

Get Loud, Luke 17:11-19, October 12-13, 2019

¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,^[a] who stood at a distance ¹³ and **lifted up their voices**, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a **loud voice**; he fell at Jesus’ feet giving Him thanks.

When attending a baseball game, at baseball heaven in St. Louis, the scoreboard will flash the words: “Get Loud.” Based on today’s text, the introit and the Psalm God is saying to us, “Get Loud.”

I want you to think about times when you or others **shout**. People raise their voices when cheering for a sports team. People certainly raise their voices when calling for help. We raise our voices when we are angry. Children often raise their voices when they are playing. Parents have to remind them to use their inside voice. How many of us get loud when thanking or praising God?

Now I want you to think about times when you or others are **quiet**. Kids might mumble under their breath when mom, or dad ask a question. Confirmands might speak softly when confessing their faith. We might both speak and sing softly when in church.

Let me be very clear about two things as we start. First, we have reason to get loud. Second, to speak softly does not mean it is insincere or unacceptable to God.

Listen to today’s introit from Psalm 34: Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised ... My soul boasts in the Lord....Oh, magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.

Today’s assigned Psalm is Psalm 111. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Revelation 7 said those gathered around the throne cried out in a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God Who sits on the throne and the Lamb” (Rev. 7:10) And our Post communion canticle from Divine Service 1 says “He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy

with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia. Let me ask again, how many times have you shouted thanksgiving?

So what is it that will lead us to turn up the volume? We would lift up our voices if we saw that we are in the same situation as the ten lepers.

The lepers were **diseased**. “They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Leprosy in Biblical times was a terrible thing.

They were not only diseased they were **distant** and detached. Leviticus 13 says “As long as he has the infection he remains unclean he must live alone; he must live outside the camp.” How does it feel to be separated from those you love and those who love you? They were outsiders. They were totally dependent on someone living in the village to provide them with the necessities of life. They were totally dependent on someone being merciful to them.

They lived without the simple joys of life – life in the family, being greeted on the street, shopping in the market, operating a business, singing hymns in the synagogue. They were barred from these forever.

Dr. Paul Brand dedicated his life to working with leprosy. He saw the devastation of leprosy when he worked as a surgeon in Vellore, India.

A man from India named Sadan suffered with leprosy near the beginning of Dr. Brand’s research. Sadan was shocked when Paul and Margaret Brand took him into their own home. This man with disfigured hands and feet was utterly amazed when Paul Brand took his wounded limbs into his hands to examine them. Sadan said, “I had nearly forgotten what human touch felt like.” Paul Brand did pioneering surgery to correct Sadan’s hands and feet. He made sure Sadan went through physical therapy to regain the ability to walk and to function in life

And then Sadan said something amazing. He said, “I must say that I am happy that I had this disease. Apart from leprosy I would have been a normal man with a normal family, chasing wealth and a higher position in society. I would never have known such wonderful people as Dr. Paul and Dr. Margaret, and I would never have known the God Who lives in them.” (Lutheran Hour sermon October 9, 2016)

The lepers were not only diseased and distant. They were **doomed**. They had no hope. They had no way to be healed.

Thankfulness is the result when we realize our situation is the same as the lepers. We are **unclean**. We gather here every Sunday to say, "Unclean, unclean." Sin ravages our bodies, our relationships and is evident in our thoughts words and deed.

The disease of sin means that we are **outsiders**, indeed separated not just from family or friends but from God.

And we are **hopeless**. There is nothing we can do to cure ourselves, There is nothing we can do bring ourselves closer to God.

God's response to the lepers and to us starts with **mercy**.. That cry is all over our liturgy. Our liturgy and prayers make clear that God's mercy is the source of every blessing.

In response to their cry for mercy Jesus said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. We have no right to come before God with demands. We can only ask for mercy.

Can't you just hear it? The leper looks down and sees his body healed and fully restored. He runs through the streets and he can't hold back. "Praise God. Hallelujah! I'm clean!"

Let me be clear it is not our volume that makes our prayers, our worship or our songs pleasing to God. They are pleasing only through Christ. What produces our volume is knowing that Jesus, called out with a loud voice and said, "Father, into your hands I commit My spirit." Then He breathed His last. It was the cry of One Who gave Himself to defeat sin, death and hell.

It was a death and resurrection that means we are **clean**. We have been cleansed in the waters of baptism and in and through the blood of the Lamb. You are clean. You are forgiven. I can't help but think of Dave Ramsey and how he has some of his guests shout, "I'm debt free." The reality is you are debt free.

In Word and sacrament God comes to us and says, “We are **included.**” “We are no longer outsiders. We are no longer unacceptable. “You who were distant have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

God’s response makes us **joyful.** We have been born again to a living hope that is ours in the resurrection of Christ. Because of God’s grace in Christ we will sing with a loud voice on the last day, “Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

A well-known story about a Pastor who reached out to a leper colony is worth repeating. (Fresh Illus. for Preaching & Teaching Rowell. 206) “Pastor Jack Hinton from New Bern, NC, was leading music for a worship service held in a leper colony on the island of Tobago. There was time for one more selection. He asked for a request, and a woman who had been facing away from the pulpit turned around.”

“‘I saw the most hideous face I had ever seen,’ Jack says. The woman’s nose and ears were entirely gone. Most of her lips had rotted away.” “‘She lifted a fingerless hand in the air and asked, ‘Can we sing Count Your Many Blessings?’”

“Overcome with emotion, Jack left the service. He was followed by a team member who said, ‘Jack, I guess you’ll never be able to sing that song again.’” “‘Yes, I will,’ Jack replied, ‘but I’ll never sing it the same way again.’”

In the midst of all of life God brings us **victory.** Let me take you back to the ball park. I would suggest to you that victory creates joy, joy creates thanksgiving, thanksgiving creates volume. When your team rallies, when the winning run is scored, when you are healed, when you are victorious you get loud.

Ten were cleansed. Only one got loud. Where are the nine?

You are cleansed. You are no longer an outsider. You are no longer hopeless. Your God is victorious. Yes, it is time to get loud. Amen.