



# **STORIES OF LIFE!**

**The Gospel of Luke**

## **A Story of Real Faith!**

**Luke 17:7-19**

**Message #50 of 60 – S833**

**Sermon given on March 3, 2019**



**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# A Story of Real Faith!

*Luke 17:7-19*

## Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 17**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- One of the things that makes Christians seem strange to other people is the way we respond when someone does something wrong to us
- Christians walking in faith are quick to forgive the sins of others
- That is just one of the things that make Christians weird to the rest of the world
- Today we are going to look at two other things that stand out in the life of a Christian who is walking in real faith
- Let's pray and then get into the text for today
- **Pray**

## Teaching

- **A Story of Real Faith!**
- Your life is the story of Jesus living out of you
- It is a story of God at work in the world through you
- When it is a God-story being written in your life there will certain activities that make your story real
- These activities prove the reality of your faith
- The first activity that ought to be present in your story is **Forgiveness**
- Jesus calls His followers to unreasonable, radical kinds of forgiveness
- **Luke 17:3-4**
- The apostles realized how hard that was going to be
- **Luke 17:5**
- It takes faith to forgive when it doesn't feel possible to forgive, but not as much as you might imagine
- **Luke 17:6**
- A tiny bit of faith can accomplish the impossible
- The first activity of real faith is forgiveness
- If you are struggling to forgive, you need more faith – ask for it

- The second activity of real faith is **Humble Service**
- **Luke 17:7-9**
- Jesus is speaking in terms that His culture understood
- There was nothing unreasonable about what Jesus says here
- This was how things worked in that time
- The closest thing we have to it today is the employer/employee relationship
- Paul tells us how we ought to serve
- **Luke 17:10**
- There is a temptation when we exercise faith and God acts on our behalf and does something radical
- For example, if through faith, we forgive someone something that is exceedingly hard to forgive
- We might be tempted to think we are pretty special **Romans 12:3**  
For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.
- If we have real faith, that faith will be exercised in a public way
- Real faith is always public faith **James 2:17**  
...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
- God established good things (works) for you to do through faith  
**Ephesians 2:10**  
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- Anytime you do the good works God prepared for you to do, you are serving Him
- Jesus is saying, don't look for some special reward or blessing from God, just because you did what God told you to do **Romans 12:1**  
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
- It is reasonable that you serve God with your whole life
- After all, He redeemed you, He bought you out of the bondage of sin
- He rescued you from the eternal consequences of your sin
- You owe Him your whole life
- When you do what He commanded = 'unprofitable' = not worthy of praise or reward = 'was our duty'

- I believe God created me to do this – to be the pastor/teacher of this church
- It is my ‘reasonable service’ to give my life to that task
- I appreciate it when people tell me they are blessed by something I have done for God
- I pray that I never grow to love the praises of men – They are like flowers – nice to look at and smell, but don’t eat them, don’t take them inside you – make you sick, or worse, kill you spiritually
- This is my duty to God for Him sending Jesus to save me
- I serve God, to please God, and if I do it well, I should humbly recognize that it was God the Holy Spirit working through the faith He gave me to do my duty
- If you feel inclined to say something nice to me or anyone else serving in this church, do it, I appreciate it, but don’t be surprised if I don’t say more than ‘thank you’
- Real faith forgives those who offend us
- Real faith serves God humbly because it our duty
- The third activity of real faith is **Thankfulness**
- **Luke 17:11-12**
- This account is found only here in the gospels
- Leprosy was and is a terrible disease – often results in disfigurement
- In the Bible, leprosy is used as a picture or symbol of sin
- Lepers don’t feel anything – they are insensitive to the normal warnings of pressure and pain – they can be cut or burned and not feel it – which is where their disfigurement comes from – not the disease
- Lepers were social outcasts – driven from human populations to live in isolation or, as in this case, in small colonies of lepers
- Typically, once you contracted leprosy, there was very little hope of healing
- These ten lepers, social outcasts, hopeless – until they hear that Jesus is passing by – He has healed thousands of people – even lepers
- Suddenly there is hope in the darkness of their hopelessness
- **Luke 17:13-14**
- Notice Jesus doesn’t touch them – He doesn’t even tell them that they are healed – ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’

- Jesus tells them to do what a ‘cured’ leper would do
- We can’t know for sure what kind of faith these ten men were
- But they had enough faith to obey
- ‘as they went’ as they obeyed ‘they were cleansed’ = healed of leprosy
- Jesus said in verse six, mustard seed of faith is enough
- Take your little bit of faith and obey
- As these ten lepers are making their way to the local priests, they suddenly realize that they are healed – in my imagination – I see one of them stubbing their toe – suddenly realizing he can feel
- Then looking to see the disfigurement is gone
- Imagine what that would have been like
- Maybe they all stopped, looked at each other, amazed
- Then they started again to go to the priest just as Jesus told them to do
- All but one of them
- **Luke 17:15-18**
- For this man to return to his home and community, he was going to have to go to the priest and be declared ‘healed’
- But before he does that, he feels compelled to come and glorify God and show his gratitude to Jesus
- Why does Jesus question the response of the other nine – they are doing what Jesus told them to do
- This teaches us something very important – God esteems God-glorifying gratitude and thankfulness higher than obedience **Psalm 107:19-22**

**Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions. Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.**

- Jesus then responds to the Samaritan former leper
- **Luke 17:19**
- Thankfulness was an expression of the healed leper’s faith
- Jesus said, ‘Your faith has made you well.’
- In Luke 7:50 – Jesus said the same thing, except instead of being made well, He said, ‘Your faith has saved you.’

- The word has the sense of ‘rescuing or delivering a person from imprisonment or other afflictions’
- The woman in Luke 7 – delivered or rescued from her sins (many)
- The man here in Luke 17 – from a hopeless prison of leprosy
- Woman expressed her thankfulness at Jesus’ feet – fragrant oil
- The man at Jesus’ feet praising God
- Real faith is grateful and thankful
- ‘Go your way.’ - This man leaves with the full assurance of not only being healed physically, but also of spiritual wholeness.
- Too many Christians are like the other nine lepers – they have experienced the cleansing of the forgiveness of their sins but lack the power of full assurance.
- That assurance comes as we come to Jesus and worship and adore Him with a grateful heart.
- I wrote this part of the message on Tuesday after the Bible Study
- During the study I was commenting on the difference between grace and legalism
- Legalism strives to make you right so that you can approach God
- Grace encourages us to go to God so that He can make us right
- We can go boldly to the Father and know with absolute certainty that he will receive us
- We come just like the prodigal in Luke 15 – filthy, stinking, bankrupt
- And just like the prodigal’s father, God wraps us up in His arms and pours out His amazing grace upon our lives
- Even as I was sharing it, a sense of thankfulness, followed by joy surged through my heart
- Brothers and sisters, if you are saved here today, you were rescued from spiritual leprosy – you were spiritually insensitive to the things that were destroying your life
- Jesus saved you from that – be grateful – be thankful
- Three activities of real faith – forgiveness, humble service, and thankfulness
- The story God wants to write in your life is one of real faith
- Just as the apostle did in verse 5, let’s ask God for more faith, so that our story will be a story of radical faith!

- That sounds like a good story **Pray!**