

6.10.12

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Scott

One of my favorite songs is entitled “Jesus, Friend of Sinners” and is sung by Casting Crowns. There’s one part of the song that I just didn’t get – until I heard Scott’s teaching Sunday. The line says, “You died for sinners just like me, a grateful leper at Your feet.” I didn’t really understand why the writer called himself a leper.

Scott explained that leprosy is a horrible disease that affects the skin and nerves. It does not directly cause death, and during Jesus’ time it caused those infected to be barred from their community. People thought lepers were cursed by God. Scott explained that the leper described in Mark 1:40-45 was in a place where he felt unworthy of even human dignity, and his existence as a person was as low as it could be.

That’s when I understood. I’ve been in a deep pit of despair before, and I’ve been an outcast. I know how the leper felt – maybe not to the full extent that he did, but unworthy nonetheless. The beautiful thing is that Jesus was filled with compassion at the man’s state. Can you picture Jesus’ eyes filled with tears and his throat tight as he reached out and touched the man? The man was not rejected by Jesus, and He wasn’t ignored. He was welcomed into Jesus’ arms.

When I think about my life, I know I’m no different than the leper. I have felt unapproachable, and yet God pursues me. I felt guilty, and yet God forgives. I felt unloved, and yet He lavishes me with grace. I was an outcast, but He welcomed me into His family. I believe the Casting Crowns’ lyricist felt this too. If you have time, read the rest of the [lyrics](#) and [listen](#) to the song. Even better, you should check out the [story](#) behind the song. Does the world know we’re all lepers and lost causes – or do they see us as “plank-eyed saints with dirty hands and a heart divided?”

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Can I believe that God loves me, even at my worst?

Last week Dan mentioned that Haitians really understand their place before God. Do I approach God as a leper or Pharisee? Do I think I’m just a step below God, or do I realize I’m an outcast and God is calling me into His family?

Have I ever felt unworthy of even human dignity? Have I been an outcast? Did I ever make someone else feel like an outcast?

How do you think the leper found the courage to speak to Jesus?

The leper heard something that drastically changed him. What is it that I have heard that drastically changed me – both positive or negative?

Why do you think Jesus said “don’t tell anyone” when he healed the leper.

The leper heard one message from Jesus and he believed and was healed. We have all of Scripture and yet often we don’t believe we are healed or forgiven or loved or . . . Why or why not?

Do I have anything in my life that I think will hold me back from Jesus’ love?

This month’s memory verse: *John 16:15...”He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation.”*

Additional Verses: *Mark 1:40-45, Matthew 5-7*

Reminders:

6.17 – The Gathering @ SHU @ 10am! Father’s Day & the book of Mark.

6.24 – NO Gathering – “4 the City” project...details TBA.

Radical Reminder:

I will pray for the entire world.

I will read through the entire Word.

I will sacrifice my money for a specific purpose.

I will spend time in another context.

I will commit my life to a multiplying community.