



A Testimony of Stewardship

Luke describes a powerful scene after ten lepers are cured. What might this teach us about giving and stewardship?

Stories like this are tricky, making connections between healing and faithfulness. Misreading the text has led some to say if only the unwell could have more faith, they could be healed. Such readings are not only wrong, but they also perpetuate all kinds of injustice and ableism. Rather, the God found in scripture shows preference for the poor, the sick, and those on the margins.

The same phrase “made you well” can be translated from the Greek as “saved you.” Within a Hebrew understanding of salvation history, saving was both a deeply physical act (healing and liberation) and a reality rooted in community. Both Hebrew and New Testament scriptures point to a God deeply concerned about the physical suffering and oppression of a people. When the prophets and the gospels both speak of a messiah figure, who would bring salvation, that saving act was expected as liberation for a collective people.

“Your faith has made you well” could be read as “You [collectively] are saved/liberated [together] from that which oppressed you.” What’s more, the one to receive this message is an outsider. In Jesus, the longed-for liberation of a people is realized, and Luke shows that this salvation is not reserved for the few on the “inside” but a Samaritan, as well!

People often think about stewardship as the 3T’s: time, treasure, and talent. There is a 4th: testimony. This story includes the testimony of the Samaritan to his healing by God. Yet, here is an image of Jesus testifying as well. He says “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Jesus testifies to an expanding field of God’s saving work, to those who did not share ethnicity, race, or culture.

Here we are reminded that our testimony, our witness, can be used to speak with and for each other as we reflect our baptismal covenant to strive for justice and peace among all people.

Today, we are invited to give our gifts, not as an act of individual piety, but as a part of a collective action, participating in God's work of repairing the world. This stewardship of gifts includes our words and voice. As we think of our relationships to those inside and outside our community, we are reminded how our testimony can be offered as an act of stewardship as we share in the work of healing.

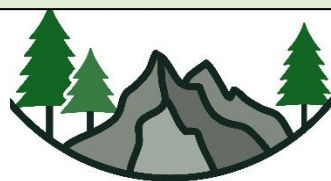
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Questions For Reflection:

What does it look like for our gifts to be used for the healing of the world?

What if stewardship included time, talent, treasure, and testimony?

How can this testimony be used for healing and repair?



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