

The Other Samaritan; the Grateful Samaritan

Leprosy one of the most dreaded diseases known, as its victims eventually could not even feel a loving touch¹. As it was believed to be contagious, those who had the disease were forced to be isolated from all others². But the Great Healer was not afraid to give the healing touch to those who were sick, and He even sent some of His true followers out into the world to heal them.

I met the “Grateful Samaritan” a few years after his healing by Jesus³. He was still known in his community as “the Leper⁴”, even though the people were no longer afraid to be in his presence. He told me the story from his perspective...

I was a leper, and had met up with a group of other lepers along the border between Samaria and Galilee. The others were Jews, but the disease had reduced them to nothing in the eyes of those around them, and we all came to accept each other in spite of our religious and cultural differences. It was an alliance forged through our common isolation, and we had to call out in a loud voice to ask passersby for alms.

The Master and his entourage was travelling in that area on His way to Jerusalem, and from our station outside a small village the ten of us cried out to Him for Him to have pity on us. We had heard stories that He was some great Rabbi, and we hoped that He would help us in some way.

When he saw us, he stopped and simply told us to go and show ourselves to the priests. This was something that was commanded to be done after being cleansed; we were a bit confused, but didn't know what else to do, so we left. After having gone just a little distance though, we realized that our bodies had been made whole – the leprosy was gone! It happened as we made our way to present ourselves as clean. Our faith had been weak, but we did have great hope.

We were so amazed, but after realizing that we were healed, the rebirth of our differences seemed to overcome everyone in the group. The newness of our condition was still fresh, but it seemed to me that we were no longer equals, and that the old prejudice was coming back. As I walked along with them, I began to consider the Master's command to see the priest. As a Samaritan, I did not interact with the Jewish priests, so, I quit following the group. They were probably glad now to get rid of me.

I began to walk to my own temple, and caught up with the Master's group still heading towards Jerusalem. I ran forward and threw myself at His feet and thanked Him profusely (and very loudly). He looked at me and said to those around Him, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?”

Then he said to me, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." Of course I knew that the power was actually from God, but not my faith. But I was glad none-the-less and did as He asked.

As I went along, it began to dawn on me that if this Master wasn't the priest that I should present myself to for verification of my cleansing, then to whom should I go? Who even in my own people could provide the authorization for my release into society again that this Teacher could?

Later I heard of His conversation with a fellow Samaritan, a woman, and it became much clearer to me that there was no longer to be any differences between Jew and Samaritan, or any other people for that matter⁵. We were all to worship in Spirit and Truth.

After hearing the story, I thought about the entire group of ten. They were all reduced to zero in their humiliation; then they were healed and they could feel better about themselves. I wondered if each had kept the humility that they had once had, and whether they had learned the greater lesson about Grace that extends beyond mere physical healing.

1. Read Fearfully and Wonderfully Made and In His Image, by Brand and Yancey
2. Leviticus 13:44-46
3. Christ touching the lepers; Matt 8:2-3
4. reference to "Simon the Leper"; Matthew 26:6
5. see Romans 10:12