

We're back with a devotional and our latest news.



Each week I send out a sermon link for our staff at Reignite Hope to watch and then we gather together to discuss the sermon on Wednesday mornings. Last week the sermon was on a story from Luke 17 where Jesus healed ten lepers. This event occurred very near the end of Jesus' ministry on earth as He was traveling from Galilee in the north to Jerusalem in the south where He would be crucified in about two weeks. And just a couple of days after healing the ten lepers Jesus healed the blind man Bartimaeus and led Zacchaeus, the tax collector, to salvation—quite a week!

Now having leprosy back then was very serious. For starters, it was untreatable as antibiotics didn't even exist until 1928 when Alexander Fleming developed penicillin. Then, being stricken with leprosy, you would become a social outcast. You would not be allowed to associate with others. You would have to announce in a loud voice that you were unclean if anyone came near you. You also couldn't go into the marketplace or even into the Temple to worship. Thus you can only imagine how encouraging it would have been for these ten lepers to hear that this guy named Jesus had arrived in their village because a year earlier (**Luke 5**) Jesus had healed a leper and no doubt word of that had spread as it did with all of His miracles.

So in the Luke 17 story, Jesus encounters the ten lepers who were standing at distance from Him and He tells them to go and show themselves to the priest so that they can then be declared clean. Then, as they were traveling to see the priest, they were suddenly healed. And the story goes on to say that one of

lepers immediately turned around, and “*praising God*” went back to find Jesus and thank Him for healing him.

Now what usually seems most startling to the reader is not that Jesus healed them. After all, He was healing people all the time, but it is the fact that only one went back to thank Jesus. And our natural conclusion is that one was grateful and nine weren't. But that's not likely since all ten would have been, without a doubt, thankful for having been healed. How could you not be? And keep in mind that getting to the priest and being officially declared clean was a huge deal! You would no longer be an outcast and could rejoin your family, your friends and the rest of society.

So, the likely point of the story, or at least the main point, is not that the nine didn't go back to thank Jesus, but that one of them recognized after being healed that Jesus was more than just some nice guy who somehow had the power to heal people. Instead, he instantly knew in his heart that all of the rumors and speculation about this miracle worker being the long awaited Messiah and being the Son of God had to be true. And suddenly going to the priest to be officially declared clean was not nearly as important as going back and finding Jesus. He wasn't the only one that was thankful, but he was perhaps the only that really got it. Once you really come to understand who Jesus is, you don't want to be anywhere else! Much like the demoniac that Jesus healed in Luke chapter 8 who just wanted to stay with Jesus after being healed, but Jesus told to go back to his family and tell them how much the Lord had done for him. When you really get it about who Jesus is, you realize that you don't need anything else but Him.

He can not only heal leprosy; He can heal anything. Most importantly, He can heal the broken relationship we have with our Creator that our sins have caused. The cross of Christ was, and is, the ultimate cure for anyone who will turn from their sins and turn to Him for forgiveness. It is the free gift of God (**Romans 6:23**) and just like Jesus bestowed mercy on the ten lepers He will extend mercy to anyone who will ask for it—“*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*”—**John 6:37**

In thinking about this, I can't help but think of all of the opinions there are in our world about who Jesus is, especially as I think of the 90 students we've selected to enter our next class starting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. When those students walk in the door of Reignite Hope, a lot of different opinions about Jesus will come with them. Just as out in the world, to some He is just a famous historical figure like Christopher Columbus or Leonardo da Vinci. To others He is a great prophet or a good teacher or on par with Mother Teresa or Gandhi. And for some He is one of the many deities in a pantheon of deities. But none of that is the Jesus of the Bible; the Jesus of history.

And this is nothing new. One day Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do the people say that I am?*” They responded that “*Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*” Then Jesus asked them, “*But who do you say that I am?*”, to which Peter replied, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” **Matthew 16:13-16**

That's the question that ultimately we all have to answer—Who do you say Jesus is? Peter got it right and so did the one leper. So, please pray with me and our entire team that by the end of the semester all of our students will be like the one that turned around and went back to thank Jesus. Like the one who really got it.



## 140 Metal Frames on their way to Angola

Bob Vasquez from Advancing the Gospel in Angola commissioned our students to build 140 metal frames. Our students started and Jessica, our new welding instructor, finished the metal frames that are now on their way to Angola.

## Metal Frames as Scaffolding

As new medical clinics and churches are built in the remote villages of Angola, the metal frames are used as scaffolding.

This is the third year, we've sent student-built frames to Angola.



## Metal Frames as Church pews

When the churches are complete, boards are attached to the frames to make church pews replacing the logs and rocks previously used as pews.

We just received another order for our next class of students to build. Their work on the project is completely volunteer allowing them to give back to those in need.

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Thank you for all your faithful prayers and support. Please pray for our students as they learn who Jesus is. May they all really get who

Jesus is and realize they don't need anything else but Him.

I'll keep you all updated and if you would like to contact me I can be reached by email at [steve@reignitehope.com](mailto:steve@reignitehope.com) or by phone at (310) 847-0593. Please let me know if there is any way that I can be praying for you during these challenging days in which we are living.

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