

Dear Partner,

“What a difference a day makes.” I was recently meditating again in the gospel of Matthew, chapter eight and marveled at the truth of that old saying when people encounter Jesus. For example, consider the poor leper who was not sure if it was the will of God for him to be healed:

Mat 8:2-3 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (3) And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Leprosy is a most heinous disease. It is slow, but relentless. At that time there was no cure at all. The horrors of it increase insidiously day after day, until the soul of the afflicted eventually submitted to hopelessness. Yet this man had hope beyond all natural hope. He knew that Jesus “could” heal him. He just wasn’t sure if it was His will to do so. With fear and trembling he approached the Lord and with all honesty said, “I know that if you are willing, you have the power to cleanse me of leprosy.” How I love our Lord’s response. With a resounding “I WILL” He put forth His hand and touched him saying, “Be thou clean.” And “immediately” his leprosy was cleansed.

When the man woke up that morning his body was wracked with pain and sores. We are not told how many years he had suffered from that terrible disease. I have read that often the tips of fingers and toes are the first to be eaten away. Then come the ears and often the nose. There is the constant ache from pain and the stench of rotting flesh. Can you imagine waking up that way every day? But what a difference a day makes. He came to Jesus in that condition ... but he left completely cleansed of leprosy! He woke up doomed to perish without hope in the world. But he left Jesus with a whole new life in front of him.

What a perfect picture in the natural of our condition before God in the spiritual realm. All of us were born sinners. We had the “disease” of sin and death working in our members from the time of conception. We were all spiritual lepers and every day that horrible disease ate away at our lives and produced the stench of death in the nostrils of God. But what a difference a day makes. We came to Jesus lost and undone, without God and without hope in the world. This is precisely the condition described by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

Eph 2:12-13 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Are there any sweeter words in the universe? We have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. He reached out to each of us by grace alone and said, “Be thou clean.” Thank God for the blood of Jesus. Thank God for his great love for us ... even while we stunk as spiritual lepers in His sight:

Rom 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

What a difference a day makes. Each of us had our day when we approached the Lord as wretched sinners. We had heard the gospel and the God of Hope had planted the seed of His Word within us. With supernatural hope we responded and approached Him with that honest faith like the leper. We may have had some fear and doubts but thank God the Word says,

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

He turns none away. All are guilty. All are as helpless to save themselves as the leper was to heal himself. All are corrupt and rotten through sin and death just like the leper. But thank God for each of us He touches and says, "I will. Be thou clean." CLEAN! CLEAN! Clean through the blood of Jesus. I am hearing that old song rise up in my soul;

"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow. No other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

I don't think the leper ever forgot the day he came to Jesus. It changed the course of his whole life. Each of us are the same. We were lost and without hope until the day we came to Jesus and He pronounced us CLEAN through His blood. Oh, words fail me to sing songs of thanksgiving to Him. What a glorious God we serve.

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

Gary