

I do not have a sermon to preach to you today – instead a Bible study. I will make some comments, ask some questions but you will need to make the application – to think about what it means for your life. I suppose that is true every week – I speak words from God – the word of God and the Holy Spirit goes to work in you to make that word alive in your life. So I hope the Holy Spirit will be able to use my words this day to kill and make alive – to put to death in you anything that is not worthy of Jesus and to raise up a new you through faith.

Please follow along on your lesson insert as we look at the gospel reading.

*On the way to Jerusalem.* Jesus is the one on the way to Jerusalem, on his way to giving himself for those he loves. A cross awaits him there – he knows it but he does not turn aside.

Are you on the way to Jerusalem, on the way to giving yourself in costly ways? Is there a death ahead of you and a rising with Jesus?

*Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.* Now there is no region between Samaria and Galilee any more than there is a region between Pennsylvania and Ohio. There is simply a border. Samaria is an area that more than 700 years before Jesus was conquered by the Assyrians who took all the skilled people and rich people and educated people away and brought in a group of people who worshipped other gods. They mixed with the peasants and working class people who had been left behind. And their religion became a mixture of the faith of Israel and the faiths of these pagans who came in. Jerusalem people and Galilee people looked down on Samaritans. Jesus is walking down the border between the two.

*As he entered a village ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance they called out saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”* The law of God forbids people suffering from various skin diseases to come into contact with other people. These ten knew Jesus by name, asked him for mercy. Were they looking for a handout? Well, that is not what they got.

*When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourself to the priests.”* He gave them a command – they followed his command without asking even one question. All ten obeyed his command.

*As they went they were made clean.* All ten healed of their skin disease.

*Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed turned back, praising God with a loud voice.* Only one of them did not go to the priests but came back.

*He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him.* Flat on the ground before Jesus – was he showing how lowly he was and how exalted Jesus is? People used to do this in the presence of kings and queens.

*Then Jesus asked, “Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”*

Foreigners were not allowed to enter the temple in Jerusalem, the place where the people who were pure in their beliefs worshipped. But this man was worshipping Jesus and Jesus received his thanks and worship.

*Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”* The word translated made well can also mean saved or made whole. Your faith has made you whole or your faith has saved you. The foreigner is the saved one, the one made whole.

Is this a story about the importance of giving thanks? Or a story about Jesus power to heal? Or a story about how Jesus receives everyone who comes to him – regardless of their background? Or is this a story about trusting Jesus and doing what he says? Or a story about faith in Jesus leading to salvation?

You will have to decide. Will the story lead you to thanksgiving – counting your blessings, pouring out your praise and thanks to God?

Will the story open your eyes to see those you think of as outsiders in new ways? Will you look for ways they honor God more than we who think of ourselves as the godly ones?

Will you be crying out to Jesus for mercy and then listening to how he leads you, directs you? Will you be watching for healing from him?

Or will you think about how Jesus can make you whole? Will faith in him be your salvation? Will you believe in his power to make you whole?