

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS

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Reading: Luke 17:11-19

Do you know what a leper is? It is a person who suffers from a sickness called leprosy. It is one of the most dreadful sicknesses you can imagine. It spreads through the whole body and slowly destroys it. Nowadays, doctors are able to treat people for this disease, but at the time when the Lord was on earth no one knew what to do, and everyone was very afraid of catching it.

Suffering from such a terrible disease is bad enough, but that is only part of the sad story. Someone with leprosy was not allowed to live with other people, because then they might get sick too. He had to leave his home and loved ones, and go and live with other lepers. This is why it is said that the ten lepers “stood afar off,” that is, far away from all the other people who were following the Lord (Luke 17:12).

Imagine how hard it must be not only to suffer from a sickness that no one can cure, but also to have to leave the people you love, knowing that you can never be with them again, helping them and making them happy during your life in this world. No wonder these ten lepers were waiting for the Lord! They had probably heard of all His great miracles, and when they saw the Lord coming, they cried with loud voices, “Master, have mercy on us” (Luke 17:13).

And the Lord did indeed have mercy on them! At first the lepers did not know that the Lord had really heard their prayer, for all He told them was that they should go and show themselves to the priests. This was important, for even if a leper was cured he was not allowed to go back to his family until a priest had looked him and said that he was healed.

But, even though they did not quite understand, the lepers obeyed the Lord, and as they went to see the priests a wonderful thing happened. They were cured! All signs of leprosy disappeared! How happy they must have been, as they all hurried on to see the priests that now they would be able to go home and be reunited with their families and friends. All of them, that is, except one. No doubt this one was just as happy as the others, and he, too, longed to see his loved ones again. But he was also grateful. He remembered who had made him well. He came back to the Lord, and cast himself down before Him, and thanked Him with his whole heart for this great miracle.

We can learn something important from this story: to remember to be thankful to the Lord for all the blessings He has given us. Often, we are like the nine lepers, hurrying on our way, thinking only about ourselves and forgetting that the Lord is the One who created all the things we enjoy. He has given us our family and friends, our homes and all the happiness we feel. We should never be too busy to stop and think for a moment about the Lord’s great love for us and thank Him for all that He gives us.

Amen.