**Proper 23, Year C, October 13, 2019**

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Luke 17:11-19

*On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."*

In the Gospel story, we have these 10 lepers who get healed by Jesus. But one of the lepers comes back to Jesus in praise and thanksgiving for what has happened. And Jesus wonders – where’s the other 9?

Now in the Scripture passage we read that Jesus tells these 10 lepers to go show themselves to the priests. This was meant to validate that they were cleansed of their leprosy. For lepers in that time, if you suffered from leprosy, you were ostracized from the community, rendered unclean, relegated to live out in the margins of society – and everyone stayed away from them out of fear that they might catch the disease. It was a terrible fate – not only physically but socially and psychologically and spiritually. You are unclean, you are not fit to be in normal society and you are unfit to even come into the presence of God. But Jesus changes all of that for these 10 lepers.

Now in the text, it says that “Then one of them, *when he saw that he was healed*, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him.” All 10 of the lepers got healed. But there was something different about this one leper. When he sees that he’s been healed, it motivates him to turn around to thank Jesus. It makes me wonder – what so different about this leper? All 10 lepers got healed but when this one leper sees that he is healed, he responds with such gratitude that he turns around to go back and offer thanks to Jesus. I wonder, was there something about this leper’s seeing – his vision – of his healing that made him to go back to Jesus?

And then notice what happens with this one grateful leper.

First, Jesus wonders – where’s the other 9? I healed all of 10 of you but only 1 of you has come back to say thank you. Where’s the other 9?

And second, notice what happens next. Jesus says to this one grateful leper, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well." That phrase – “made you well” could also be translated, “saved you” – your faith has *saved* you. And some see this as an additional act of Jesus – not only did Jesus heal him of his leprosy, but now, Jesus is pronouncing a kind of salvation in this man’s life. So 2 acts – healing and “salvation” – healing back when Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priest and then a saving or salvation that happens in response to this one lepers worship and gratitude.

And I think that there is a parallel reality happening for all of us. Jesus reaches in and does something in our lives to bless us – to extend his love and grace into our lives. And then, when we respond in gratitude and worship, our gratitude and worship breeds greater spiritual transformation in our lives.

Think about it. There are so many ways that Jesus blesses us, heals us, showers his love on us. But if we are not careful, we don’t take notice enough to go back to Jesus in thanksgiving and worship. We receive his blessings in our lives and then we just go on with our lives to the next thing. But for some of us, we take notice – just like the one leper took notice of his healing and turned around to thank Jesus – we take notice and we are moved to go back to Jesus in gratitude and worship. And as we go back to Jesus in gratitude and worship, our faith is deepened, our spirits are renewed – our faith is deepened, our spirits are renewed *in a way that would not have happened if we didn’t go back to Jesus in gratitude and worship*. As we come to Jesus in gratitude and worship, Jesus brings his salvation deeper into our lives. In a way, we are “saved” just a little bit more as we journey towards our eternal glory.

Gratitude breeds spiritual transformation. (2x)

As you think back on your week, what are you grateful for? What has Jesus been doing in your life that you can be grateful for?

And if life has been full of struggle and hardship, allow the liturgy to carry you this morning. Allow the words remind you of God’s love and grace extended to you in Jesus Christ.

The word Eucharist means thanksgiving. So as we engage in the Eucharist, Jesus meets us at His Table. I invite you to come with gratitude and worship – with thanksgiving – thanksgiving for the blessings in your life, thanksgiving for Jesus.

And as we bring our thanksgiving, gratitude, and worship to Jesus, He brings spiritual renewal, spiritual transformation, deeper salvation.

Gratitude breeds spiritual transformation. I invite you, in a moment of silent reflection, to consider what God has done for you so that you can bring your gratitude and worship to Jesus when you come to His Banqueting Table at the Eucharist.

Amen.