

JUST PASSING THROUGH THE R'S

It may be the understatement of the year to say we are going through an unprecedented period in our history as a nation and as a people. For most, if not for all of us, life as we knew it as 2019 rolled over into 2020 has drastically changed. Unfortunately, most of those changes have not been pleasant. Millions have been infected with the Novel Coronavirus, commonly known as the COVID19, and hundreds of thousands have lost their lives. Millions have lost their livelihood due to job loss or business closure and many of those business closures may be permanent. As if that wasn't already enough, our nation has been further rocked by sometimes violent protests ostensibly in reaction to acts of injustice perpetrated by some members of the law enforcement community. No matter what our own political persuasion or views concerning these situations and events, most of us will agree that we are not currently in a good place and there is much healing and restoration that needs to happen. We are in the right place this morning.

We hear enough bad news on the airwaves and social media, but we are in a different place this morning; a place where we expect to hear good news of hope and encouragement. Hope does not ignore the reality of the present, but focuses on what God has told us in His word and what He has already promised to do for us, in us, and through us.

While we were quarantined at home, my brother Kedrick, commonly known as KB, organized a family prayer, praise and sharing time via Zoom. It was during that meeting that this message was birthed.

Luke 17: 11-19 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.

Based on the reading of this passage of God's word, let us meditate on the subject "Passing through the R's".

The first thing we notice in the passage is that everything that took place happened as Jesus was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee on His way to Jerusalem. The passage does not indicate where he was coming from, but one thing we do know is that he was coming from somewhere doing the Father's business. We are all called to be "passing through" on a journey from where we were when we were saved by grace to our final destination when we come face to face with Jesus Christ! That journey was

never promised to be a cakewalk or a bed of roses. While we were never promised our passing through would be easy; to the contrary Jesus said we will suffer some stuff; we are promised that God will always be right there with us. That's why King David could say "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me!"

The next thing we see in verse 12 is that Jesus entered a certain village. It is interesting that while verse 11 mentioned that He was passing in the midst of Samaria and Galilee, the name of this certain village is not mentioned in the passage. While there are many names of great places and great people mentioned in the Bible, many of the miracles of Jesus took place in a certain place or concerning a certain woman or a certain man. That gives me hope this morning that even though I may not have power or privilege or worldly recognition, as long as I am a certain man, I too have a hope of a miraculous encounter with Jesus! The same goes for all of us under the sound of my voice. The next thing we notice in verse 12 is the passage says the 10 lepers met him, and not that he met them. This is not mere semantics. There were many people that Jesus met, and there were also some who met Him; they positioned themselves in a place where they knew he would be passing through. They were not content to wait for a chance encounter for they were in desperate circumstances and without hope for they had a deadly disease. And were cast out of society.

The R's

- He recognized that he was healed
- He remembered who had done it
- He responded appropriately
- He returned with thanksgiving in word and behavior
- He was rewarded – your faith has made you well. The word well here is not the opposite of sick, because this man had obviously already been healed of his leprosy and cleansed.

May none of us in this place this morning be like any of the nine, although I would not rush to pronounce judgment upon them. We have all been guilty at some point or another of taking God's blessings for granted and not giving Him the thanksgiving and praises due Him. Indeed, even while we are passing through these tough times, He is continuing to bless us in many ways.