

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost- EF 2013

Luke 17: 11-19

*“He... went with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks.”*

That was our Samaritan. The others went on to be ritually reunited with their community by their priests. It wasn't as if the others hadn't had faith in Jesus. They had all called out to him in hopes of him healing them. They even called him “Master”, a term that only his own disciples called him. And yet it was the Samaritan that returned, that single Samaritan.

That meant that the others must have been Jews. Having been healed of their leprosy, they could be reunited to their community through their priests.

The Samaritan?... not so much. Even cleansed of leprosy, he would still have been *persona non grata* in that Jewish neighborhood. When all the ten had leprosy, there was an equality about their despised condition. Not so now.

How much has human nature changed in the past 2000 years? We still work hard at despising each other. We should check ourselves out more closely when we say or hear the words, “those people”. Who are our lepers today? Gender, race, religion, immigrant status, sexual orientation, welfare status, homelessness, disability, political affiliation, criminal history? The list can go on and on.

Jesus came to save **the** people. His ministry to the lowly and despised should always remind us to love the outcast, and to have hope when we find ourselves to be outcast.

But there is something more going on here than just the lowly being saved.

Where was Jesus going? He was headed to Jerusalem. By that we mean he was headed to Calvary.

The Samaritan's response was a grateful one. He demonstrated loudly his gratitude and threw himself prostrate before the Master's feet. This action speaks of more than just gratitude. This is the gratitude that moves people to give themselves to the source of their joy. When the Samaritan dedicated himself to Jesus through prostration, he was told to *“arise and go thy way”*. We can assume the “way” is Jesus' way, the way to Jerusalem, the way of the cross.

The Samaritan is our role model. He had faith. He had hope. He experienced the divine presence. His gratitude moved him into discipleship.

We here have faith. We have hope. We come here in expectant anticipation of communion with the divine Son. Do we allow our hearts to be moved with gratitude? Do we allow that gratitude to prompt us to follow the way, the way of the cross?

The way may be marked by much suffering, but its hallmark is that even while suffering, we can experience and share the eternal love of God. It is by receiving and sharing that gift that we become disciples of Christ.

When we prepare to leave here today, may we gratefully remember Jesus' words, "*Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.*"