

DIRTY FEET & LEPROSY

Kissing dirty feet and leprosy. That's the image I leave you with for your thanksgiving. You're welcome. I'll explain, but let me say this - you may find you have some weirdos joining you at your thanksgiving table. Even worse - you may be one of them. This is a day we've set aside as a country to conductor our blessings. If anyone should know about blessings and thanksgiving - it should be the Lord's people.

Dirty Feet - Luke 7:36-50

- **36-40:** We've got Jesus reclining at a table with Simon (a Pharisee) to eat. I don't think this is the same dinner as the one with Mary at Simon the leper's house as seen in Matthew, Mark and John (though we'll talk about leprosy in a moment). This is in the home of a Pharisee, Simon. Who did he see? A sinful woman.
- **41-50:** We want to pay attention to the example Jesus gives, because I believe it helps us understand this woman. I've gone back and forth, but I believe Jesus is saying that she's been forgiven - therefore she loves much.
- Verses 47-48 can be understood as a present action (she is NOW being forgiven) or a past action (she IS/HAS BEEN forgiven, therefore she loves much). In fact, the NIV (though not a word for word transaction) agrees with that idea by translating it, **"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."** (Luke 7:47, NIV). I tend to think they're getting the correct idea.
- If that be the case then we have in front of us a beautiful example of an individual who has deep appreciation, deep thankfulness, for the life Jesus had given back to her. Others rejected her, while Christ accepted. I love how Jesus looks at her while He talks to Simon. He's not trying to be dramatic - He's reassuring her that she's okay. His eyes didn't look away from hers. He was reassuring her of her life in Christ - "your sins are indeed forgiven. Nothing has changed. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."
- I pray that when you gather together to eat, that you eat in peace, because Christ has forgiven you. Let His promise bring you joy, but more than anything, let it result in love for Jesus and thanksgiving to God. So, when you look around the table, I hope you see some people who have washed some dirty feet - with their hair and tears. I hope you have as well.

Leprosy - Luke 17:11-19

- **11-13:** This is Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem while living as a man. He was going to lay down His life for all mankind. As He made His way there, He came across the 10 lepers.
- Leprosy was horrible as you know. Those who were found to be unclean had a very bleak future. The law taught, *"The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp."* (Leviticus 13:45-46). One example of this will do: *"Now there were four men who were lepers at the entrance to the gate. And they said to one another, 'Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, "Let us enter the city," the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. So now come, let us go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare our lives we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die.'" (2 Kings 7:3-4).* **Imagine having thanksgiving with this fun crew - you'd for sure be the life of the party!**

- **14-17:** The problem with this text isn't that the 10 didn't have faith. They followed Jesus' direction without any proof. It was on their way when they were healed. The problem in this passage is that 9 out of 10 weren't thankful. This is where it begins to sound too familiar. If 9 people living in such horrible conditions didn't think to return to Jesus . . . how much easier for those of us who live in luxury? How easy it is to get distracted? How quickly we forget!
- It's right to thank God for our physical blessings. Truly, we have so many. This man was physically healed. When you gather around your table this week with your family and friends to eat - just know that those individuals are gifts from God. He has blessed us all physically and materially and it's good to remember that.
- However, this isn't the greatest blessing. No, when you look at those around your table - you might see those who had "spiritual leprosy", if you will. They were spiritually as good as dead and deteriorating, but now made alive by God. Jesus not only cleansed them, but He put them back in a position to be with others. Just like the sinful woman - she was forgiven and should be accepted back among God's people. That man no longer had to stand at a distance from Jesus.
- This passage has a sting to it, because the one who returns wasn't a member of the Jewish nation. He was, as Jesus said, "a foreigner." Yet again, someone is told to go because their faith had saved them/made them well. Do you remember what it was to be alienated from God? Remember what it was to be out of fellowship with Him and His people? So many times, those outside the body have much more appreciation of being in God's family than those who have heard it our whole lives. We don't see ourselves like the sinful woman in Luke 7 or the spiritual leprosy.
- Our challenge is seeing the need for God in our abundance and having thankful hearts instead of hearts full of things in this world. So, this week - be thankful to God and ask: is my life one that resembles this woman and man? Do I return to the Lord with thankfulness? Will I do this during the good and the bad?

Colossians 3:12-17 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.