

XIV Trinity 2022
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
Galatians 5.16-24 St. Luke 17.11-19



Only one man came back to thank Jesus for healing him...and he was a Samaritan.

Once again the hero in today's Gospel is a Samaritan. The difference between last week's Parable of the Good Samaritan and this week's Gospel is the ten men are not virtual characters in a story. Jesus is actually having a real-life encounter with ten men with a "dreaded skin disease".

We don't know for certain what the "dreaded skin disease" was. Any visible skin condition was suspect and would have been considered possibly contagious. It would have made the person with the condition unclean and an outcast...forced to live away from family, friends and society.

Jesus is one his way to Jerusalem along the border between Samaria and Galilee. He is still in Gentile territory when he encounters the ten men with the "dreaded skin disease". They kept their distance and shouted, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!"

Jesus tells the ten men to go have the priests in the Temple examine them. According to the Book of Leviticus...only a priest could declare a person unclean...and only a priest could declare a person healed.

The Gospel tells us when one of the men saw that he was healed, he immediately turned around and went back to Jesus. He knew Jesus was the source of his healing and fell down at his feet, praising and thanking God. Only one man returned to thank Jesus...and he was a Samaritan.

We don't know anything about the other nine men. They were probably Jews, although the Gospel doesn't say they were. Regardless, the man who did the right thing and thanked Jesus for healing him was a despised Samaritan. The Gospel clearly teaches us Jesus didn't discriminate when it came to healing someone who asked for his help.

What about the other nine men? The Gospel doesn't give us any more details. We can only assume they did what Jesus told them to do. They had the priests in the Temple

examine them and certify they too were clean. But they failed to acknowledge Jesus was the source of their healing or to thank him for helping them.

We ask God for healing all the time. We ask him for spiritual and physical healing. God likes it when we ask for his help. He also likes it when we thank him. Our individual and corporate prayers are acts of faith. They are expressions of our belief God hears and answers our prayers...and God always answers our prayers...yes...no...or wait awhile. There is no such thing as a prayer that goes unanswered.

Now that God has answered our prayers and we have seen the results of our asking for help or guidance...what do we do next? We need to do exactly what the Samaritan does in today's Gospel. The Samaritan did the right thing...he came back to Jesus and fell at his feet and thanked God...he knew it was God who healed him.

Jesus wants us to know God is always ready to forgive us and heal us because it's his nature to show mercy and compassion. Jesus shows us how much the Father loves us through his own acts of love and compassion...especially through his acts of healing. He cares about our physical and spiritual health and everything we do in our daily lives whether it's work, school, church, or vacation time to get refreshed. And nothing is unimportant to God.

Our friend, Paul, reminds us in today's Epistle to the Galatians, healing comes in many forms. Paul is concerned about actions that are against God's will...actions that hurt others and hurt ourselves. The cure for bad actions is good actions: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. God's Holy Spirit helps us do all the right things. That is a healing!

We should never hesitate to ask God for healing. And we should always remember...

God likes it when we say "thank you!"

