Text: Luke 17:11-19

**Introduction**

We today probably don’t understand what leprosy was. It still exists, but today we can cure it. It is caused by a bacterium. About 95% of people are naturally immune to what that bacterium does, but 5% aren’t. And what it proceeded to do, very slowly, was kill all your nerves so you couldn’t feel anything. Hence to old old jokes about leper limbs falling off. It also caused sensitive skin lesions, muscle weakness and eventual blindness. And once you were infected, that was it. The course of the disease was known and you could do nothing about it. And because it could possible spread, lepers were typically expelled from society. Today, it is cured with antibiotics. The closest thing to it today might be a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis Something unknown sets the immune system against the body itself attacking the nerves. Although MS isn’t transmissible so the shunning part is missing. But otherwise the progression is roughly the same. You are still there, but the body that is you reaches a form of living death, until you die. And there isn’t much you can do.

**Text**

We have a problem. Leprosy as it was is almost a perfect analogy for our problem. We can talk about that problem as sin. We can talk about that problem as death. We can talk about that problem as the power of the devil. Sin, death and the power of the devil hold natural man – natural us – in sway. And there is nothing that we can do. As the apostle Paul would say, “I know the thing I should do, but I keep doing the things I don’t want to do…this is sin in our members.” And natural man is powerless against sin.

Oh, we can manage our reputation. We can maintain a certain civil righteousness among our fellow man. But even then you could get caught texting things like “I wish my political enemy’s kids would be shot, the little nazis.” Holding onto even civil righteousness is tough. But real righteousness? We don’t have a chance. We constantly do the things we know we shouldn’t. And they almost always hurt us. And the leprosy spreads.

Likewise we cannot add a single hour to our span of days. Death continues to clock in in this old world at 100%. You can be Brian Johnson thinking you can “Choose not to die.” Which is about the saddest form of denial I can imagine. His righteousness regime to keep up that façade surpasses the Pharisees and the Kosher laws.

And all of this delivers us to the Ruler of this old world – Satan. The Strong Man.

We have a problem. And we know it. All of use know it in our gut. All of us in the quiet hours when the confident mask might slip a little might cry out “Master, have mercy on us.”

**Christology**

And this is the good news. God has had mercy on us. On all of us.

And when we are talking about God there we are not talking about any of the various gods that have claimed that title. Nor any of those who might not have claimed it, but still invite worship. The only God that has come to us and revealed himself is Jesus. He’s the only one that walked this earth through our towns and villages. He’s the only one that ever thought to take on leprosy. He’s the only one who confronted our problem: sin, death and the power of Satan.

The 10 lepers beg this one – “Jesus…Master, have mercy on us.” And he does. All of them. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son. And this has always been God’s character. The rain falls on the just and the unjust alike. Our daily bread is provided even to evil people without our prayers.

That cross paid for the sins of the world defeating sin.

His resurrection made a pathway past death.

And Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father. Satan thrown out no longer able to accuse the people of God before the throne. He bound the strong man and stole us.

Christ has defeated sin, death and the power of the devil.

He told all 10 to “go show yourselves to the priests” Those are the people who could let them back into society according to the law. And as they went they were cleansed.

This victory is for you. It is yours. Christ has won it for you. The leprosy of sin and death and the power of Satan has been healed.

**Moral**

The question then is how are you going to live?

Luther’s explanation to Our Daily Bread includes the fact that the gospel comes first. God certain gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers. But then it moves on to this question. “We pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.”

How do we live?

Those three problems: sin, death and the power of the devil have been defeated, but they still hang around in zombie form: the devil, the world and our sinful flesh.

The devil prowls around like a lion looking for who he might devour. The original leprosy has been cleansed, but the devil would like to fool you. Why don’t you stay in the leper colony? Why don’t you make your home here. God doesn’t really mean it. Sure, you are healed, but are really going to show yourself to the priests? They are the ones who kicked you out. Don’t go back there. Here we accept you, however you want to be.

And the world, which has given you nothing, will attempt to lure you. It’s a dog eat dog world. You gotta take while the taking is good. Grab what you can. It’s a world of scarcity. Sure God healed you, but you don’t know when it will come back. Strike while the iron is hot. The one who dies with the most toys wins.

And even our own natures long to just do what we want. To take our daily bread and want some cake too.

“One of them, when he saw he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.”

How then do we live?

It begins with thanks. Thanks recognizes what has been given to us. We have been made well. Sin and death and the devil no longer control everything I do.

Thanks recognizes who has done this for us. Jesus has purchased and won us us from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil.

Thanks knows the correct posture. That of worship. God himself has come and healed me.

How do we live?

It begins with thanks.

**Eschatological**

And that thanks puts us on the right path. We know that we could not heal ourselves. And God has had mercy. We also know that the zombie hoard is out there. The devil, the world and even our own flesh will want us to go back to bondage, to sickness. Because it is all we have ever known.

But the one who healed us bids us rise.

“Rise and go your way, your faith has made you well.”

Go your way. Yes those zombies are out there. But you go with Christ. And the Holy Spirit. You walk with Angels all the way. Your way is not longer their way. Your way is Christ’s way.

Go your way. Have faith. The same Holy Spirit that called you and enlightened you is going to sanctify you and keep you. Have faith. The work that God started in you he will bring to completion.

How do we live?

We live by faith. It has made us well. And equips us for every good work.