

Sunday 9th October 2022

Pentecost 18

Luke 17: 11-19

When I was a small child of about three years old, my brother and I were allowed by our mother, to go and play in a very shallow creek by our house. Under no circumstances, though, were we allowed to go anywhere near the Limeworks Quarry because of the machinery and danger. Ray, my brother, who I think could just walk, said we should go and see Dad in his Office at the Limeworks. I said that we were not allowed to. But off he headed towards the fence of the Quarry when we heard Mum calling to us and running down towards us. (She had been watching us all the time). I made a run for the bridge but Mum picked me up and gave me a smack on the bottom. Ray, who saw what had happened to me started to cry and he got cuddled all the way back.

When Mum got back in the house, she couldn't find me. She called and called and I wouldn't answer or come out. Finally, she found me under my bed and told me to come out. I wouldn't and stayed there until Dad came home. I told him that it wasn't fair that I got smacked and Ray didn't because he was the one who wanted to go and see Dad and disobeyed Mum.

Dad soothed my hurt feelings.

Sometimes when we are afraid, or hurt we hide hoping we can't be found.

Play hide and seek (don't go out of the church building.)

What are some of the things we hide from and are afraid of?

Bullies at school, Spider's, dogs, thunder storms, being locked in a room, the dark, snakes, flying, sailing on the sea...

Today we heard of ten men who other people were afraid of. These men had a skin disease which at that time was incurable, and caused them to finally die. It was called leprosy.

The way the society of that time protected itself was to put those who had the disease in isolated colonies by themselves. They were called leper colonies. People who lived in these had to either carry a bell and ring it to show that they were infected with leprosy or to shout out "unclean" as they

approached other people. This would warn the other people to keep away from them.

You see people were afraid that they may catch leprosy just as we have been afraid that we might catch Covid from another infected person. To protect ourselves we wore masks, had injections and went into lock down staying home in an attempt to stop Covid spreading.

Those with leprosy didn't have masks, injections or the means to isolate at home so they were placed out in places far removed from the well people.

Jesus wasn't afraid of the lepers. He didn't run and hide from them. When they called out to him, he told them to go and show themselves to the Priest – for he was the person who could certify them healed. So they went to see the Priest, but only one came back and thanked Jesus.

We can often feel afraid of many things – especially the dark, for we don't know what it is hiding from our sight. But Jesus told us not to be afraid because he is always with us and that we can trust him.

A little book mark I have had for many years says, "Fear knocked on the door, faith opened it. There was nothing there."

Isaiah 41:10 encourages us "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."