

Mistaken Identity

Week of November 22

Most of us like things neat, tidy, and pretty, but deep down we probably all agree that life can get really messy and ugly. There are times we make bad choices and suffer the consequences. Other times someone close to us lives unwisely and we suffer. There are times horrific things happen out-of-nowhere and we are forced to deal with the aftermath. Sometimes disease and illness threaten to rob us of our present and future. Many of us have found ourselves destitute and homeless.

Today's Scripture talks about ten lepers, destitute and homeless. According to Old Testament law, lepers were to "live in isolation in their place outside the camp" (Leviticus 13:46b). It is difficult to comprehend the pain these ten men lived with moment-by-moment. They had no rights, no jobs or careers, no affiliation with the public except to declare their uncleanness. They were cut off from their spouse, family and friends, their faith community. The only community they had was other lepers. Existence for them was trying to "live" in a decomposing body.

Read Luke 17:11-19

1. Think of a time you were forced to "live in isolation in *your* place outside the camp." In general, how does society treat those "outside the camp?"

Often it's not until we go through pain personally that our perspective on a tough situation changes. We know the Bible says, "Judge not that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) and yet, it seems we default to casting judgment on others all the time. Of all people, Jesus knew what it was like to be scorned and ridiculed by the "elite." It was while He was on His way to Jerusalem that Jesus heard the lepers crying out to Him, and it was in Jerusalem where He would soon be judged by the religious leaders and sentenced to die.

2. Perhaps you have been learning hard lessons from a hard experience. What is the Lord teaching you about passing judgment on others?

It's interesting that once the lepers were healed, only one returned to "give glory to God." We are quick to judge the nine who continued on their way. Certainly there have been times the Lord has worked a miracle for us and we didn't take the time to thank Him for it. All ten men obeyed the Lord—they left immediately at Jesus' command to show themselves to the priest, and on the way, they were healed.

But it was the foreigner, the Samaritan, who returned to "give glory to God." Perhaps the Samaritan was the only one who recognized the Lord Jesus for who He is, God in Person. Verse 15 says he "came back to Jesus, shouting, 'Praise God!'" Then he fell to the ground, thanking Jesus for what He had done. Oh that we could see Jesus for the wonderful Savior He is—mighty and glorious, full of perfect love and power—and see all He has done for us, surely we too would fall at Jesus' feet!

3. In response to the foreigner's humility and gratitude Jesus says, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you" (v19). What do you make of this "extra" healing and blessing this Samaritan received?

When has the Lord not only answered your specific prayer, but given you a bonus as well? What did that look like for you (or perhaps for your family)?

The Bible says, "Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation... For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ" (Colossians 1:15, 19). God sent His Son into this world as a baby. He was given the name Jesus by the Angel, and lived to complete an assignment that has been in place from time immemorial – to redeem humanity by defeating sin and restoring our relationship with God the Father. There is no one like the Lord Jesus Christ, and no one can ever take His place or re-do what He has already perfectly accomplished.

4. The Plain Truth states: "When we mistake Jesus' identity, we miss the fullness of salvation." What do the following Scriptures tell us about the Lord Jesus Christ and His identity?

Isaiah 9:6-7

Matthew 1:18-21

Hebrews 1:1-3

Truth be known, we are quick to judge even Old Testament passages like Leviticus 13:45-46, in which the Lord wants "the camp" of Israel to remain holy and pure. The LORD wasn't trying to be mean or unfair, for He is kind and just in all His ways. God wanted His people to understand His utter holiness. Still today God wants His children to be in relationship with Him, undefiled by blatant sin, disease, and disorder. But because we are unholy—stained by sin, cursed with disease, and given to disorder in this world—He took a lowly position and now stands with us. "So Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make His people holy by means of His own blood. So let us go out to Him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace He bore" (Hebrews 13:12-13).

Jesus knows the plight of the leper. “There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him. He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses He carried; it was our sorrows that weighed Him down” (Isaiah 53:2b-4a). As you look at your Savior and think about what He has done for you, won’t you bow before Him and give Him thanks?

5. In the space below – as an act of thanksgiving – list at least 10 things you know the Lord has done for you. Then write a short psalm of praise and either say it aloud (or shout it!) or sing it to Him in worship. He’s worthy!

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Text: Luke 17:11-19

Why didn’t the nine others come back to thank Jesus?

- 1) They were following _____.
- 2) They missed _____.
- 3) They were _____ for their _____.
- 4) Perhaps it was not ingratitude but a case of _____ identity.

The Plain Truth:

**If we mistake Jesus’ _____,
we miss the fullness of salvation.**

One Year Bible Reading

Nov. 22: Ezekiel 44:1-45:12, 1 Peter 1:1-12, Psalm 119:17-32, Proverbs 28:8-10
Nov. 23: Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 28:11
Nov. 24: Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 28:12-13
Nov. 25: Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14
Nov. 26: Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 28:15-16
Nov. 27: Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18
Nov. 28: Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 28:19-20

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