

SERMON NOTES Sunday 12th October 2025

sunnysidechurch

Theme: **The nine and the one**

Passages: **Luke 17.11-19, 2 Timothy 2.8-15.**

Some of the main themes from the sermon: -

Practicing the Way

The Christian author, John Mark Comer, has written a really helpful book called 'Practicing the Way'. It's about being a disciple of Jesus by being with him, becoming like him and doing as he did. I enjoyed it but found it quite a challenging book. In particular, he emphasises that we are called not just to believe in Jesus but to follow him. This distinction was in my mind when I read today's Bible passages.

A little bit of context from Luke

Jesus has just said some challenging things to his disciples about discipleship and life in the community of faith; the need to forgive each other and to care for our vulnerable fellow believers. As he continues his journey towards Jerusalem and his passion, he encounters ten men with leprosy in an account that only appears in Luke's Gospel. Leprosy was (and is) a horrible illness that deprives sufferers both of their health and their place in their community. Sufferers were outcasts. There are some interesting and surprising aspects of the account that make this far more nuanced than a straightforward healing miracle.

Reasons not to say thank you

Firstly, all ten of the men asked Jesus the 'have pity' on them (v13). Whether they knew about Jesus' reputation as a healer is not clear. However, Jesus responded not by giving them alms (as they might have expected) but by telling them to 'go and show themselves to the priests' (v14). It was local priests who were sanctioned to declare people 'clean' or 'unclean'. That the ten all went on Jesus' command suggests that they all had faith in his healing power. Nine of them, having been healed and presumably readmitted to their community, just got on with their lives. Why didn't they come back? Maybe they wanted to see their families again, maybe in their excitement they just forgot, maybe they simply saw Jesus as a useful means for getting what they wanted, maybe they were afraid to be identified with Jesus....

The difference between healing and wholeness

But one of the ten did come back praising God. He threw himself at Jesus' feet

and thanked him (v15-16). For him the meeting with Jesus was much richer than for the others. He became a worshipper and a disciple. Whereas the other nine would have resumed life in their communities this man was a Samaritan, so his status as something of a social outcast would continue. Despite this he is overwhelmed with gratitude. This presents a challenge for Jesus' disciples then as now.

Is our love for Jesus transactional or something deeper?

How deep is our gratitude to Jesus for his love for us? Does it affect us to the very core of our being (like the Samaritan) or is it just a (very useful) part of our lives? Is our relationship with Jesus about all of our lives or do we take to him only the bits of our lives that we think need fixing?

I think, if I'm honest, there is something of the nine in me. When life is feeling sorted, it's all too easy to keep Jesus on the back burner and give priority to the things that seem more enjoyable and important like friends, family and career. Jesus wants to be more than a panic button for each of us. If we really want the fullness of life that Jesus offers (John 10.10) we have to want it more than other things. It is clear from this story of the ten that Jesus will give us as much of himself as we are willing to take. But taking more comes with a cost; the cost of 'practicing the way' that Jesus illustrates in his teaching just before the encounter with the ten men with leprosy.

Some discussion points this week:

1. ***What to you is the difference between being a follower and a believer?***
2. ***Who are today's outcasts?***
3. ***What do we notice about those Christians whose relationship with Jesus goes way beyond the transactional? (You may want to think about people you know or about Christian people from the past, whose lives and witness have made a mark on you).***
4. ***Is it possible to have a 'life in all its fullness' if we keep Jesus at arm's length?***
5. ***What can we do to be more like the one than the nine?***
6. ***How can we help each other be more like the one than the nine?***