

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 17:11-19
September 5th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

As They Went, They Were Cleansed

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O God, who hast delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of Thy dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, enable us by Thy grace, we earnestly beseech Thee, so to walk in the Spirit that we may not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, considering ourselves to be dead henceforth unto sin, but alive unto God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

What causes these ten lepers to break the Law both by leaving their required isolation from others and by banding together in order to approach not just any ordinary person, but a Rabbi Who is well versed in the Law? For the Law says that the leper *“is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; and his dwelling shall be outside the camp”*. But these men are near the entrance of a certain village. And they are not separate from each other, but traveling together. And finally, when someone comes near, lepers are supposed to cry out, *“Unclean! Unclean!”*. Certainly, the punishment for violating this law is severe—a beating forty times with a whip. And any Rabbi would certainly know this. So, what gives them the courage? What makes them so brave and audacious? Why do they risk so much? Their own words give the answer. For instead of shouting, *“Unclean! Unclean!”*, the Evangelist St. Luke writes that *“they lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’”*

For mercy, these men will risk much. For mercy, they will knowingly and willingly break the Law. And for mercy, they go to the greatest lengths. So, mercy—that is what fuels their confidence, what stokes their courage, what enkindles their daring and boldness. And not mercy, but simply the hope of mercy. For they have no guarantees that their plan will work, that their prayer will be granted, that our Lord + Jesus will have mercy. For this is the same Lord + Jesus Who used a whip to drive out money-changers from the temple—because those merchants broke the Law. So, who is to say that our Lord + Jesus will not react the same toward these law-breakers? Still, mercy compels them.

You might think that they really have nothing to lose. After all, they have leprosy. This means, they are outcasts and live a miserable life. So why should they not risk all?

But how many of us will risk all—even our life—for the hope of anything? Do we not, rather, want some guarantee—or at least some reasonable assurance—that we will get what we are after before we put our life on the line? Only if we believe against what everyone says; only if we hope against hope—only then might we be willing to lose our life in order to gain something better. Yet these men hope against hope with the faith that our Lord + Jesus will not turn them in or turn on them, but will have mercy.

Again, you might think that desperation drives these men. But if it is desperation, why do they not go up to just any rabbi? For there are plenty of rabbis with good reputations—reputations of being kindly, merciful, compassionate. Why pick the Rabbi called the Lord + Jesus? Why specifically seek Him out? Because these men had heard the preaching of the Apostles. The Lord + Jesus had sent them out, with *“seventy others also,”* and they went into *“every city and place where He Himself was about to go,”* healing the sick and saying, *“The kingdom of God has come near to you.”* These men were sick, and they wanted to be healed. So why not go to where the Lord + Jesus was going? And why not risk it all and cry out, *“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”*

So, it is not desperation that drives these lepers, but the Lord’s mercy that invites and draws and encourages them. And it is not fatalism, but faith that emboldens them.

And our Blessed Lord does not disappoint those who hope in His mercy. For He says, *“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion”*. And this He says to teach us that whatever we receive from the Lord God, whatever gift He gives, that we accept and take to heart—all ultimately *“depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, Who has mercy.”*

And that is where these ten men are—they depend on nothing but the Lord’s mercy. And that is what we are—unworthy beggars who look to, hope for, depend on, and hold to our Lord + Jesus and His mercy. And so *“Kyrie eleison”*; “Lord, have mercy”—that is and must remain our perpetual and eternal prayer.

And like the ten lepers, we are not disappointed in our hope. Our Father loves mankind and so, through His Son in the Holy Ghost, He has mercy on all men and on His whole creation. For His mercy is not simply given to the good and upright. Our Father extends, offers, presents, and gives His mercy to every single person—even if you do not believe it, even if you do not ask for it, even if you do not think you need it. For, He causes the sun and the rain to fall on both the wicked and the good; upon the unbeliever and the believer.

Now, if that is the case, why pray again and again, “Lord, have mercy upon us”? Well, for two reasons: First, it is the prayer of the faithful that rejoices over our Lord’s continual mercy. For why should He give if there are not at least ten righteous persons who hope in His mercy? And second, woe to that man or woman who receives the Lord’s mercy yet without gratitude or faith. For our Lord gives His mercy, not to be taken lightly or thoughtlessly, but to be lived in the thanksgiving of earnest faith in God and true heartfelt love for all men. The unbelieving who continually receive our Lord’s mercy throughout their lives on this earth, and remain in their unbelief, will receive the reward of enduring our Lord’s eternal wrath in Hell.

That is why our Lord commends the one faithful Samaritan who returned and gave thanks. For *“when this man saw that he was healed, he returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks.”* And by giving thanks to the Lord, this man who was formerly a heretic demonstrated that he loved the Lord and His mercy; and that he would live the rest of his days by being merciful to others, to the same degree that the Lord had been merciful to him. And the Lord acknowledges this when He gives the Samaritan a second and greater blessing. For St. Luke, the Evangelist writes that *“Jesus said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has saved you.”*

Faith which not only begs for, but lives from the Lord’s mercy; faith that not only cries out in times of desperation, but also in times of joy; faith that lives not just by coming to church, but also by extinguishing anger and letting the mercy and love of the Lord God live through you—that, my beloved, is the faith that saves you. For it is not enough simply to sing, “Lord, have mercy upon us.” You must also *“be merciful just as your Father is merciful.”* For He loves all of mankind—and so, then, you should

love your neighbor as yourself, too. And when you do, then you live your thanksgiving to the Father Who, through the incarnation, death and resurrection of His Son, the Lord + Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost working through you, has had mercy upon you.

And the mercy of our Lord is bestowed abundantly in the washing and renewal of the Holy Ghost, and in the meal of His very own Body and Blood given in bread and wine. For in this healing, we see a picture of the both the holy Eucharist and Holy Baptism. For we, like the ten lepers who were cleansed of their leprosy as they went their way, approach the Font of our Triune Lord God, leprous with original and actual sin. And He cleanses us of the leprosy of our sins through the washing of Holy Baptism. He tells us to show ourselves to the priests, to receive that holy washing away of our sins, and having shown ourselves and our sinfulness to the priests, our Lord heals us in the waters of Holy Baptism. We are cleansed as we go on our way in faith.

Then, we realizing what a great cleansing we have received, and realizing that we on account of our sins are outcasts, return to our Lord + Jesus, kneel before Him, and give thanks at this holy Altar, receiving His true and substantial Body and Blood given in bread and wine. This meal which we eat is our giving of thanks for our Lord's bestowal upon us of forgiveness, life and salvation. While, at the same time, He bestows even more forgiveness, life and salvation to us. Therefore, let us come before our Lord + Jesus, kneel before Him, and give thanks to Him for His wonderful benefits of grace toward us. Then, we will hear the blessing of our Lord that He spoke to the Samaritan leper, "*go your way, your faith has made you well*" spoken to us in the words that we hear at this Altar of "Depart in peace" and the leprosy of our sins are removed. As we go on our way hearing the promises of our Lord God, and the forgiveness that He gives, let us give thanks to Him in faith, remembering always His great mercy and compassion for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen. 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!