lepers again, for lepers were cast out of the congregation, they were not even allowed to congregate with other lepers, which this pericope reveals was not always followed. But the same is true today, sinners congregate together, and they spread their disease and lies by their appearance in large groups.

You have been healed of your leprous disease of sin by the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus Christ. Do not desire, by your sinful living, to become a leper again; do not desire to live a sinful and reprobate life; do not call that which is good "evil," and that which is evil "good," like so many who are deceived today; do not live as if God's commandments are no longer in effect for Christians, or for anyone. As we learn from Dr. Martin Luther's explanation of the Conclusion to the Ten Commandments, "We should fear His wrath and not act contrary to them." For, God threatens to punish those who

transgress against them and this is not just a temporal and short-lived punishment, but an eternal condemnation in Hell. So, when you hear Christians (or at least those who claim to be) saying that abortion is not wrong and that it is a woman's choice to kill her unborn baby, rebuke them sharply with God's Word, for God has clearly said "*Thou shalt not kill.*" And when you hear Christians say that there is nothing wrong with homosexuality and that it is okay for gays to marry as if God has not clearly condemned this behavior as an abomination (both in the Old Testament and in the New), rebuke them sharply with God's Word, for God will not hold you guiltless when you have the opportunity to speak against these things, but hold your tongue.

We rather should observe the blessed Apostle St. Paul's words to the churches of Galatia and walk in the spirit. How does one walk in the spirit? Well, that is again illustrated by the Samaritan leper—the Thankful Samaritan—who followed our Lord's command to "*go, show yourselves to the priest*" precisely, for when he realized he was cleansed of his leprosy, he went to the only Priest Who would acknowledge him (since he was a Samaritan and the Jews did not deal with them). He went to the Lord + Jesus and fell down on his face and gave Him thanks. This, my dear friends, is a picture of the Holy Mass—the Eucharist; the Lord's Supper. Indeed, the word translated as "thanks" in the Greek is "Eucharist." This is why we call it the Eucharist, because it is a giving of thanks to God for cleansing us in our Holy Baptism, and suffering and dying in our place and fulfilling the Law perfectly for us. It is a thanksgiving for all the gifts that our Lord + Jesus offers to us: forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Therefore, we when come to this holy Altar, we kneel before the Lord, and give thanks to Him for our forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation by eating and drinking His very and true Body and Blood which was given and shed for us for the remission of all our sins. This is what it means to "*walk in the spirit.*" It means to readily hear God's Word, to participate daily and often in the sacraments; remembering daily your Holy Baptism and that the Old Adam was drowned in those waters, and the new Adam has arisen and lives before God. Walking in the spirit means coming to this holy house and receiving our Lord's very Body and Blood in bread and wine. To walk in the spirit means to give thanks to your Redeemer for His work of salvation for you by participating in the means of grace. It means hearing, reading, marking and inwardly digesting daily the Word of God, so that we might learn his will, and desire to follow it, and learn of how He came to us and had compassion on us, and healed us of all our sin. It means to attend upon the preaching of our Lord + Jesus Christ from the pulpit in this place.

And this is the way of our salvation, our Lord + Jesus, the Compassionate Samaritan, rescues us from sin, death and the devil, and we the Thankful Samaritans, kneel before Him and give Him thanks for cleansing us of all our sin. Therefore, it is the earnest prayer of the Church, of us, that we pray the words of the Collect for the Day, "Keep, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Church with Thy perpetual mercy; and because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by Thy help from all things hurtful and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation." In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who by Thy Son Jesus Christ hast delivered us through Thy Word and Holy Baptism from the dread leprosy of sin, and art pleased daily to manifest Thy gracious help in our every need, we beseech Thee, awaken our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may never be unmindful of Thy benefits, but ever live in Thy fear and perfect trust in Thy mercy, and with a joyous heart thank and praise Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!