

Where Are The Nine?

Joe Slater

Common courtesy compels us to say “thank you” upon receiving a gift. Failure to do so marks one as not only rude but self-centered and entitled.

As Jesus was entering a certain village, ten lepers cried out to Him: “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*” (Luke 17:13). His reputation as a compassionate healer preceded Him, motivating these unfortunate sufferers to plead for cleansing. They weren’t disappointed. “*So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go show yourselves to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed*” (v. 14).

Leprosy often claimed the life of its victims, slowly eating away at their flesh until finally they died. What a marvelous gift those ten lepers received from Jesus! Now they had hope for a normal life and could freely associate with their families and friends. Surely they would be thankful – wouldn’t they?

“*And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving thanks. And he was a Samaritan*” (vv. 15-16). Most Samaritans would have nothing to do with a Jew (John 4:9). Jesus was a Jew. Yet this Samaritan fell at His feet with thanksgiving to Him!

“*So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’*” (vv. 17-18). Indeed, this Samaritan’s example exposed the chosen people’s ingratitude!

This coming Thursday is a Thanksgiving holiday in America. Let’s put football and early Christmas shopping aside as we remember to give genuine thanks to God for the countless ways He has blessed us! May we not be among “the nine”!

His Truth Marches On!

Isaiah’s indictment against his generation, a people who had temporarily succeeded in turning truth on its head, is no less applicable today. “*Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*” (Isaiah 5:20-21).

The Messianic prophet could just as well have been commenting on this generation and condemning the sad state of affairs (and affairs of state) characterizing our truth-impaired 21st century.

When lying is considered clever and truth is dismissed as immaterial; when those who do wrong are lauded while those who attempt to do right are ridiculed; when indecency is winked at while courage and honesty are snickered at; yes, when evil is called good and good is called evil, correction (for any people, at any time) is required.

And always – eventually, invariably – correction comes. In the end, truth **will** prevail. It always has and always will.

In the final analysis, when all has been said and done, when once=powerful nations have long since crumbled to the dust of oblivion, truth will prevail. Men may deny it. They may denounce it. They may even demonize truth and do their best to extinguish it. But mark it down and rest assured, truth **will** prevail!

Isaiah’s people perished in captivity, yet the truth marched on, outlasting them all. The skeptics and spinners of our day will one day go the way of all flesh, but the truth will outlast all of us as well.

“*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls away; but the word of the Lord endures forever*” (1 Peter 1:24-25).

--Dalton Key (Tulsa, OK) via Old Paths

Live Happy

I read a story that happened during the 1700's. A family was in church, and their ten-year-old daughter got the giggles. In spite of her parents' warnings and threats, she couldn't stop laughing. The family was kicked out of the church and could never return. Who knows what happened to that little girl when they got home.

For some reason, our ancestors, and even some of us today, believe that church is a place for solemn, dreary faces. Perhaps it is because we see God that way. But think about it. Is God happy? I believe that He is. He is not happy in the sense that most people think of happy, as having good fortune that keeps them smiling. Our God is happy in that He is content.

Most people think of happiness as getting their way and having what they want. If that doesn't happen, they are sad. However, sadness is the result of sin. True sadness comes when we disobey God and reap the consequences.

One Greek word for happy is *makarios*, which in most versions of the New Testament is translated blessed. In nearly every place where it is used in the New Testament, the idea is we are blessed because we can rely on God and His guidance and care. Blessedness is obeying God and doing His will.

When we are God's children, we can have joy and be truly happy. I'm not saying we should get the giggles during worship service. Things should be done decently and in order. We should show proper respect for our God and for those leading the worship.

Let's not have any dour faces. Let's show the joy and happiness we feel because we belong to God and we can rest in His love and care. Nothing external can take that joy from us.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)