

# Odd Man Out

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Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight! O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

! On the way to Jerusalem, he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.

Now, Luke gives a location marker in Jesus' movement to remind us that the Messiah is on the move. He is traveling to Jerusalem.

To what end? Where he is going there to lay down his life as a ransom for many. But along the way, he has been teaching in these middle passages of Luke about his kingdom.

The way one may enter into the kingdom and the kind of people who are given entrance into the kingdom. Now, we're told by the good doctor that he is passing along currently between the region of Samaria and Galilee.

[1:28] That might seem like a throwaway line, but it has significance. Galilee is still mostly Jews. It's in northern part of Israel. Samaria is on the way to Judea, which is southern part where Jerusalem is.

And you have to go through Samaria. Oftentimes, Jews actually walk around Samaria to go to Jerusalem. So he's passing around this border region.

And as he entered a village, we're told, he was met by ten lepers who stood at a distance. He's about to enter an unnamed village, likely on the border, again, of these two regions.

And these ten lepers met him. This is not a lucky encounter. This isn't just, oh, we happen to run into each other. I'm fortuitous.

It's very likely that these men sought Jesus out. They would have heard about his power to heal the sick and the lame and the blind and even the leper.

[2:33] Remember, earlier in Luke 5, Jesus had healed a man who was suffering from leprosy. So it's very likely that these men stood at the outskirts of this village, open, expecting even, to run into Jesus and his journey.

And they did. But here's the tragedy of the story. They met the Messiah. But they could not draw near to him by reason of their disease.

Now, leprosy in our day is actually finally, there's actually another word for it. The word has escaped me now. But leprosy, back in those days, is a catch-all for all kind of skin diseases.

So you might have, and some of them might be life-threatening diseases. Some of them might just be skin blemishes. That maybe is, you know, odious or apparent to other people.

That will qualify you as being a leper in Jesus' day. And the disease has social and spiritual ramifications.

[3:55] Oftentimes, the social and spiritual ramifications of leprosy is worse than the physical ramifications of leprosy. To suffer from leprosy is to be a social outcast.

Such a person is considered cursed by God. They are confined to live on the outskirts of society. They are ritually unclean.

So they cannot have relationship, any kind of relationship, really, with their family. They can't live in the same house anymore. They can't have relationship with their friends.

They can't even have relationship with God. Because they're forbidden to enter the temple or even the synagogue. So the phrase, these 10 lepers stood at a distance in verse 12, communicates the extent of the severity of the disease.

A leper walking, even in a place that there might be other people, will have to yell, is expected to yell, unclean, unclean.

[5:00] So that people who are coming near him may make way or know that someone who is unclean is coming by. So they might not be contaminated. Primarily, not just from the disease, but

just the ritual uncleanness that this person with leprosy embodied.

So you might imagine the life you will lead if you had leprosy in the time of Jesus. They came to Jesus.

They saw Jesus. They stood at a distance. Yet they cried out. Lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy. Have mercy on us.

Their cry was a cry for mercy. Note that. They recognized Jesus' messianic role, that he is someone who has authority and is blessed by God.

And by calling him Master, they placed themselves at his mercy. They subordinated and surrendered themselves to his mercy, looking for God's mercy through Jesus.

[6:08] I'm reminded of the words of the great English hymn writer, Isaac Watts. When he says, he comes, that is Jesus, comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

Far as the curse is found. This is, I'm reminded of this. Whenever I see Jesus healing the sick, opening eyes of the blind, these are vestiges of the curse.

And Christ comes to make his blessings known. This Messiah, this Jesus, not only teaches with authority, calling all to himself as the way and the door to eternal life with God.

He also shows now that at his first coming, the blessings he comes to usher in. He displays it. He gives it freely to all who come to him, seeking mercy.

But those who are to enjoy this blessing of Jesus, know rightly that it is not a right. It's not anything that you've earned.

[7:15] It's not because of your right standing before God that you can then make demands on his benevolence to you. We all stand accused.

We all stand accused before God. All we can cry, all of us, without exception, all we can cry before God, before God's majesty, is mercy.

Mercy. Just as these lepers cry. Do you ask God to be merciful to you, a sinner? Or do you come telling him why you deserve to be heard by him?

Do you come to church with a proud and haughty heart? Or do you come as one who angers for the word of God? Do you come as a hungry beggar to feed on his body given for you and his blood shed for you?

How do you come to Jesus? The right way is the way of these lepers. It is God's mercy we need, brothers and sisters. It is God's mercy we want.

[8:19] We don't want God to give us what we deserve. Because all we deserve from God in our sinful humanity is death.

So when we come to him, we come asking, crying, mercy. And Jesus, being who he is, saw them, verse 14, when he saw them even afar off.

Now, most Jews, in fact, the disciples are probably back in the way. You kind of get the picture here that in focus, in Luke's narration of this, Jesus and the ten lepers are in focus.

The disciples were there. I wonder if they are physically not there because they've started unclean people. They maybe have scampered back. We don't know. But really, Jesus is in focus and the ten lepers who were coming to him for healing are in focus.

And Jesus sees them. And when he saw them, he said to them, Go, show yourselves to the priests. And we're told that as they went, they were cleansed.

[9:30] I find it interesting that Jesus doesn't just say, be healed at this point. Rather, he sent them to show themselves to the priests. Now, the priest function, the priestly function in Judaism and in the temple religion, is that they are also gatekeepers.

Not only the people that make sacrifices of offering for sin and for thanks to God, but they also function as gatekeepers of purity. So the priest would have had to check anyone who would have been declared unclean.

The priest would have to examine them to make sure that their uncleanness had gone away. And they're now ritually clean. So when Jesus says, go and show yourself to the priest, he's saying, get the verdict and the credibility of the priest saying you're now clean.

Because until that happens, they cannot return back to society. But imagine what these ten lepers would have even thought. They come to Jesus asking for healing.

And then Jesus says, just go. Go show yourself to the priest. They might say, well, Jesus, have you forgotten? There's a step here first. You've forgotten the step where you say, you know, you're healed.

[10:52] You know, do the thing you do where you heal people. And then we'll go. They weren't healed instantaneously, as you see in verse 14.

Rather, it was when they went in obedience to Jesus' command that they found that they were healed. Now, it wasn't the priest that healed them.

We know that, right? And it wasn't even their obedience that healed them. It was Jesus. Jesus' hearterance. Powerful hearterance. The word of God that created the universe.

Also rolls back the curse. It is his word that healed them. I can't help but think back to Luke 17, verse 5 and 6 that we looked at last week.

Jesus told us in those passages, verses, that we are to forgive our brother who comes seeking repentance. As many times as they come seeking repentance, we are to forgive.

[11:58] And the disciples, rightly hearing Jesus and knowing how hard that might be, said to Jesus, we don't have the kind of faith to do that. Increase our faith, they said to Jesus.

And Jesus responds, it is not the quantity of your faith. If you have faith as little as a mustard seed, it is not the quantity of your faith. It is the quality of your faith.

What does that really mean? It is the object of your faith. I imagine that these ten lepers, as they turn back from Jesus, and when he said to them, go, they don't necessarily have to have, wow, our healing is assured.

They probably had some misgivings. They were probably thinking, maybe a little dejected even, as they walked away. Man, we were hoping we will be healed.

We had such high hopes. But note what they did. No matter what it is that they were feeling, they obeyed. They were on their way to the priest. Again, it wasn't the fact that they had great faith.

[13:06] It is the fact that they believed. And they trusted. It was the object of their faith. And I think this actually perfectly exemplifies what Jesus was saying in those earlier passages in chapter 17.

About the object of your faith, no matter how little it may be, if that object is Jesus, it is sufficient. If it is as little as a mustard seed, if it is in the right place, if your faith is placed in the right person, it is sufficient.

Because it isn't actually their faith, or their spiritual greatness, that is healing them. It is Christ's power and mercy that is being made available to them.

And you can imagine, they are going, and you can imagine as they saw, I mean, these are the people with skin diseases, right? It's obvious. It's apparent.

And as they walked towards the priest, imagine they haven't even gone far. Because we know they haven't gone far, because one of them came back, and they still find Jesus in the same vicinity that he had in front of.

[14:15] So they hadn't gone far. They noticed, to their elation, to their joy, the discovery, that they've been healed. What does that mean for these men?

Healing of this disease, of this awful disease, means that they can be reunited with their family again. They can seek gainful employment again.

They can worship in the temple again. At this point, imagine they were all running full speed to the temple, to show themselves to the priests.

But there's an odd man out, out of the ten. One out of the ten didn't go towards the temple.

One out of the ten, when he saw that he was healed, verse 15, turned back. Oftentimes, Luke uses that same word, that he used there for turn back, to denote repentance, in his gospel.

[15:20] This one man, turned back, praising God, observed his posture, and his attitude. Praising God with a loud voice, falling on his face, at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.

And now we're told, just, he was a Samaritan. Observe that. A picture of a grateful worshiper.

He fell on his face, at Jesus' feet. Worshipped Jesus, as God. This is kind of a high Christology passage, in the midst of the gospel.

This one man, this odd man out, recognized, who healed him, comes back, to show gratitude. But not only that, he comes showing gratitude, as one who was, as a believer.

Coming to worship, offering his thanks, with a loud voice, at God's goodness and mercy to him. Bowing at the feet of Jesus. People would discern God at work, through Jesus.

[16:33] Worship God, at Jesus' feet. That's what this man saw. He saw God at work, through Jesus, and he worshipped God, at Jesus' feet. That's what we're all called, to do as well.

I just want to say, a note here, on Anglican worship. We come, and in our liturgy, we often worship, not only with our words, our words are important. That's why we have liturgy, in the form, in the

book of common prayer.

But even, our bodies, we used to worship. And I often think, I didn't grow up Anglican. I often thought it was curious, when people knelt, and stood up at points, in the service.

What is the meaning to that? But I've come to understand, the deep, deep, deep meaning, of it. It is not only, do we come to God, knowing who he is, knowing the mercy, that we've received from him, we worship him, at various moments of our worship, with our bodies, in our posture, before God, God's majesty.

It is right to do so. And that's what, this worshipper is doing. I'm not saying here, that, you know, Baptist people, are not worshipping God, in spirit and in truth. I'm just highlighting, the fact that, I like the fact, that we as Anglicans, do that.

[17 : 52] All right, so don't go around, if you're Baptist, don't be offended, please. So the Samaritan leper, we're also, comes to Jesus, he worships.

But this is what's significance, about what this odd man, how it does. The rest of them, are going where? To the temple. By the way, we actually don't know where, which temple they're going to, because, curiously enough, they're in the region of Samaria, and the Samaritans, have erected a temple, to compete with the temple, down south, in Jerusalem.

So if they were going, down south to Jerusalem, that's quite a journey, and that might be, where they're going, but maybe they're going, to the Samaritan temple, in Mount Gerizim. But what the Samaritan leper, saw, was that, that's not the place to go.

That's not the place, to be. He, he's recognizing, that this Jesus, who's healed us, is both, I priest, and temple.

He saw, that in Jesus, is the, the fullness of God, dwells bodily. So, that's what the temple, significance of the temple, is the place, where God resides. But I think, this leper saw, this man, this is where God resides.

[19 : 14] He recognized, whether consciously, or subconsciously, that Jesus, is the temple of God. By his coming, and through the work, he will accomplish, on the cross, Jesus has changed, the locus of worship.

He's moved it, from a geographic location, to the movement, of the heart, and the disposition, of the heart. A heart, that has come, to trust in Jesus, has found, through worship.

I remember, what Jesus told, another Samaritan, in John chapter 4. Remember the woman, at the well. No longer, will people worship me, on Mount Gerizim, on this mountain, the youth Samaritans worship.

No one, no longer, will people worship, God, in Jerusalem. But the hour, is now here, Jesus tells her, when the true, worshipers, will worship God, in spirit, and in truth.

I think, the leper, recognized this. He comes to Jesus. He comes, to show himself, before the high priest, and thank him, for his mercy.

[20 : 26] Then Jesus answered, in verse 17, were not ten cleansed, were, where are the nine? Was no one, found to return, and give praise to God, except this foreigner? Jesus' words here, sheds light, on a few more things, about these, the makeup of these men.

This Samaritan, is a foreigner. He's an outcast. Not only, because of his leprosy, while he's been healed, of that, but he's still an outcast, by nature of his ethnicity.

He's a Samaritan. Likely, very likely, the other nine, were Jews. They've been healed, by God's mercy. They've been reinstated, back to right fellowship, and worship, and society, by God's mercy. And they were, presumably, on their way, not presumably, they are on their way, to the temple. I'm sure, they're no less elated, and happy, than this, man, this one man, that came back to Jesus. In fact, they've been made whole. They're full of joy. But only one, out of the ten, rightly recognize, that Jesus, recognize Jesus' identity, and responded appropriately.

[21 : 41] The Messiah of Israel, is here. The shepherd, of his people, is here. The anointed one, that they've waited for, is here. They didn't see it.

The Samaritan, the outcast, saw it. This is, in keeping with Luke's, narration in this middle passage, is about who comes to Jesus, who comes to the kingdom. It's those on the outskirts.

The lame, the poor, the outskirts, the unclean. They see Jesus. They come. Jesus welcomes them, into the kingdom. The religious, the religious, establishments, see Jesus, and they don't recognize him.

That's what's going on, again here. Jesus, amazed, at the foreigner's faith, was also, rebuked, the blindness, of the other nine.

Ten were healed, only one came back, and recognized, Jesus, for who he is. I got an email, two weeks ago, from a group called, the Universal Peace Organization.

[22 : 50] Now, I thought it was a spam email. They were asking for money, to rebuild the holy temple, in Jerusalem. I initially, took it for spam, but then I read it, and I thought, I would reply to them, whether they were spam, or not.

I actually think, I went, further went online, and looked at the links, they showed in the email. It's like, I don't still, there might still be a racket, to make many, I don't know, but there was, well developed videos, and stuff about, really building, a temple, in Jerusalem.

This is what, I wrote back to them. I'm afraid, that you attempt, to build a temple, in Jerusalem, is an exercise, in futility. Christ, through his, once for all, sacrifice, upon the cross, has made, the temple, obsolete.

Instead, E, is the new, and greater temple. Please be advised, I write to them, to preach, the gospel of Jesus Christ, to both Jews, and Gentiles, rather than, a fool's errand, of trying to erect, that which Christ, has done away with.

I felt good about myself, after I send it. But that's really, not the point. The truth, of what I said, is there, and I didn't hear back. But, how often, are we, perhaps, trying to erect, temples?

[24 : 18] Maybe not the temple, in Jerusalem. In fact, by the way, if you get stuff like that, please, please respond, kindly, but, don't give your money, to that. Give your money, to the furtherance, of the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

The furtherance, of the gospel, of Jesus, that is calling people, back to Jesus. E, is the temple. E, is the door, way, to eternal life. That's what, we should give our research.

Remember what, we've been talking about, in Luke. That's what we should invest, our wealth, for the future. Not, to erect the temple, in Jerusalem. We want to tell, the people in Jerusalem, and in Palestine, and in all over, the rest of the world, that Jesus has come, the Messiah, has come.

And he offers, salvation, and freedom, to all who come to him. And that's what happened, to this man, who came to Jesus. Look at verse 19. Jesus said, to the former leper, rise, go your way.

The second time, Jesus is sending them, to go his way. But this time, was something more important, more significant, than just mere healing, from leprosy. Your faith, has made you well.

[25 : 32] Jesus said to him. The made you well there, is the word for salvation. It's the same root word, for salvation. So really, what Jesus, is better read, better interpreted, your faith, has saved you.

Jesus says to him. His faith, in Jesus, not, in his ancestry, not in, ritual purity, is faith, in Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God, is what saved him.

And he's been given, entrance into the kingdom of God. By responding in faith, and coming back, in grateful submission, to the one, who is the embodiment, of God's miraculous power, and mercy, this man received salvation.

That is the only way, to receive salvation, brothers and sisters. God is merciful. He gives, and he shares his mercy, unjust and unjust alike. Some of us, in the church, are beneficiaries, of his mercy. But here's a warning, for us. I hope that we know, the person, who gives this blessing, we love the giver, of the gifts, more than we love, the gifts that he gives.

[26 : 48] Because if we just love, the gifts that he gives, we have not come to Jesus. We've come, we might be even part, of the religious establishment, but we're just here, for the gifts.

But do you love, the giver of the gifts? Do you come to him, in surrender, and submission? And if you do, he offers salvation. Jesus saves.

Thanks be to God. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you, for your mercy, that you are merciful, you are benevolent God.

You look, upon our, rotten, and hopeless estate, and you have compassion, on us. Thank you, that this is the kind, of God that you are.

We see it, in the face of Jesus, in the works of Jesus, how he's, compassionate, to those who are, downtrodden. Help us, first and foremost, to have the heart of Christ, to those around us, that we will exhibit, and exemplify, the same compassion.

[27 : 53] But more than that, Lord, help us, Lord, to proclaim you, even as we do so, proclaim you, as the means, and the only way, that anyone, can have true life, and true freedom.

And, even more than that, Lord, help us to continue, to come to you, Lord Jesus, as Savior, and Master, and Lord. We pray this, in Jesus name.  
Amen.