

**ANONYMOUS PART FOUR
THE GRATEFUL LEPER
PASTOR ROGER BARRIER
LUKE 17:11-19
10-28-07
S-1738**

● SLIDE #1: *From the midst of the Choir*: Wonderful to be surrounded by people you love and who love you.

“But what if you did not have so many people all around you? What if you were all alone?”

Shy and lonely—HS football game. In parking lot; knew something was wrong but not quite certain what.

Being alone and unloved is one of the greatest fears in the human heart.

● SLIDE #2: Hinds Feet: “If I love I put myself in a position of possibly being hurt. What if I love and I am not loved in return?”

Jane Mallet

First real falling in love experience. Numerous dates, falling in love. Picture on wall in the bathroom when I got up to shave in the morning.

Sophomore in High school. Tired to figure out a way to get married—but not enough money from mowing lawns to make that work.

As Gwen Stefani sings: “I am sick with Love, Send the doctor.”

June, at Camp Soroptimist, and Dear Roger letter

“Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.”

Decided that Longfellow was wrong. One of the dumbest things anyone ever wrote

Looked up Jane on internet. She is a cardiologist in Southern California. Glad for her. Pain of rejection still there.

Glad I got Julie but always wondered how she feels—*Julie got someone else's reject*.

Have you ever felt like someone else's reject?

Let's go to the Bible and talk about 10 rejects—one of whom loved and was loved in return.

● SLIDE #3: *Luke 17:11-13: Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"*

● SLIDE #4: *Luke 17:14: When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.*

● SLIDE #5: Luke 17:15-16: *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.*

● SLIDE #5: Luke 17:17-19: *Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*

Now, let's look more carefully at this passage.

● SLIDE #6: Luke 17:11-13: *Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"*

The news of Jesus sparked hope in the heart of ten poor leperous wretches. So, they broke all the rules and thrust their tainted and unwelcome presence into the shrinking crowd.

There they were – horrible, white faced, tightened, glistening skin, frowsy rag over their mouths. Crowd shrinks back, crying, "Leper, Leper, Get back, Leper!" Why? They were contagious.

● SLIDE #7: Leprosy was a horribly debilitating disease.

Pain in joints and discolored patches. Skin becomes thick. Nodules collect in folds of the skin ulcerate with foul discharge – eyebrows and hair fall out – wheezing, rasping voice. Body becomes mass of ulcerated sores. Eyelids rot off—can't close eyes.

Nerve trunks affected – loss of sensation (no pain where pain should be), muscles gone, tendons contract until hands become like claws – chronic ulceration of hands and feet. Fingers and toes drop off – progressive death of body.

Leprosy is really bad. That is why it is used in the Bible as a symbol for sin.

● SLIDE8: Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Lepers lost:

Friends

Job and means of support (forever dependent on relatives to bring food and care packages.

Lost dreams

Lost marriage

Lost children

Lost aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents

Lost his religion: Could not go to church in this condition

Lost his feelings—gone numb—only pain

As terrible as leprosy was in itself, it *had serious social implications—These people were alone.*

Rabbi: "I throw stones at lepers to keep them away."

Yell, "Unclean, unclean!"

That is what sin can do. It rages in every human heart.

Imagine the horror of a life—ostracized; no love, no friends, no value and no way out until he met Jesus.

Jesus loved him. He was healed and he was so excited that he ran to tell everyone what had happened!

TWO BIBLE STORIES ILLUSTRATE THE PARALLEL BETWEEN SIN AND LEPROSY.

●SLIDE #9: NAAMAN - 2 Kings 5 - Syrian commander.

Had two diseases - pride and leprosy.

Told by Elisha to go wash in the River Jordan.

“Not that dirty river. Are there not rivers in Syria? Why can't I wash in one of them?”

Pride made Naaman unreasonable, angry and inflexible and he needed to be rebuked by a little girl.

●SLIDE #10: Naaman couldn't get rid of his leprosy until he got rid of his sin of pride.

●SLIDE #11: UZZIAH - 2 Chronicles 26 – Israeli King

He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt. Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and he fortified them.”

But Uzziah got proud. He entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests confronted him, ‘It is not right for you to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests who have been consecrated to burn incense. Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests leprosy broke out on his forehead.

When Azariah and all the other priests hurried him out.

Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the Lord had afflicted him.”

King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house - leprosy, and excluded from the temple of the Lord.

●SLIDE #12: Uzziah was smitten with leprosy because he succumbed to the sin of pride.

Because of the sin of pride we bring on the dreadful disease of leprosy.

●SLIDE #13: WHO ARE THE LEPERS OF TODAY? WE ALL ARE!

●SLIDE #14: Romans 3:23: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

All of us have sinned and our sin not only keeps us from sharing the glory of God—it separates us from the Person of God Himself.

●SLIDE #15: Sin dirty our inner spirits and our ability to see and hear from God.

STORY of foggy windshield in Hillsboro, TX on cold and humid night.

●SLIDE #16: *LUKE 17:14: When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.*

I can imagine some of those Lepers wondering, “Now how is that going to work and they stood there wondering in their leprosy.

Luke was careful to record that after they left Jesus, as they were on their way to see the priests, they were healed.

Imagine fingers grow back, nose grows back. Imagine the thrill and wonder of that! Imagine joy of restoration.

They believed in His Word enough to start their trek while the leprosy was still white up on their bodies. This is faith.

Many people come right to the point of opening the door of their hearts and letting Jesus in forgive sin and begin a love relationship. But, they waver,
I a few moments invite you to enter into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Have your sins forgiven. How is this going to work?

This story is much deeper than the story of ten lepers who were healed of leprosy.
The story is about one unloved leper who returned and experienced true love at the feet of Jesus.

•SLIDE #17: *LUKE 17:15-16: One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.*

The Samaritan alone paused in his tracks as his skin was healed, his eye lids reformed and the nubs on his hands reformed into fingers! He turned around and retraced his steps in order to kneel in worship and gratitude at the feet of Jesus.

•SLIDE #18: Leper kneels before Jesus.
Christ did not say, “Get up from there, I don’t need that, I am God!”

Imagine look of love, openness and gratitude as gaze of leper met the gaze of Christ.
Imagine picture of RYR and His heart was moved with compassion.

The mystery is that the all sovereign One can receive pleasure from the created.

Parents all over the world like receiving love and adoration from their children.

•SLIDE #19: Dad, I love you! Did you have a good day? I did! I can’t wait to see you.” (Brie, 10)

•SLIDE #20: My dad is so tender hearted. (Bron, 5)

•SLIDE #21: I love you with my blood pumping muscle. (Bron, 7)

•SLIDE #22: Dad, I love you so much! I prayed for you today. I missed you today! Did you have a good day? Kisses and hugs! Thanks for picking me up. Hi Dad! Smile! Love you, Brianna (11).

•SLIDE #23: Here is one from Bron (8), Dad, I miss you so much. Take some time off from work.

God loves to receive love and adoration from us.
God is longing for an intimate relationship with us.

•SLIDE #24: *LUKE 17:17-18: Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"*

Does that not sound like disappointment to you?

Why? The other nine were doing exactly what He told them to do! He told them to go to the priests and the Nine obeyed His instructions exactly.

Christ was still disappointed. Why?
How many was X hoping would be there? All Ten.

You can be like the nine and obey all the rules and go to church and give money and teach the bible and still miss a love relationship with Christ.

Christ wanted to experience fellowship with all ten.
And He wants to experience fellowship with all of us.

Surrender to Christ: have sins forgiven: here is the relationship of love He longs to have with you.

•SLIDE #25: LUKE 17:19: Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

INVITATION:

•SLIDE #26: Some of you don't believe there is a God and you certainly don't believe that Jesus Christ is God. Certainly don't believe in a resurrection.

I invite you to switch for a moment from your doubts and just imagine that He is real. Wouldn't you like to have a relationship with a God like that. Come and give it a try.
There is no reason to let your intellect hold you back. Let your emotion flow.

•SLIDE #27: Some of you have been thinking about giving your life to Christ. You are wavering. Trying to decide whether or not to go to Jerusalem. You are right at the point of decision: Just need a gentle nudge. Imagine Jesus has His hands outstretched to you. Invite you to move into those loving, accepting, receiving hands.

•SLIDE #28: Some of you are thinking of all the sins that literally stain your life. You are imagining that there is no way God could forgive you. Hurt the people around you---said and done things of which you are deeply ashamed—secret sins tucked away in the closet of your heart. "Jesus could never love a person like me." Oh, yes, He can. Nothing you can ever do is beyond the reach of His loving heart.

•SLIDE #29: Some of you are deceived into thinking that because you come to church and are a fairly good person that you are a true follower of Christ. Think again. Paul says we should examine ourselves to be certain we are in the Faith. Have you come to a moment in your life when you personally surrendered to Christ? I am soon to invite you to solidify that decision.

•SLIDE #30: Some of you are unloved. Perhaps you have loved and lost. You are afraid to love again. Put yourself in a love relationship and you were spurned. Decided to never love again. Encourage you to love again. Turn your heart to Jesus Christ.

I was rejected by Jane.

Risked love again and found love in Julie. Wouldn't trade for anything in the world.

I was rejected by Christ (John 3:17-18) because of my dirty sin.

- SLIDE #31: *John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

My personal testimony: When I came to Christ my sins were forgiven and I entered a relationship in which I found the love of God and the power to handle every situation that has ever come to me in life.

When I come to Christ, come into a family all over the world. Whenever we meet a Christian we have an instant bond.

Wegen dinner with Derrek
English general on funicular
Iraqis
Mongolians
Philippines
Instant bond

QUE FOR WORSHIP TEAM TO REENTER STAGE AND PREPARE FOR SONG:

*"Pray a prayer in a few minutes inviting you to tell Jesus that you accept His sacrifice and would love to receive his love and forgiveness.
Jesus invited people to come."*

Short song, *Amazing Grace*, of quiet meditation as we think about our relationship with Christ. Let song represent time of peace. This will be your moment. Listen to song and after song I am going to ask you to give your heart to Christ.
Some of you will be crying: Jesus Christ is calling you.

In a moment I am going to invite you to the front altar to receive Christ. I will be here to meet you.

SONG: *Amazing Grace*

Bow your heads.

Picture such oneness with the Father. What must it feel like to have such constant companionship that there is no sense of ever being alone? Can you imagine experiencing God's love and compassion rolling over you like the continual washing of the waves upon the shore? What might it be like to hear His voice and see His face? What might it do to your heart to know that God is likewise enjoying every moment of the intimate time you spend together!

Practice Prayer

- SLIDE #32: Dear Jesus, I'd like to have a love relationship with you. I recognize that my sin ruins my ability to relate to You. I ask you to forgive my sins. I want nothing to stand between you and me. I want to love you and to experience your love in return. By faith I humble myself right now and receive your invitation. I want you for my Lord and Savior. Thank you. Amen.

Pray Prayer:

Who prayed that prayer? Raise hands.

All stand.

If you prayed that prayer, I invite you to come.

Big step. Walk down aisle and meet me in these next moments.

If alone or scared, tap someone on the shoulder and ask them to walk down with you.

If Xn, pray for those who raised hands.

SONG: SURRENDER: Congregation sings as I invite them now to come.

Congratulations to those who have come.

Clap.

If you didn't come, come on back.

Lady last week got to her car and returned.