

A PEOPLE OF FAITH

Tuesday Evenings in March 2020 at 7.30, 17, 24 and 31 March
A series produced by John Rackley asking what it means to have faith in Christ
at the beginning of the 21st century.

HANDOUT 3

Lord Jesus Christ, your light shines within us.
Let not my doubts nor my darkness speak to me.
Lord Jesus Christ, your light shines within us.
Let my heart always welcome your love.

Faith creates a certain sort of behaviour

An example from Luke 17: 11-19

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^[a] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were *cleansed*.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was *healed*, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your **faith** has made you *well*."

a) Let us look at the behaviour of Jesus. He is acting as our pioneer of faith. He is the trail blazer always leading his disciples into places of transition. He walks in the no-man's land between two bitter enemies.

The faith of Jesus demonstrates that

- Going to the edge gives us a glimpse of something different
- Walking on the borders allows us to look in and out
- Going to the edge enables us to connect what is separated
- On the margins we are less in control, less certain of ourselves, more ready to learn.

b) Let us look at the faith of the tenth man.

What is the significance in using three different words to describe what happened to the lepers?

Cleansed = they no longer had a social disease

Healed = they were cured

Well = saved; he had undergone a change of heart; it was more than skin-deep.

The poignancy in the story is that once he was healed the Samaritan could not stay with the others. Their illness had united them but he could not go to their priest. He was still racially and religiously separated from them. He turns to Jesus and together they create a new community based in Grace and Faith.

“your faith has saved you”. What is the faith that Jesus sees in his behaviour?

- *It is the ability to distinguish between the essential and the important* – the nine rush off to the priest, the tenth man returns to give thanks.
- *It is the insight to see that a personal meeting is more valuable than getting to your destination in the shortest time possible*
- *It is the willingness to leave to one side the accepted way of doing things* ie going to the priest and receive Grace wherever it is available
- *Faith saves us from believing that what makes people enemies is more important than our deepest needs*
- *Faith is acquiring a sense of personal significance that does not depend on the approval, religious or otherwise of anyone else.*

The others were only following orders! They did what Jesus told them. They were doing the correct thing. It was thankless task. No joy in it; at least none that they cared to share with Jesus. They may have been doing the right thing but it was not the complete picture. That day a choice was made. Some were made better; one was made whole.

Questions:

1. Consider the behaviour of Jesus.

How do you think the disciples would feel?

What do you think they would learn about faith from Jesus?

2. Consider the faith and behaviour of the Tenth Man.

Can you think of examples where you have seen that sort of faith today?

What is essential and what is important in the life of the Church today?

Which feature of the Tenth Man’s faith do you find most challenging?

With his true identity revealed the Tenth Man and Jesus create a prophetic community. A community that challenges the conventions and traditions of both Jewish and Samaritan worlds.

In Jesus we see that God will not dwell within the camp. God will not stay put where we place our tent, temple, shrine, mausoleum, sanctuary, chapel or church. God will not reside in the certainties, correct language, proper belief that can inhibit us as much as sustain us.

The Journey of Faith

We travel as pilgrims from the little light we have
through the darkness
into a greater light than we can imagine.
So will begin the last and greatest adventure of all
as we are drawn into the splendour of the full light of God.

Eddie Askew