

Sunday School Lesson

DR. C. W. BATES
Pastor.
Swannanoa Methodist Church
Swannanoa, N. C.



Lesson for Sunday, Feb. 5:
"Gratitude, A Christian Virtue."
Lesson Text: Luke 17:11-19

All our lessons for this quarter are found in the Gospel of Luke. We ought to be grateful to him for this book. It gives us a very different slant on the life of Christ than we find in Matthew or Mark or John. Luke was greatly interested in Jesus' miracles of healing, and it is interesting to discover that he has preserved more of the stories of such than any other of the Gospel writers. He was also interested in those instances in which Jesus showed consideration of the poor, the outcast, and the unfortunate. In his Gospel we have the account of the raising of the widow's son (7:11-17), the healing of the Centurion's servant (7:2-10), the healing of the afflicted woman (8:43-48), the raising of the daughter of Jairus (10:42), the restoration of the demoniac (8:26-39), the parable of the good Samaritan (10:30-37), and, in the lesson before us, the healing of the ten lepers. We might call Luke's account of the life of Christ, "The Gospel of Compassion." We want to consider now the healing of the lepers, and, if we can, draw some lessons from it that will help us follow the example of one of them. But let's look at all ten of them first. They were all very much alike up to a certain point.

1. They all had leprosy. We do not know much about it, here in the United States. There are few

known cases of it, and these are largely isolated, in, to give it a nice name, a "Leprosarium" in Louisiana. But in the Orient, which takes in the Holy Land, it is still a common and dreaded disease. Men and Women, and even children, are afflicted with it. Fingers, ears, hands slowly rot away; feet become infected and disintegrate and slough off; eyeballs rot away until nothing is left but the sockets. It is a terrible picture. In our day for many who have the disease there is hope in the new remedies that have been found for it. If it is not too far advanced, there is the possibility of cure.

But for these men no such remedies were available. Death, slow but certain, brought hopelessness to their hearts. Not only was it painful and loathsome; it cut them off from their loved ones, from society, from business. They were outcasts, depending for food on the pity of those who passed by, warning even them with the cry "Unclean! Unclean!", not to come too close.

Pain, the pain of leprosy, drew them together. Ordinarily the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But they knew the fellowship of suffering—their common affliction broke down the barriers. "Misery Loves Company". We might stop long enough to make this comment: It may be that one of the uses of pain is to make us sympathetic. When you go back to the original meaning of that word, that's what sympathy is: the sharing of pain, sorrow, through a common experience. It makes friends out of strangers. These ten, even though one of them was a Samaritan, were alike in this: they shared a common, painful, repulsive disease.

2. They all had the same chance for healing. It is terrible to think of the millions of people on our earth who have no hope of being relieved of their suffering, or cured of their disease. Not that there are no remedies, but because the remedies are not available. And if they were, there are not enough doctors to administer them. Here we have, so to say, one doctor for every 1500 patients. In India, there is one doctor for every 250,000. And for other areas the proportion is even worse. Add to the scarcity, the inadequate hospital facilities, the prohibitive cost of medicines, and you have an almost hopeless situation. What hope is there for all but the very few who have tuberculosis or malaria or sleeping sickness, or a hundred other diseases, of even being reached, let alone cured. All honor to the medical missionaries who have gone into these neglected and needy areas to try to help bring some relief.

But, getting back to the lepers, none of that was true for them. For them there was one physician for ten patients. And spell it with a capital P. "The great Physician now was near; the sympathizing Jesus." We do not know how they came to recognize Him. The text simply says "as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, and cried, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.'"

3. They all had the same faith in Christ's willingness—and, maybe, in His ability—to help them. I put it that way because I am not sure, at that point, they expected to be cured. Their plea for mercy may have included that. But it may be it went no farther than to hope he would help them—relieve their pain, perhaps. But, if that is so, he went beyond their hope, as they not only uttered their cry for mercy, but were willing to help him work out the larger blessing, the cure of their disease. Except in a few rare cases, Jesus always demanded something from

those to whom he gave something. A cure always called for co-operation—the co-operation of faith. He says to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand." To the man stricken with the palsy, "Take up thy bed and walk." He says to the lepers, "Go show yourselves to the priests." "And as they went—because they went?—they were cleansed." It took the cry to get the cure. But it would not have come if they had done nothing more than cry. I think that is true of those who have leprosy of sin. The Great Physician can heal all our soul's diseases. But we must reach for the remedy. These men—all ten of them—had the blessing of healing because they were willing to do what Christ demanded of them. That is the way healing comes to us.

There are some other, not quite so important, things in which they were alike. But I must get to the thing, the one thing, that made them different. One had the grace of gratitude, enough gratitude to return to the Master and express it. "Then one of them—the Samaritan—when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks." "Then said Jesus, 'Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?'" Why didn't they come back, as did the despised Samaritan? Just think of a few possible reasons, briefly: Because they thought it was due them to be healed. If God sends affliction—and they thought he did—then he ought to provide a cure. (It doesn't matter where it comes from nor how.) Why thank God for what it is his duty to provide? "Give us our daily bread." But don't expect us to thank God for it. He didn't put us into the world to starve. But why thank him for keeping us from starving? We helped make our bread; let's eat it! Isn't that pretty much the argument, expressed or implied, in the attitude of many people? Again, they didn't return to give thanks because they were too intent on getting back to an "normal life." Back to their friends and loved ones, from whom they had been separated so long; back to town to open up the shop—their business had suffered while they were outcasts. So on and on. But isn't that true of us? We are so busy, so much concerned with things, that, at the moment, seem more important. Giving thanks, being grateful, can be put off until a more convenient season. It takes too much time to return and give God thanks. We have time for other things; but not that. It takes time to be holy, it takes time to be grateful. Many of us don't take time to be either.

How much we have to be thankful for! How much we need to "praise God from whom all blessings—all blessings—flow!" We need to express our gratitude—because a thankful heart is pleasing unto God. How disappointed he must have been because the nine didn't return to give thanks. We can hear something of his disappointment in that question, "Where are the nine?" But we need to express our gratitude because it does something to us. There is such a thing as the grace of gratitude. "And Jesus said to him—the grateful Samaritan—'Rise and go thy way; your faith—and your gratitude—has (have) made you whole.'" Someone has suggested that while the nine lepers were better physically—they had their bodies healed—they were no better, and perhaps much worse, spiritually, after Jesus met them than before. "Among all the hideous sins of the spirit none is more devastating or deplorable than ingratitude." And most of us—is it one out of ten?—is guilty of it.

"Count your many blessings; name them one by one;
Count your many blessings—see what God hath done."

But do more than count them; praise God for them. Say, "Thank you," to God.

MONTREAT

By Miss Julia Stokes

"Knowing and Doing," was the subject of the Sunday morning sermon by the Rev. Stanley Bennett in Gaither Chapel at the 11 o'clock service. In connection with the service a nursery is held each Sunday during the church hour. Mrs. J. E. Maddox is chairman of mothers group.

The Youth Fellowship of Montreat met in the Rec room of Assembly Inn at 4:45 p.m.

Vespers was held in Gaither Chapel at 7:15 p.m. with the World Mission group in charge of the program.

The Young Adult group met in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Carlton White at 8 p.m. Sunday.

The prayer meetings are held each Wednesday at 4 p.m. in the sun parlor of the Assembly Inn and at 7:15 p.m. in Gaither Chapel. Because of the snow last Wednesday, the afternoon meeting could not be held.

The Westminister Fellowship of Duke University held a retreat in Assembly Inn for the week-end. There were about 40 in the group and they enjoyed skating and mountain climbing. They seemed glad to find some snow still on the mountain top. They held their worship service with the Montreat church.

The executive board will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 7 at 4 p.m. in the sun parlor of the Assembly Inn. The president, Mrs. Collins Lee, will be in charge.

The Men of Montreat will meet on Monday, Feb. 6 at Assembly Inn for a supper meeting at 6:30 p.m. The president, Dr. Douglas Monroe, will preside. The speaker will be the Rev. R. L. Torrence, chaplain of the United States Service of Buncombe county.

The Women of the Church will hold a school of missions beginning with a family night supper on Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. in the home ec room in Gaither. This will be a covered dish supper and the families are invited to come. The different groups are to meet for study after supper. Mrs. W. J. Gammon is chairman of world missions and is working out a program for other days of study during the month of February.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Bennett and Stanley, Jr., have returned from a week spent in Richmond, Va. Mr. Bennett attended the town and country church meeting in Union Theological seminary.

Mrs. E. C. Sherry, Miss Annie Webb, and Miss Elizabeth Woodhouse left this week for a visit to Florida. Mrs. Sherry will visit friends in Clearwater and Pompano and be gone about two weeks. Miss Annie Webb will be in her cottage in Dunedin until spring. She is not teaching for the remainder of this school year. She will have as guest for the month of February, Miss Elizabeth Woodhouse. Mrs. Woodhouse will visit her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Goodman on Montreat road for the month of February.

Paul Moore is spending the week-end with his mother, Mrs. Paul Moore in the Warrenton cottage on Woodland road. He is a student in North Carolina University at Chapel Hill.

Miss Claudia Edwards of York, S. C., was in her home on a short stay. She spent part of the time with Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Gammon in their home on Mississippi road. "No Wings in the Manse," a book by Mrs. Betty Frist, wife of Dr. John Chester Frist, pastor of the Government Street Presbyterian church of Mobile, Ala., and summer residence of Virginia road has just come from the publishers.

Mrs. Frist, daughter of the late Dr. C. H. Ferrin and Mrs. Ferrin of Orlando, Fla., knows what life is in a manse as she was one of seven children of a Presbyterian minister, and now wife of a minister and mother of four. How she ever found time to write a book with all the duties of a busy minister's wife and housewife is one of the unsolved mysteries of her friends.

She was honored by two teas in Mobile, one given by the Mobile branch of the English Speaking Union in the Seaman's club on Jan. 16 and at the Woman's Seaman's club with a publishing party later in January.

The Rev. C. W. Solomon has returned from a two weeks' service in Strawberry Plains, Tenn. He will preach on next Sunday at both services in the Princeton Presbyterian church, Johnson City, Tenn. On Feb. 5 two of his team will start services in the Concord, Tenn., Presbyterian church and Mr. Solomon will be in this church for evangelistic services for two weeks.

The beautiful five inch snow that landed on Montreat Monday night made Tuesday the most beautiful day of the year. It was indeed a winter wonderland, but was one of the easiest snows to get through. The earth was so dry that it just seemed to drink in the moisture and all snow seemed to melt into the earth overnight. Some few people managed to get up to see the beauty, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Simpson drove up from Greenville, S. C., to get a glimpse of snow and take pictures. Mr. Solomon reported a beautiful trip over the Smokies to Knoxville last week.

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Spanish-Amer. War Veteran Dies

Last rites for David L. Parrish, 77, of Badin, who died in a hospital Thursday, Jan. 26, were held in the Swannanoa Presbyterian church on Saturday. He was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and a member of the Robert Lee Moir Jr. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post at Badin.

Pallbearers were Arthur Bannerman, John Cornett, Lynn Reighard, Bradford Burnette, Fred Davidson and Oliver Alexander.

Surviving are the widow, the former Miss Kittie Sue Patton; three daughters, Mrs. Charles Craven, Wilmington, Del., Mrs. R. H. Ross, Chatham, N. J., and Mrs. B. H. Furr, Rome, Ga.; two sons, L. B. Parrish, Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., and John D. Parrish, Badin; and one sister, Mrs. Benjamin Martin, Muskogee, Okla.

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