

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus Heals Ten with Leprosy

Luke 17:11 - 19

Opening

- Gathering: Why do people fail to thank others who have helped them?
- Today's Focus: Jesus continued to reach out in mercy and revealed lessons of faith even after He refocused His ministry to prepare His disciples.
- Key Verses: *They were on their way to Jerusalem ... those who followed were afraid. Again He took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to Him. Mark 10:32*
- Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? Luke 17:18*

Opening Prayer

Lesson

From the Farthest End (*Matthew 16-17*) = Refer to a map during the first part of this lesson

- How far away from Jerusalem was Jesus at the time recognized as the turning point of His ministry?
Matthew 16:13 = Around Caesarea Philippi, Northernmost part of Palestine, near Mt. Hermon
- How did Jesus' disciples answer this question during this trip into this especially pagan area?
Matthew 16:14-16 = Peter confessed Jesus to be the promised Messiah, God's Son
- What confirmation did the disciples get that Jesus was really who He explained Himself to be?
Matthew 17:1-5 = He was transfigured, visited and commended by the Father (Mt. Hermon?)

The Turning Point of Jesus' Ministry (*John 7*)

- How did this event mark the turning point in Jesus' ministry? = About 8 months before His death
Matthew 16:21 = He turned His focus toward teaching His disciples
- How did Jesus' travels show that His ministry focus had changed? = Then to Judea and Perea
Mark 9:30-31; 10:1 = He passed through Galilee without ministering to the people
- Did Jesus go to Jerusalem at this time, or did He wait until His final entrance? = October
John 7:1-2, 14-15 = He went to celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles (end of harvest)
- How did Jews in the temple for the Feast interpret Jesus' presence in the temple?
John 7:25-26 = He must be recognized by the leaders as the Messiah
- How did the Jewish leaders respond to these rumors?
John 7:32, 44 = They tried to arrest Him - Unable to because it was not yet His time

In Judea and Perea (*John 10:22-42*)

- How long did Jesus stay in Judea?
John 10:22-23 = In temple at Feast of Dedication - Hanukkah (December)
- How did the Jews visiting for the Feast respond to Jesus at this time?
John 10:24-25, 30-31, 39 = They wondered if He was the Messiah, tried to kill Him
- Where did Jesus spend most of the rest of His time before His final trip to Jerusalem?
John 10:40-42 = Across the Jordan River - In Perea
- How did Matthew and Mark summarize these months of Jesus in and around Jerusalem?
Matthew 19:1 (Mark 10:1) = Went into Judea and to the other side of the Jordan
All of the stories in this quarter occurred during the time mentioned in these verses.

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The Last Days in Judea (*John 11*)

What caused Jesus to return from across the Jordan? = Last week's lesson

John 11:1-8 = To raise His friend Lazarus from the dead

Other than love for His friend, why would Jesus make such a risky trip?

John 11:18-19, 45 = It showed His power and brought many to faith in Him

How did this prepare for His arrest and death that would occur in just a few months (or weeks)?

John 11:46-50, 53 = It heated the Jewish leaders' desire to get rid of Jesus

Since it wasn't yet time for Him to die, where did Jesus go?

John 11:54 = To a village near the desert called Ephraim (not the tribal region of Ephraim)

A Quick Trip Home (*Luke 17:11*)

Did Jesus stay in Ephraim the entire time preceding His final trip in to Jerusalem?

Luke 17:11 = He apparently returned briefly to southern Galilee

Why might Jesus have returned to southern Galilee before His final trip to Jerusalem?

Mark 15:40-41 = To gather friends and disciples to join in the final journey

Do we have any stories of any of these companions on this final journey?

Matthew 20:20-21 = Mrs. Zebedee (from Capernaum/Bethsaida) made request for sons

Was this a joyful journey for Jesus' companions? = Afraid since Jesus was wanted by Jewish leaders

Mark 10:32 = They were afraid; Jesus *took the Twelve aside* and told what would happen

Did Jesus' traveling party change size as they traveled?

Mark 10:46 = A large crowd joined them

Another Purpose for This Path (*Luke 17:12-13*)

How do we see that Jesus didn't return to southern Galilee just to pick up friends?

Luke 17:11 = He "traveled along the border" - Border was east-west, Trip was north-south

Luther: *The Evangelist with special pains desires to show that He did not journey on the usual road.*

... He did not journey thus for His own sake, but in order to preach as much as possible and be of service to many. ... For He was sent to offer His services to everyone.

For what service to others might Jesus have traveled this road?

Luke 17:12-13 = To heal these ten lepers

Leprosy in the Bible (*Leviticus 13*)

Leprosy today (Hansen's disease) is now uncommon, contagious by continued contact

Begins with red spots on the face, ears, forearms and thighs that turn into thick nodules

Skin drops off forming ulcers; Tissue is lost leading to contraction and deformity

Bones are affected and fingers drop off; Body "dissolves" in later stages

Leprosy of the Bible may have included a number of other forms of skin diseases

How were the Jews protected against spreading plagues of contagious leprosy?

Leviticus 13:1-3 = Priests were to examine any potential skin diseases

How were Jews protected from being declared unclean for minor skin problems?

Leviticus 13:4-6 = Periods of isolation and re-examination were prescribed

What would happen to those who were determined to be unclean from leprosy?

Leviticus 13:45-46 = Quarantined from the community, appear visibly unclean

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Lepers Restored (*Leviticus 14*)

Was there any hope for those who had been declared unclean from leprosy?

Leviticus 14:1-3a = Yes, if condition improved, priest would GO OUT and re-examine

What was done if the person was found to be healed?

Leviticus 14:3b-4 = The priest would conduct a cleansing ceremony

What part of the ceremony symbolized the death that results from a person's uncleanness?

Leviticus 14:5 = One of the birds would be killed and its life blood poured into a bowl

How was this bowl of life blood and cleansing water used to express the return of life and purity?

Leviticus 14:6-7a = Sprinkled 7 times (complete) to cover the person

Matthew Henry: *The living bird, with a little scarlet wool, and a bunch of hyssop, must be fastened to a cedar stick... The cedar-wood signified the restoring of the leper to his strength and soundness, for that is a sort of wood not apt to putrefy. The scarlet wool signified his recovering a florid color again, for the leprosy made him white as snow. And the hyssop intimated the removing of the disagreeable scent which commonly attended the leprosy.*

How was the person then revealed to be free from their previous "living death"?

Leviticus 14:7b = The live bird soaked in blood and water was released in the open

After seven days of partial re-acceptance, how was the person restored to fellowship with God?

Leviticus 14:10-12, 19-20 = Present offerings for guilt, sin, commitment and thanksgiving

Leprosy in Our Lives

How did Spurgeon explain that we are to understand leprosy in relation to our own lives?

Leprosy is to be considered by us as the type of sin; and as we read the chapters in Leviticus, which concern the shutting up or putting apart, and the purification of a cleansed leper, we are to understand every sentence as having in it a gospel sermon to us, teaching what is the condition of a sinner in the sight of God, how the sinner is to be cured, and how he can be restored to the privileges from which the leprosy of sin had utterly shut him out.

How is the influence of sin on our lives like leprosy?

James 1:14-15 = It continues to feed on itself and grow until it destroys the whole person

How are we to be treated as lepers?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7, 13 = We are to be expelled from God's community

How are we cleansed and freed when we present our leprosy of sin in confession & repentance to God?

Ephesians 5:25-27 = Christ gave His life-blood and water of baptism to cleanse and free us

What sacrifice do we have that restores us to fellowship with God?

Hebrews 10:8-10 = Jesus was sacrificed to make us holy in God's sight once and for all

Faith Revealed (*Luke 17:12-13*)

How did the ten lepers respond to the presence of Jesus?

Luke 17:12-13 = They met Him, stood at a distance and called loudly for His mercy

What do we learn of faith from the boldness of the lepers in going to meet Jesus?

2 Corinthians 3:12 (James 1:6) = Faith is to be bold, not doubting God's providence

What do we learn of faith from the lepers calling and looking to Jesus for healing?

Hebrews 11:1 = Faith holds fast to what it does not see, feel or experience

What do we learn of faith from the lepers standing at a distance?

Romans 5:8 = Faith does not rely on worthiness or merit, but trusts in mercy

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Love Revealed (Luke 17:14)

How did Jesus respond to this revelation of the lepers' faith?

Luke 17:14a = Told them to show themselves to the priest

How was Jesus showing who He was by sending them rather than saying that He would heal them?

Isaiah 65:24 = Messianic prophesy spoke of answers to prayer before they were asked

How had Jesus showed His love to another leper earlier in His ministry?

Luke 5:12-14 = He was willing and had touched the unclean man and healed him

What does this love that Jesus showed for these unclean lepers mean for our own lives?

John 13:34-35 = We are to love one another as He has first loved us

Doesn't it take just faith to be a Christian? Is love required also?

1 Corinthians 13:2 = Yes

Why is love also required?

James 2:26 = Faith without deeds of love is dead, not life-giving faith

Thanksgiving Revealed (Luke 17:15-16)

How did the lepers respond in faith to Jesus' instruction?

Luke 17:14b = They followed His instruction without questioning

How did the lepers respond in thanksgiving when they were healed?

Luke 17:15-16 = Only one of the ten returned and thanked Him

Although this man was not a Jew, what did He know about how to respond to God's goodness?

Psalms 107:8 = We are to thank God for His unfailing love and great deeds for us

Praise Commended (Luke 17:17-19)

How did Jesus respond to receiving thanks from only one of the ten lepers?

Luke 17:17-18 = He questioned why the others (Jews) hadn't returned and thanked Him

But wasn't it more important for them to go through the ceremonial cleansing process?

Psalms 51:15-17 = Thanks and praise to God are more important than sacrifices

What words did Jesus have for the leper who returned?

Luke 17:19 = *Your faith has made you well*

How did this differ from the cleansing which the other lepers also received?

Luke 7:48-50 = He was also cleansed from the leprosy of sin

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What are some sins I have committed that have made me like an unclean leper in God's eyes?
(Luke 17:12; 18:13; 1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 106:6; Romans 3:23; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 1 John 1:8, 10)
2. When have I been conscious of my sinfulness so that I have wanted to keep God at a distance?
(Luke 17:12; 5:8; Genesis 3:6-10; Ezra 9:6; Isaiah 6:5; 29:15; Jer 16:17; 23:23-24; Rev 6:15-17)
3. How have I boldly called to God with my needs?
(Luke 17:13; 5:12-14; Psalm 4:1; 50:15; Isaiah 58:9a; Romans 8:26; Phil 4:6-7; James 5:13-15)
4. In what ways am I reluctant to reveal my sinfulness to others?
(Luke 17:14; Lev 5:5; Psalm 32:1-5; 38:18; Proverbs 28:13; Acts 19:18; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)
5. Do I regularly and sincerely thank God for the life He has given me now and forever?
Or, do I take His gifts for granted?
(Luke 17:15-19; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11-12; Ephesians 5:19-20; Col 3:17; 1 Thess 5:18; Hebrews 12:28)