

Strive to Be Saved

by Sandeep Poonen

We must strive to be saved by obeying God's commands, demonstrating humility and gratitude, and seeking a personal relationship with Him.

Duration: 27:45

Scripture: Luke 17:11

Topics: "Faith And Gratitude", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of the ten lepers healed by Jesus, emphasizing the importance of crying out to Jesus for mercy, acknowledging sin as the true leprosy in our lives. It highlights the need for a spirit of humility, obedience to God's commands even when they seem illogical, and coming back to Jesus with a grateful heart after experiencing cleansing. The ultimate message is to strive to enter by the narrow door, removing entitlement, raising voices in praise, and finding salvation through faith and gratitude.

Transcript

I want to share from Luke chapter 17, the passage that we may know, it's the story about ten lepers. There were ten lepers who got healed by Jesus. So I want to read the passage from Luke chapter 17 verses 11 through 19.

Luke chapter 17, 11 through 19. And it came about that while he was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a certain village, there met him ten leprous men who stood at a distance.

And they raised their voices, saying, Jesus Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said to them, Go and show yourselves to the priest. And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed.

Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. And he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they? Were none found who turned back to give glory to God except this foreigner? And he said to him, Rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well. Your faith has saved you.

There were many lepers in Israel. There were many lepers who were in the time of Jesus when he was living. But not all lepers were healed.

Every single leper was sick with leprosy. But not all lepers cried out to Jesus. So the first point is very simple in verse 13.

Cry out to Jesus. But what did they ask for? What did the lepers ask for? If you had one question to ask Jesus when you're stuck in leprosy, what's it going to be? Is it going to be, Why? Lord, why did you give me this? Lord, why did you allow me to go through this circumstance? Lord, why did you cause that to happen and this to happen? Lord, why did you? Why, why, why, why, why? So much part of our lives when we're dealing with circumstances is why. Why did I take that medication? Why did I eat that food? Why did I give my child this? That's the reason why it's ended up with this.

And there's a whole host of whys that our minds can be saturated with when we're dealing with the leprosy in our lives. And the leprosy is not a physical sickness. The leprosy is not the lack of a job.

The leprosy is not any physical defect. The leprosy in our lives is a sin. Jesus dealt very specifically with leprosy in the New Testament in his ministry because it was a parable about the sin that infects all of us.

That spreads and takes over the whole body and eats up the whole body too. And the response that God is looking for from lepers is Lord have mercy on me. The spirit of Lord have mercy on me when I see my sin is what God is looking for.

It's the spirit of humility. There's a lot of complaining spirit in the way we can speak our need. I can say Lord I have a need.

Lord I really get angry all the time. Lord I really deal with this unforgiveness. Lord I really get anxious all the time.

But even in those words there may not be a spirit of Lord have mercy on me. Because somewhere deep down there's still a spirit maybe of complaining. Lord why? Lord how could you? How could a good God allow this? Why did my parents do this to me? Something or the other.

All of those questions need to be eliminated to say Lord have mercy on me. Who asks for mercy? People who have nothing to come to the table with. People who have nothing on their record to say here's the reason why I want you to do this to me Lord.

Lord I have nothing except to beg and to ask for your mercy. This is the spirit with which we must come to the Lord with our sins. God has defined the exact boundaries of my habitation.

So I will have no complaint. If God has defined the exact boundaries of my habitation. That includes that right now Lord I went to my work and I found out that my job has been eliminated.

That's an exact boundary too. And when I find that my child is sick or has cancer or has some disability. It is the exact boundaries of my habitation that God has allowed.

He didn't cause it. He's a good God but he's allowed it. He drew it.

No complaint. But Lord now I can be tempted. I can be tempted to this situation that the exact boundaries of my habitation can cause me to get angry.

To get bitter. To be unforgiving. To complain.

I want to humble myself under the mighty hand of God. 1 Peter 5.5 as we heard. Lord you've defined the exact boundaries of my habitation.

I'm going to humble myself and I'm going to ask for mercy. No complaining. No spirit of entitlement.

This is the mark that God uses. This is the mark that God looks for among all of us. He's not a respecter of people.

I don't believe it was all of these lepers' fault that they ended up with leprosy. But they didn't have a complaint against God. They didn't come to God and say Jesus you say you're the son of God.

Why? That's how the scribes came to Jesus. That's how the Pharisees came to Jesus. Lord explain to me why.

With folded arms. With a skeptical attitude. The lepers had a lot more questions to ask.

Legitimately. But they eliminated all of them. Lord just have mercy.

You, I can focus on my problem or I can focus on who you are. And what you can solve in my life. I'm going to humble myself under the mighty hand of God.

With voices raised. So often we are ashamed of our pitiful situation. Leprosy was clearly a very visually shaming situation.

It was not pretty to look at. Growing up in India we saw lepers. We saw lepers where the body was starting to atrophy.

And to break off at times. It's not very pleasant to look at. Here are these people with some of, maybe some of their limbs not working.

Maybe they have two fingers. Because some of the other ones have fallen off. Some of their feet bandaged up.

That's how I saw a lot of lepers growing up in India. But with voices raised. It's hard to do that.

When God shows us our sin. It's hard to do that. I know.

But I can learn from these lepers. In their shame. With their bandages.

With their deformities of what their physical being looked like. They say with their voices they raised. Without a complaint.

God have mercy on me. Because if we don't confess our sins. We can be tight.

We can be silent. Lord I want to be quick. When something, some situation shows me my sin.

When even I had the right response. But the wrong tone of voice. In my right response.

Lord I want to confess my sins. And I want to confess my sins to the people I committed it to. So if I had the right words to my spouse.

But the wrong tone. With which I told it to my spouse. I want to confess my sin.

And address it with my spouse too. And if it's at work. At work.

And the Lord is showing all of us I'm sure. Areas in which God is saying will you be serious. About confessing your sins.

Will you be serious about not. Being silent. Raise your voice.

Recognize the area in which you've committed the sin. These bones can live. Raise your voice.

I know what your deformities look like. I know what your situations look like. I know that it's way past where the body is dead.

Now the flesh is already all. Been wasted away. Now it's just bones.

Can these bones live Lord. Can this leprous body. That is so mired in the sin.

Lord can this. Mindset that has plagued my. Ancestry.

For centuries. Can these bones live. I'll raise my voice.

With a loud voice. And I'll say to Jesus Lord have mercy on me. And then we see.

With all of my heart. We can raise our voices. Without any shame.

Because we're coming to Jesus. Not because the world will not shame us. Yes the world will shame us.

But we're coming to Jesus. Who we want our healing out of. We come without any complaint.

With voices raised. Lord these bones will live. Lord I'll confess every lost sin of mine.

In attitude. In thought. In motive.

As the word of God drives deeper. To separate between soul and spirit. Then Jesus says something very interesting.

In verse 14. He says go and show. Yourself.

To the priest. Now lepers had to go show themselves to the priest. To make sure that they were healed.

To make sure they didn't have leprosy. It was a waste of time. For a leper to go to the priest.

When he was still going to have his leprosy. Jesus hadn't healed the lepers. But Jesus tells these lepers.

Go show yourselves to the priest. And what it tells me here. Is that when God commands us to do something.

It's not always logical. He doesn't explain the whole process out. He says go and do it.

When Nathan went to God. The man of God. And said I want to be healed of my leprosy.

God said do a rather. God through Elijah said. Do something rather illogical.

Naaman found it extremely illogical. Go dip yourself in the dirty river Jordan. Seven times.

What's that got to do with leprosy? People dip in the river Jordan every day. God said it. Command of God was not logical.

When God told the servants to fill 150 gallons of water pots. With water.

What's that got to do with wine? We're at a wedding Jesus. We're not interested in water. We got water.

What we need is wine. They obeyed Jesus. No wine.

150 gallons of water. But they obeyed the commands of Jesus. When the need was to feed 5000 plus people.

The disciples come up to a little boy. And said can I have five loaves and two fish? Go what's that got to do with feeding 5000 people? The boy obeyed Jesus. Obedience.

And we find that many of the commands of God. In our lives too. Are not necessarily logical.

In the moment. It doesn't mean it defies logic. In the sense that our Christian life.

Doesn't make sense or any of these things. They define logic. When the Bible says with your heart you believe.

But with your mouth you confess. Resulting in salvation. It doesn't make sense to me.

But I believe it. And if I obey it. Confessing with my mouth.

What I believe in my heart. I have a chance. For God.

To perform salvation in my life. How does the blood of Jesus. That was shed 2000 years ago.

Cleanse my heart. Logically it won't make sense. I can go to all the apologetic.

Where you argue the Bible. And look at all the facts. That's not what I need.

I need obedience. When God says confess your sins. You want to be cleansed of all.

Righteous unrighteousness. God says obey. When God says.

To have your mouth. To control your tongue. When God says to control.

Your eyes from lusting. When God says to cleanse. Yourself from all bitterness.

And unforgiveness. May not be logical. But Lord do you know what he did to me.

You know what she's been doing to me. For the last 20 years. It's not logical necessarily.

You can have all your explanations to God. And God says the command is still the commandment. If you're willing to go.

And dip in the dirty river Jordan. If you're willing to fill up 150 gallons of water. Just do it.

What is the Lord asking you to do. What is the Lord been bugging you. Has been bothering you.

Saying do this. Do this. Write that email.

Pick up the phone and call that person. Do this apologize. You have a wrong spirit.

You said something wrong to them. But you've been holding off. Lord it's just a small thing.

It's a little thing. It's not logical. So what's the logical side as we see these lepers.

You've got these lepers. Deformed lepers. Maybe with body parts missing.

The extremities missing. Extremities go first. Extremities some of the extremities missing.

Walking. Is it walking or are they limping. Are they crawling.

I don't know what the right word is. But here's this unsightly sight. Of 10 lepers.

Doing the most illogical thing. Going to priests. To show them that they're still lepers.

Except that it was the command of Jesus. That Jesus was saying. Go and show yourself to the priest.

The object of ridicule. People making fun of them down the road. People saying what are you doing.

Go back to your leper colony. Here are these lepers walking down the road. Jesus said it.

I'm going to obey. So all of them were cleansed. Every single one of them was cleansed.

As we obey the commands of Jesus. God cleanses us from all our sins. But also cleanses us from the leprosy of sins.

That are on our body. Cleanses us. Makes our hearts and our lives.

More and more increasingly clean. From the leprosy of sins that do it. We have to come to God without complaint.

Asking God for mercy. With voices raised. Confident that we're coming to Jesus.

And then do. Obey radically what the Lord asks us to say. Do.

Asks us to do little things, big things he doesn't mean. Obey it. Look like a fool doing it.

What is she doing getting up and saying that? What is he doing getting up and doing that? Because the Lord has put on his heart. The Lord has put on a heart to do it. The Lord will honor such people.

The Lord will see the motive. Is he seeking honor? Or is he seeking to honor me? Is she seeking honor? Or is she seeking to obey me? It doesn't matter what she looks like to people. She can look like a fool.

He can look like a fool. He's doing it to obey, to honor me. You know what the woman? Weeping, Mary pouring the alabaster bile.

At the feet of Jesus looking like a fool. The disciples saying you should have spent this money to the poor. God said don't bother her.

She's doing it for me. Aren't you wasting this on the feet of Jesus? He's keeping on telling us he's going to die very shortly. Why are you wasting it on him? He's doing it.

She's doing it for me. She's doing it for my body. As we obey the commands of Jesus, God will cleanse us.

But the sad part of the story is that only one of them, as we know, only one of them went all of the way. Only one of them was saved. It says that.

Rise and go your way. This one Samaritan leper got the second blessing. All the ten lepers got the first blessing, which was they were cleansed.

But that word, your faith has made you well. Your faith has saved you. That's what's in my margin.

That's that word, salvation. Jesus came to save me from my sins. It's that same word.

He came to save you, not cleanse you from your sins. God's not, I want this to be for all of us to hear this. God's not interested in just cleansing us from our sins.

He wants to save us. Which means that we stop going and falling into that pit anymore. Not keeping us, getting us out of the pits and washing us clean.

He says, I want to teach you how so that you don't fall into that pit again. He wants to not only cleanse us, he wants to save us. But not everybody who's cleansed gets saved.

That's what we find here from the lesson of the story. Only one of them came back. Now notice this word here in verse 19.

Your faith has saved you. What was the faith of this Samaritan leper? We know that all ten had the faith to go and obey the commands of Jesus. But what did this one leper do that everybody else didn't do? After he'd been healed, verse 15 and 16.

After he had been healed, he turned back glorifying God with a loud voice. And he fell on his face at the feet of Jesus giving thanks to him. That's the one thing that the leper did that all the other nine didn't do.

That the Samaritan leper did. And I saw on here a new picture of faith. We've talked a lot in our church about faith.

We've talked about faith being obedience. We've talked about faith being humility. I saw a beautiful picture of faith here.

The faith of this one Samaritan leper. Which is glorifying God with a loud voice. Falling at the feet of Jesus giving thanks to him.

This is the one thing that the leper did. That after he had found his victory over sin. Listen to me brothers and sisters.

After he found his victory over sin in a particular area. He went back to Jesus. Because he was not interested in obedience to the law of God.

He wanted God. As we heard, God is not interested in just some people who check off the boxes of the law. God is looking for grateful and loyal people.

That's the bridal heart. That's the heart of the bride. Not just rigid, rigid obedience.

So have you made progress in the Christian life? Are there sins that no longer grab you as they used to? Where's your position though? Out at home, having the priests checked off. The elders have said yep, now you're good. You're actually looking pretty good right now.

Is that your position? Well accepted by a new covenant Christian fellowship. One of the brothers and the sisters. The elders think you're doing okay.

But where is your position? Not at the feet of Jesus. Not glorifying God with a loud voice. Thankful to him.

We miss a part of our salvation if that's not our default position. We have made progress. We're no longer lepers in some areas.

We've been cleansed of certain of our sins. But we haven't found the salvation. And our salvation is not from a moral program.

It's not a better behavior mindset. Our morality springs forth from Jesus being beautiful to us. It's not from a set of laws.

Sort of Jesus, I want you to be beautiful to me. That's why I keep coming back. I'll obey your commands.

You want me to go to the ends of the earth to give somebody water? I do that. But really, I can't wait to come back. Can't wait to come back to say thank you.

A grateful heart. Glorifying God with a loud voice. For me, loud voice is not volume of voice.

To me, I wasn't thinking about loud voice as being volume of voice. But with all of my heart. All of my desires.

That's all the leper had was his loud voice. I have some time. I have time.

I have priorities. I want to say thank you in the few years that we have left. It won't be long until we're going home to see him.

Could be any day now. But with my loudness of voice, with the volume of my time, with the attitude of my heart, I want to give it to the Lord to say thank you to him. We see that, you know, we heard that in Luke chapter 15, that there's great rejoicing when a sinner repents.

We know that that's great rejoicing when a sinner repents. But we also see that Jesus marveled with great joy when there was great faith. So we have to put those two together.

There's great repentance gives God great joy. But also great faith gives God great joy. It's not good enough to just repent.

That's to turn around. But you've got to go home. You've got to come home.

The prodigal son sitting in the pig farm saying, I've been a fool. I've been a fool. I wasted all my father's money.

Here I am eating pig farm. It's useless. The prodigal son made it right when he got up and came home.

It was useless. Let me hear me right. It was useless for these lepers to be cleansed.

When they didn't come home to the feet of Jesus. When they didn't find their home at the feet of Jesus, glorifying them with the volume of their lives, giving thanks to him, he'd missed it. What should be our response? Let me end with this Luke chapter 13.

You may not, I want you to please take this verse and hear it carefully and see if this is really Jesus speaking. Luke chapter 13 verse 22. And he was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching and proceeding on his way to Jerusalem.

And someone said to him, Lord, are there just a few who are to be saved? There's that word again, saved. That same word. Lord, are there just a few who are going to be saved? Now listen, listen, listen to what Jesus said in response.

Verse 24. Strive. How many pulpits, how many pulpits do you hear the gospel message of salvation being preached where it starts with the word strive? Jesus started this message very clearly talking about how to be saved with the word strive.

Strive. Struggle. Literally as if to compete in a race to win a prize.

Strive to enter by the narrow door. He's not talking about the narrow way. This is to enter the narrow door.

Strive. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able to find salvation. Let the word of God be true in every man and liar.

So I want to put in context this word striving in the context of everything that I've said. If we want to have salvation, dear family of God, this is not some works program to get us there. No.

But let us strive with all of our hearts to remove all complaining. As lepers, let us not come to God with a demanding entitled spirit. Let us reject it and say, God, that's the reason why this leprosy is not going to be addressed in my life.

Let us come with hearts with no entitlement. Let us strive to have hearts that have only a heart saying, God, have mercy. With a voice saying, Lord, I don't care about my shame.

I'm going to say, Lord, have mercy on me. No entitlement with voices raised. And then when God gives us a command, do this, do that, and keep doing it.

Lord, but I've been doing it for three days and nothing's changing. I told you to do it. I told you to fill 150 gallons full of water.

Keep doing it. You're two gallons in. Keep going.

148 more to go. Keep going. And the Lord asks us to flee from immorality.

Lord, I've been fleeing for 30 years. I said the command was flee. Keep fleeing.

As we keep fleeing, as we keep obeying the commands of Jesus, God does, God always does give us cleansing. He's always, I'm a testimony of it. Many of you are testifiers of that.

That God cleanses us as we obey the commands of Jesus. Without a spirit of entitlement, without voices raising, God, I'm fully surrendered. I'm not halfway in.

I'm not 90% in. I'm not in a state of entitlement with a heart saying, Lord, give me mercy and I'm going to obey whatever command you give me. God always cleanses us.

I found that to be true in my life. I'm sure you have too. But then after we've been cleansed, let us come with hearts and say, Lord, my place is to be at your feet.

I'm not going to glory in my cleansing. I'm going to glory in the fact that you are what I wanted anyways. My rightful place is to be at your feet.

That's what gives us faith. And there's great rejoicing, dear brothers and sisters, when we repent, when we change our mind of thinking. And there's great rejoicing when we have faith.

And we come to Jesus and God says, Go your way. Your faith has saved you. May God have mercy.

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