

WSS Part 12
Week 4
Sunday

Beneath the Cross
By Sharon W. Betters

Today's Treasure

*Moved with pity, He [Jesus] stretched out His hand and touched him...
Mark 1:41*

Dear Friends,

If you have been reading *Daily Treasure* for any length of time, you know I love getting inside the skin of people in the Scriptures. After digging into the scriptural context and looking for biblical truths, I start imagining the emotions and reactions of the people in the stories. Often, the Lord reveals "riches stored in secret places" (Isaiah 45:2-3) designed to take me deeper into the heart of Jesus. Consider Ruth, Naomi, Jehoshaphat, the woman at the well, the matriarchs of Jeremiah 29, Elizabeth, and Mary. Each one tells a redemption story as we walk with them.

Lisa Wallover, our What She Said guest writer this week shares my quest for learning from the lives of these sisters and brothers. I am so grateful to our mutual friend, Marlys Roos, who introduced Lisa's writing to me and to Lisa for saying yes to writing the devotionals.

Each day, Lisa will take us into the heart of a specific person transformed by their encounters with our Savior. Get ready to be honest about the struggles of life and how Jesus meets us there as we walk with:

- The Woman Who Anointed Jesus's Feet (Luke 7:36-50)
- The Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39)
- The Woman Who Touched Jesus's Robe (Mark 5:25-33; Luke 8:43-48)
- The Leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-16)
- The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)
- And Matthew the Tax Collector (Matthew 9:9)

On Thursday, Lisa writes:

He knew the Law of Moses. Every leper in Israel did. It was how they lived and how the community survived. And yet, he was about to do the exact opposite of what it required:

The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' He shall remain

unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.
Leviticus 13:45-46

So read the Law in Leviticus. He surely could recite it by heart.

Leprosy was contagious and progressive, and sometimes deadly. In the Jewish tradition of the day, a leper was considered smitten by God and afflicted. The disease was even understood as a visible representation of sin and its effects: starting small and growing, destroying what it touches. And so, a leper must not be touched. He or she would be despised and rejected, as one from whom people would hide their faces. Forsaken.

For the health of the community, lepers would be sent away from it. As painful as the disease was, perhaps even greater would be the isolation it brought. Isolation from family, from friends, even, it must have seemed, from God. Forbidden from worshiping Him in community, the prayers of a leper were undoubtedly words of groaning, cries of petition, sorrow, and grief. It was the life of a leper.

And so, following the law, this leper tore his clothes and let his hair hang loose, making his status evident to all. He had only one thing left to do – call out the warning “Unclean!” and walk away.

But on this day, he did not. Because on this day, he saw Jesus. (Lisa Wallover, Daily Treasure, Thursday, What She Said, Part 12)

When I was twelve years old, I sat with other teens around a roaring fire on the last night of our week at French Creek Camp in Pennsylvania. The counselor recalled the story of the leper and described how sin was like leprosy, starting small but spreading and eating away at our hearts. He also told us Jesus was the only one who could forgive our sins and the only way to go to heaven. His words terrified me and I quickly gave my heart to Jesus. No doubt, this was just one step toward knowing Jesus as Savior since I think my motivation at the time was I didn't want to go to hell! Yet God used this story as one more means of leading me to His Son.

The leper experienced new life because He saw Jesus and Jesus did not walk away. Friend, do you know Jesus? Does your smile hide fear of rejection, a fear created by unconfessed sin, shame, guilt? Come to Jesus. Experience forgiveness and His unconditional love. Be healed.

Treasured by Him,
Sharon

(These encounters described by Lisa Wallover in this week's devotionals form the basis of the *Beneath the Cross Tenebrae* service recently published by CDM.)