

Saturday 14th November

Numbers 12:9-16

Key Verses 10-11, 13

*10 When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam's skin was leprous it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, 11 and he said to Moses, "Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. 13 So Moses cried out to the Lord, "Please, God, heal her!"*

We come to the end of this mini story in Numbers 12 and we see God punishing Miriam with a skin disease that makes her skin flake off like snow. Aaron and Miriam were in the presence of God and must somehow have sensed his anger. Imagine how it would be to feel God's anger burning against us.

It came as a result of their sin. They had been jealous of Moses and this meeting with God had made them aware of it.

It's often the case that we drift into sin during everyday life and only realise it when we sit in the presence of God and think of his holiness!!

I've no idea why only Miriam was given the leprosy but it was a visible sign of God's judgement and as her brother, Aaron would have felt the shame. Instead of appealing directly to God, Aaron asks Moses for forgiveness. The very person he had recently been 'dissing'. (Not sure if that's a real word!) Moses who up to now has not spoken, pleads with God to heal Miriam.

We saw yesterday how Moses was a forerunner pointing to Christ. In Mat 5:44 Jesus said that we should love those who persecute us and in Luke 23:24 said. 'Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'

God agrees to Moses' request but gives her a period of disgrace before he heals her and allows her back with her people.

Who do you identify with in this story? Moses, who kept quiet and let God do the talking? Aaron, who learnt the value of the prayer of others? Miriam, who experienced God's grace as he pardoned, cleansed, healed and restored her? Or the people, who witnessed what happened and learnt the seriousness of sin?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this story?

Praise God that because of Christ, he no longer holds our sin against us. The punishment that we should experience (and Miriam did) has been taken by Jesus as he suffered on the cross. Our cleansing, healing and pardon are only granted to us because of Jesus!