

Lessons for The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 11, 2018

Psalm 30 ~ *The psalm, perhaps intended by David for the dedication of the temple, celebrates God's healing.*

2 Kings 5:1-14 ~ *Naaman was cured of his leprosy only when he submitted to Elisha's command in faith.*

1 Corinthians 10:(19-30) 31—11:1 ~ *We curtail our freedoms for the sake of our weaker neighbor's faith.*

Mark 1:40-45 ~ *The man with leprosy came to Jesus in desperation and left with great joy.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: How Far Will You Stoop?

Naaman only consented to washing in the dirty water of the Jordan river when his servants pointed out that he would have attempted any great, challenging task to be rid of his leprosy. St. Paul urged that we be willing to make concessions to our own consciences for the sake of calling the unbeliever to faith. When a man with leprosy fell to his knees begging for cleansing, Jesus commanded, "Be clean!" How far will we humble ourselves to admit that we need God's healing? Surely our Savior who was willing to touch an unclean leper comes to our level to claim us as his own!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, if you are willing, you can make me whole! You have shown your desire that I be cleansed of sin; continue working a humility in me that accepts your will in all things and reaches out to all those you have redeemed through Jesus' healing touch. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: "The sincerity of our love is shown in our giving." If you don't think so, see what happens if you forget to give your Valentine a gift!

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, You have given us great gifts;
In them we see Your greater love.
May love be seen in all we do,
And in these gifts we bring to You. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: These texts expose our doubt and cynicism. We think our only hope lies in tasks too difficult for us to complete. We think if God is able to help us, there is a good chance He won't want to. We expect those who have the upper hand to use their strength of position against us. Those are the ways we might respond to requests for help! Imagine our surprise when we learn that Jesus really does want to help, that God has chosen to rescue us in a way that takes no effort on our part! Then we respond by giving up our rights in order to help those who are weak.