

**1071 Stumbling and Forgiveness, Increasing Faith, and Healing of Lepers - Jesus (24)**  
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First of all, we see that we, who are finite, can stumble, and although we should act according to whether or not we edify people, we should be careful not to make this mistake. If we see that we are weak and make mistakes, how can we not forgive people, just as our heavenly Father forgave us, and if people repent, they will be forgiven indefinitely. Secondly, we see that our faith is really small because we cannot do what a mustard seed's worth of faith can do. If we can truly realize our position, our faith will increase. Finally, we can learn from Jesus' healing of ten lepers. The only one who returned to glorify God was the Gentile and we can see that not all of us will be grateful and come back to praise God after being healed. And when we look at Jesus' statement that your faith has saved you, we can see that this sickness is sin related.

**1. Stumbling over others and forgiveness**

"He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.'"(Luke 17:1-4)

Human beings are finite and inevitably make mistakes. The mistake of stumbling over others is inevitable, but how serious it is! Be careful not to make such mistakes. Since they are inevitable, how can they be minimized? We can do as Paul said, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify."(1 Corinthians 10:23) With edification as the starting point, there is much less chance of stumbling over others. Think of yourself as a person who can make mistakes, and thus forgive others who can make mistakes and offend you. If a person dies without remorse, you can't really forgive him, but forgiveness is always good for you, and it will bring you out of your bitterness. When we look at the scripture that says to rebuke him, it means that at least this person is willing to talk to you, and if you meet a person who doesn't talk to you, you don't even have the opportunity to do so. Even in this case, you still have to forgive this person, and it's always good for you, just as I said before. Forgive in all circumstances.

How many times do we have to forgive? "Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."(Matthew 18:21-22) By linking these two verses together, we are basically saying that people should always be given the opportunity to repent. The New Testament is very clear, isn't it? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) After the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), it says, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

**(Matthew 6:14-15) The Heavenly Father does not say how many times He will forgive us, but from a human point of view, it is almost impossible to forgive a human being seventy-seven times. Therefore, we are not talking about the law, which is impossible to do, but rather, we need to have such a life, and we will naturally do it. How can we be conformed to the image of Jesus if we do not forgive people their trespasses? (cf. Romans 8:29)**

## **2. Confidence-boosting**

**"The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you. "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'""(Luke 17:5-10)**

**Another time a similar relationship between faith and the mustard seed is mentioned is in this verse, "And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."(Matthew 17:20) I remember the first time I encountered the talk about the mustard seed, I was really unconvinced. Is my faith so small that I am not even as good as the smallest seed, the mustard seed? Now I realize that it is true, and apparently I can't move a mulberry tree or a mountain.**

**Let's look at how Jesus answered the apostles' question regarding how to increase our faith. First of all, He pointed out that they were men of little faith, that they did not even have the faith of a mustard seed at that time, i.e., He wanted them to realize the reality of the situation. They were men of little faith, and although they had been with Jesus for a long time. This was evidenced by the fact that before He was crucified, "And they all left Him and fled."(Mark 14:50) As the result, "...standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ...and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, ..." (John 19:25-26) It was not until they actually saw Jesus rise from the dead and were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that the apostles were "...with great power ...were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, ..." (Acts 4:33) It is also clear from the subsequent development that they did not care about their own lives for the sake of the gospel.**

**Then He used the parable of the Master's servant, where it says, "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'""(Luke 17:10) Nowadays some people may think of servants differently, but that is exactly what the role of a servant is at that time. It is only when one realizes his actual situation as the servant that one can increase his faith!**

So what is our actual situation? It is to realize that God is infinite and man is finite, and that life can only come from Him, as the Scripture says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." (1 Corinthians 3:6-7) If He does not open our eyes, how can we really see? As an example in Numbers 22:31, "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; ..." Balaam couldn't see the truth without his eyes opened by God. As another example, "Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'" And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." (2 Kings 6:17) Without God opening the servant's eyes, there was no way for him to see the horses and chariots.

There are quite a few verses that talk about His absolute sovereignty, so let's look at what Isaiah, who I couldn't understand the description before, said, "Who is blind but My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, Or so blind as the servant of the Lord?" (Isaiah 42:19) That is to say, if God does not take the initiative to open the ears of His servant, he will be deaf! We must recognize and truly know that without the Lord opening our eyes, we would be blind. This is why Jesus said to the Pharisees, "...If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." (John 9:40-41) Like the Pharisees, we all have physical eyes that can see, and it is not easy to admit to ourselves that we truly know that our spiritual eyes must be opened by God!

### 3. Leprosy cure

"While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'" When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)

This was not the first time that Jesus healed lepers, but this time there were ten of them, and we know from the scriptures where they were approximately. We also see that only one Gentile out of the ten returned to glorify God and bowed down at Jesus' feet to thank Him. We see that not all people who are healed return to praise God with gratitude. Jesus specifically said that this man was a Gentile, so logically, even though the Bible doesn't say that there were Jews in the midst of the healing, there should have been Jews. Just as the Bible does not say that these ten men had faith, we can see it in their behavior. Jesus asked them to show their bodies to the priests, and when they spoke with Jesus, they were not cleansed because it is said, "...as they were going, they were cleansed." (Luke 17:14) If you look at the fact that Jesus' request was for them to go to see the priests, and we know in

general that the Jews were involved with priests, and on the other hand, the Gentile had basically no part in priests. Thus, this can be used as another hint that there were Jews among the ten. And we see that this Gentile had faith and a good conscience, and only he came back to thank Jesus.

If we look at what Jesus said, "...your faith has made you well."(Luke 17:19), we can see that the sickness was sin related. Although the New Testament records that the disciples were able to perform many miracles, it does not record that anyone other than Jesus was able to cure leprosy. Referring to the Old Testament, such as Leviticus 13, we can see that leprosy is quite special. As we know today, some leprosy is contagious, but some is not, and there are quite a number of scriptures that talk about leprosy, so I won't go into that. Here we see that in the healing of the lepers, "...you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..."(Matthew 9:6) Only He had the authority to forgive sins at that time. It is impossible for us today to have Jesus to forgive our sins, but His name represents Him, and so it is, "...repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."(Luke 24:47)