

Returning with the One

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 17:11-19



Big Idea

Suffering and hardship often awaken us to our great need. In that place of desperation, we may be willing to cry out to Jesus for help. But what will we do when once the help comes? Will we run off from Him without a second thought? Or will we return to Him with thanks and praise?

Observation #1: God Reaches through the Physical to Touch the Spiritual

Jesus is God's answer to our physical and deeper spiritual dilemma. He came not just to heal the body, but to heal the soul. As such, all the healings in the gospels are not ends in themselves. They are parables of a greater redemption that Jesus is going to accomplish for us on the cross in His death and resurrection. He is taking spiritually deformed, unclean, dead, blind, lame people and making them whole again. He is taking the spiritually ostracized and outcast and bringing them home to God.

Observation #2: Our Trials Are Trustworthy Friends

Suffering wakes us up to our mortality and dependency and need for mercy. It pushes us to ask for help where in pride we would rather not. We come alive to our inadequacies. We feel tangibly and physically what has always been true spiritually—things aren't all right with us and we need help from God. Our riches, our comforts, our successes, they lie to us, they deceive us, they numb us into self-confidence and pride. Our good days lean in like Judas to betray us with a kiss. But our hard days are far more honest. They tell us who we really are and how we really are doing and what we really need.

Observation #3: Grace is Given in the Going

Jesus says: "Go and show yourselves to the priests" (v. 14)—something a leper was only supposed to do if and when he was already cured. But these lepers—spots and rashes and boils and all—hear the command of Christ, and they get up and go. They believe that, though they are not already clean, surely they will be by the time they get there. They had a sense that grace would be given to them in the going.

Observation #4: Healing Is for Homecoming

I think the beauty in this moment is best captured when we contrast the picture in v. 16 with what we saw back up in v. 12. In v. 12 this leper is with the others "[standing] at a distance." But then here now in v. 16, where is He? "[H]e fell on his face at Jesus' feet . . ." He breaks through the safety zone once required when He was leprous and throws himself at the feet of Jesus. He's been cleansed. He's welcome. He's home. Healing is for Homecoming.

Observation #5: The Lord Becomes the Leper

Jesus is not a magician. He doesn't just make our leprosy and sin disappear. He is not an illusionist. He is a priest, or perhaps more appropriately, He is a *sacrifice*. He does not merely wave His wand and make the curse disappear, He bears the curse in His own body on the cross!

Reflection Questions



- We're prone to see suffering and trials as a closed doors—closed doors on our dreams, on our joy, on our hopes. But really, in them, doors are opening up for deeper fellowship with God. How have you experienced this to be true? What other Scriptures support this idea?
- Describe a time when God's grace was given to you in the going. What did stepping out in faith on His word look like? How did He meet you in it for good? Why is this often so hard for us to do? What might God be calling you to do now that will require this same kind of faith without sight?
- In what ways have you taken the spoils of God's grace and used them to fashion idols for yourself? What would it look like to fashion a tabernacle instead?