First Presbyterian Church of Soda Springs

10/9/22

Embraced By Grace

Luke 17:11-19

**11**On the way to Jerusalem Jesus[a] was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. **12**As he entered a village, ten men with a skin disease approached him. Keeping their distance, **13**they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” **14**When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. **15**Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. **16**He prostrated himself at Jesus’s[b] feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. **17**Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? So where are the other nine? **18**Did none of them return to give glory to God except this foreigner?” **19**Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

1. Normally - Manuscript Preacher - Every word written out.
   1. Because I tend to ramble and go off on tangents
   2. Busy week, personally and professionally.
      1. Trying something new; preaching from notes.
      2. Stretches me as a preacher
         1. May be a disaster or may be the start of something new.
2. Reading only found in Luke’s Gospel
   1. Good Samaritan and the Samaritan woman at the well are other examples of Luke message about insiders and outsiders.
3. Jesus and company are traveling to Jerusalem in the region between Samaria and Galilee.
   1. Samaria = a red flag.
      1. Observant Jews would not be caught anywhere near Samaria.
         1. Samaritans considered to be the remnant of the Jewish people left behind after the Babylonian conquest.
            1. Their version of Judaism evolved in different ways

Samaritans considered to be culturally inferior, theological and liturgical heretics.

* 1. Jesus and company enter an unnamed village and encounter 10 men with leprosy.
     1. Leprosy was a catchall phrase for what verse 12 in NRSV translation describes as a skin disease.
        1. Anything from a pimple to what we know now as Hansen’s disease.
        2. Anyone with any sort of blemish or flaw considered unclean.
           1. Shunned and feared; people were afraid to even allow the shadow of someone afflicted to fall on them for fear that they’d become infected.
           2. Only way for these people to be accepted back into society = have a priest declare them healed.

A priest, not a doctor

* + 1. The 10 foreigners, with a condition that had caused them to be isolated from their community and loved ones, plead for Jesus’s mercy.
       1. Jesus could have ignored them and kept walking.
          1. Tells them to go show themselves to the priests.

Not healed until they are on their way to the priest.

* + - 1. One, healed, runs back, falls at Jesus’ feet to thank him.
      2. Jesus asks about the other 9; “Were not 10 made clean? But the other nine, where are they?”
      3. Tells the one: “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”
    1. 10 healed, but only 1 showed gratitude.
    2. This is where grace enters the picture.
       1. Jesus expresses surprise that only 1 returns to give thanks and it’s a foreigner to boot.
       2. Jesus could have very easily reversed the miracle and punished the ungrateful 9, but doesn’t.
          1. Not who Jesus was
       3. Instead, he allows all 10 to be embraced by grace.
    3. Question: what should our response be when we’re recipients of God’s grace and mercy?
       1. May seem rhetorical, but is it?
       2. Do we just assume that grace and mercy are there for the taking without any effort or response on our part?
          1. It’s true that we’ve done nothing to deserve God’s ever present grace and mercy.
          2. But, is there a link between gratitude and faith?

Reading seems to imply that there is.

Your faith has made you well is surely Jesus’ way of saying that faith and gratitude are very closely linked and that faith without gratitude is no faith at all.

* + - * 1. When we are recipients of God’s grace and mercy, Do we just accept that grace and mercy as our right, just as the 9 men in our reading did, without taking time to close the circle by expressing thanks? Or do we recognize the need to express our profound gratitude to God.
        2. Practicing gratitude is practicing faith. If faith is not something we have but something we do; something we live, then in living we express our complete trust in God. How, then, can we not practice gratitude, when we know that God, the giver of all good gifts, holds all of life in his hand?
        3. To have faith is to live it, and to live it is to give thanks. It is living a life of gratitude for the mercy and grace shown to us by God, that constitutes living a life of faith. This is the sort of faith that made this man from Samaria truly and deeply well.

**AMEN**