

## Sermon Notes October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Sermon Text: Luke 17:11-19

**Scripture:** Luke 17:11-19, The Message

**11-13** It happened that as he made his way toward Jerusalem, he crossed over the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men, all lepers, met him. They kept their distance but raised their voices, calling out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

**14-16** Taking a good look at them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” They went, and while still on their way, became clean. One of them, when he realized that he was healed, turned around and came back, shouting his gratitude, glorifying God. He kneeled at Jesus’ feet, so grateful. He couldn’t thank him enough—and he was a Samaritan.

**17-19** Jesus said, “Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back and give glory to God except this outsider?” Then he said to him, “Get up. On your way. Your faith has healed and saved you.”

### Sermon

This morning, we hear that Jesus and his disciples are passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee and entered into a village. Now, there are some differences of opinions on the exact location of this village.

There are many who believe that the area that Jesus was in was a geographic borderland. Thus, meaning that this village was not in either Samaria or Galilee. We can think of it as a hybrid place. If it is indeed a hybrid place, Luke is making a theological statement about this thin space.

Once again, we can see that Jesus is ministering in the margins. He is once again crossing borders and in his border crossing, he is doing so in a healing and liberating manner. Jesus, once again, is taking the spotlight away from the sacred and worthy and placing it in the margins.

Today, we see Jesus healing ten individuals who have a skin disease that has caused them to live a life that has caused them great suffering. The suffering that they have is manifested in both the physical and emotional realm. Suffering in one is tough. Suffering in both is immeasurable. Then, in addition to this great suffering, they had to do in isolation. They have been banished.

As Jesus is walking, he hears voices that are calling out to him. In their cries, they use both Jesus and Master. In Luke’s narrative, there are only three instances where an individual call him out by his name, Jesus. The other two instances are the blind beggar and the penitent criminal. Now, hear this, they not only call him Jesus, but they also use the word Master. Why is that special? Master was a term that was usually reserved for disciples. These ten lepers approached him with a faithful and expectant posture.

Maybe we can learn from them. How many times do we approach Jesus with a faithful and expectant posture?

There are many things that intrigue me about this text. But, one of the aspects that rises to the top is that the healing that takes place because they were seen and heard by Jesus. They put themselves in a position that gave them the opportunity to be seen and heard.

Because of Jesus seeing and hearing them, their skin disease was healed and their isolation was going to come to an end. The suffering that they had endured in this borderland was about to be no more.

Later in the story, we will hear from Jesus that they were a catalyst in their healing when he tells the Samaritan that came back, “*your faith has made you well.*” Maybe, we can think of it as an active patient engagement. I am sure that many of us have been given instructions by a medical person and our engagement with their instructions placed us in the active patient mode and helped our healing. Now, when the Samaritan recognized that he was healed, he came back offering praise to God and showing gratitude to Jesus.

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Once again, individuals would have had an uneasy feeling that it was a Samaritan that was healed and came back and prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus. Why did he do this? He recognized that God was at work. It should not surprise us, but this once again is a story where we see Jesus notices and heals an individual that is ignored and not noticed by others. In this story, the Samaritan might have a deeper desire to share gratitude because he had a double-dose-of-marginalization. He was living on the edge because of his disease and the fact that he was a Samaritan. Remember, Samaritans were the unlovely outsiders.

Maybe this is another story that can help challenge us to think about who we do not notice. There are individuals in Door County who live on the margins. Do we look at them and notice them, or do we look the other way? Another way to think of it is in the following manner: who is worthy and who has access to God? At times, I think that we put up too many barriers for others to see and hear what God has to say. We think that they may not be worthy.

I want us to rest in this moment and remember these two important truths before we go any further.

- 1) Jesus cares for the marginalized
- 2) Faithful recognition and gratitude are appropriate responses to Jesus.

As I wrestled with the text today, I decided that I wanted to simply lean into this idea of thanks and gratitude. On thanks, the word that the Samaritan used is the exact word of thanks that Jesus gave to God when he thanked him for the bread and cup at the last supper. This word translated thanks is the basis for the word Eucharist, which we come to each and every week that we gather.

Through our baptismal promises, we promise that we will come and hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper. When we do this, we can give thanks to the God who noticed us and has showered us with love and Grace.

Following the thanksgiving and gratitude that the Samaritan showed, Jesus said to him, "*Get up and go on your way, your faith has made you well*". Last week, I gave a small lesson on language with the word of faith and challenged you to think of in through the lens of commitment. This week, I want us to look at the last words of Jesus. Jesus, in the text, uses the word *sesoken*. Once again, there are a few ways that this can be translated. In our translation this morning, we heard "made well". There are three other options. They are healed, saved and whole. Whichever translation that we go with, I think we can see that there is more to this story than just a physical healing. For me, I like the word whole. Thus, Jesus looks at the Samaritan and says, "your faith has made you whole."

This is a great story, in my opinion. But, as always, when I am reading the text, I am trying to think about how this story impacts us. Specifically, what can Bay View see in this text that can make in an impact in our daily lives.

I went back to seeing and believing.

Faith is not only a matter of believing but it is a matter of seeing.

As the lepers were traveling to the priest, the healing took place. The Samaritan saw that his skin was healed and recognized the power of Jesus. In the healing, he recognized that he had something to be very thankful for and wanted to praise God with his voice. Because of this, he changes his direction. He veers off the course and instead of continuing the journey to the priest, he comes back to return to Jesus. The difference occurred when he sees the healing.

So, this is where I would like to go and it comes in the form of three questions from David Lose asked us pastors to wrestle with.

In the face of adversity, do we see danger or an opportunity?

In the face of human need, do we see demand or gift?

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In the face of the stranger, do we see potential enemy or friend?

Out of those questions that David asked, I think the first question is the one that really jumped out to me when I looked at them through the Bay View lens. Many individuals look at our church situation, which is not unique, especially in our synod and say that we are at a crossroads. Some way even use the word adversity, especially when you use the following definition: a state or of continued difficulty. So, I ask you, how are we, as a church, going to move forward. Are we going to see this time as a dangerous time or a time of opportunity? I will tell you that as the pastor, I see so many opportunities. We may have to take some risks, but opportunities abound.

Then David took it one step deeper with these three follow up questions:

When we look to God, do we see stern judge or loving parent?

When we look to ourselves, do we see failure or a beloved child?

When we look to the future, do we see fearful uncertainty or an open horizon?

Today's story can give us some insight. How we answer these questions depend on what we see. How we see and how we answer these questions dramatically shapes our outlook and behavior.

Traditionally, October is stewardship month across the nation in churches. For us at Bay View, the church council has written a letter to share the honest truth about where we are financially. The finance team is examining the numbers in all areas. The stewardship team has crafted a letter for our 2023 pledges that you will see soon.

I want to share with you from David Lose second round of questions that I see God as a loving parent and not a stern judge.

I see us at Bay View as beloved children of God and not failures.

I see us as a church at a time of crossroads and choices and as I look at the path we can take, I choose to see our time as an open horizon and not as fearful uncertainty.

Friends, this is why time in this Holy Space is so important. Our time together is not just about hearing God's story or even praising God. When we engage in scripture-song-sermon, it is to help us see God at work in our lives and our world.

Seeing makes all the difference. I want to implore you to truly see how amazing God is working in this congregation. We are called to see. Keep your eyes open. See what is happening. Point to the blessings. Be courageous and claim mercy. Name to the spaces of Grace. Use this opportunity to see all the good that God is doing and use that in your vocabulary. God is doing amazing things and God can and will continue to use us.

Finally, as we hear so much about church finances and stewardship, remember our passage. Stewardship is not first about giving but about seeing all that we have been given and rejoice in a way that cannot help but shape how we act. **Amen.**