

Lord, Make Me Clean

- *Mark 1:40-45*

- **I want to give you a word & you tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. Cross. Sin. God. Leprosy!**
 - The very word leprosy filled people with horror. The Jews regarded it as "the stroke of God."
 - The leper carried about in his body corruption, contamination, and death.
 - Society ostracized and segregated him lest he contaminate others of the community. If anyone wandered into his vicinity, he had to cover his mouth and cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" to warn the other person away.
 - He was excommunicated from the religious life, functions, and feasts of the nation.
 - His only companions were other lepers in the same pitiable condition as himself.
 - He could not work because who would want the goods and services of a leper?
 - He could not come and go as he pleased. He endured a living death, because his disease spread and was incurable.
 - Often, it began in a small way. He lost the feeling in his fingers, in his feet, and in his limbs.
 - Before long, he presented a dreadful spectacle with rotted stumps where once had been healthy limbs. He had no hope.
 - He was cut off from his family, from his former friends, and from the fellowship of the people of God.
 - All he could look forward to was death. For this reason, often times leprosy is viewed as a picture of sin.
- **The man we will be reading about this morning was a leper, but he was one who had made a wise decision, he chose to come to Christ, even in the awful condition he was in.**
- **As we read about this leper, I don't want us taking a long look at this man or his condition, but instead I want us to look at our own lives & see how closely we compare with this man and his dreaded disease.**
- **READ SCRIPTURE**

I. **Jesus Was This Man's ONLY Hope (v.40)**

a. **Leprosy was a feared disease.**

- i. We know from previous accounts in Scripture & in history that when a person became stricken with leprosy, they were immediately cast out of the city, away from the general public b/c of fear that others would be infected as well.
- ii. This was in some ways a death sentence for a leper:
 - i. They were never to be around their family & friends again.
 - ii. They were torn away from everything that they had known.
 - iii. They had to deal with excruciating pain day in and day out.
 - iv. They were given no hope except to die in their suffering, alone, surrounded only by other unclean people.
- iii. He did not ask for it.
 1. Nothing in scripture gives us any reason to believe that this man deserved to be stricken with such an awful disease.
 2. Many today choose to get mad at God or refuse to come to Him b/c of situations or circumstances in their life.
- iv. Like the leper, in our sinful condition, Jesus is our only hope.

b. **The faith of the leper.**

- i. We are not exactly sure how he found out, but somehow he knew that Jesus was coming by & he knew that he had to get to Him.

- i. If you think about, this in and of itself is going to be a massive undertaking for him.
 - a. He was away from those who would be willing to help him get there.
 - b. He is ordered by law to verbally announce that he is unclean when he is in public.
 - c. And even if he makes it close to Jesus, who is to say that with all of the people around, including his disciples that Jesus would even be able to get to him?
 - d. Acting on that decision took a great deal of courage. For one thing, crowds always surrounded Jesus, and who could predict the actions of a crowd? The man might well have been stoned long before he reached the Christ. So what? He was dying anyway. He had nothing to lose and everything to gain.
- ii. But what's interesting is the manner that he came to Jesus. Oh, how we could learn so much from this leper. He didn't come just to be healed, he came to worship Jesus.
 - i. Mark says he knelt down.
 - ii. Luke says he fell on his face.
 - iii. Matthew says he worshipped Jesus.
 - iv. "I want to worship God!"
 - v. "I want to be a part of God's people, in relationship to Him!"
 - vi. "I want to touch others, to be in relationship to the people of God!"
- iii. That is what the leper is asking. Of course he wants physical healing. But becoming clean is much more than becoming healed!
- iv. However, deep in his heart it had to be a concern if Jesus was willing to heal him, b/c after all, he was still a leper, the most unclean of all people. Could Jesus really love him enough to change him? He knew he had the power, but would He reject him like the rest?
 - i. Many choose to never come to Christ simply b/c they are not sure Jesus would be willing to love them b/c of their sin.
 - a. It did not matter what others had told him about Jesus, he was determined to meet Him.
 - b. Others probably laughed and said there's no use, but he had faith that Jesus could do a work in his life.
 - ii. We are reminded in II Peter 3:9 – "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

II. **Jesus Was Moved With Compassion (v. 41-42)**

- **I love when we read in the scriptures about the compassion of Jesus. Do you know why? Because every time we read about it:**
 - It was undeserving
 - It was miraculous
 - It was freely given
 - It was complete
- **Jesus never left anyone wanting after He passed by.**
 - a. **He touched him.**
 - i. He did not ignore him.
 - ii. He did not push him away.
 - iii. He did not yell for his disciples to take this man away in his uncleanness.
 - iv. Instead He was moved with compassion and he reached out to touch this man in need.
 - i. Thank God, we don't have to be clean to come to Jesus.

ii. Thank God we don't have to be perfect & have everything in order before we can be saved.

iii. I am thankful this morning that Jesus will take us just as we are, filthy and all.

b. He spoke to him.

i. Jesus willed this man to be clean by the spoken word of His mouth.

ii. Just as Jesus willed for this man to be clean, that is the same desire that He has for every person born on this earth, that they might be cleansed through Him, IF we will come as the leper came.

c. He cleansed him.

i. By just the power of Jesus' word the Bible tells us that this man was instantly healed of the disease that he thought had ended his life.

i. What a powerful God we serve.

a. He doesn't need our help

b. He don't need our permission

c. He doesn't even need our advice on how it needs to be done.

d. All He has to do is just speak to our heart and He can change us.

e. Throughout the scriptures, whenever Jesus spoke, things happened. All He has to do is speak:

i. And He can heal the sick

ii. And He can raise the dead

iii. And He can calm the storms

iv. And He can cleanse our hearts

ii. What a loving God we serve

a. By law, Jesus should have and could have turned him away, but He desired to help him.

b. By protecting Himself and the others, He could have sent this man the other direction, but instead He drew him closer.

c. He could have just eased his pain or given him some words of encouragement, but he chose to cleanse him completely.

III. A Witness Is Born (v. 44)

a. Even a leper should be a witness

i. He did not have the credentials that many had, but He had felt the Master's touch.

ii. He did not have the rich background that many came from, but he was a Child of the King.

iii. He could have come up with many excuses why he shouldn't, but all he could think about was the one reason that he should.

b. We are to give the praise to Christ

i. Jesus urges him not to boast in himself, that this was owed to him or that he deserved it, but instead tell on the compassion and love that Jesus showed toward him.

i. There are times when we will look at someone who is in sin and we say to ourselves or to others, "but for the grace of God, that could be me."

ii. Though it is completely true that it is b/c of God's grace that we are saved, it has nothing to do with who we are, we are nothing more than a sinner too.

ii. We are not to judge the man across the street, but instead, we are to go and tell him what Christ has done for us and can do for him as well.

➤ **What does this mean for us today?**

- **The same illustration can apply to us today; God is gracious, willing to forgive, to restore your relationships with others, to heal your relationship to Him; He is ready to cover with the blood all the hurtful and hateful things you have heard, all the pain you have caused through what you have done, and all the messes you have made because of where you have**

walked. God is willing to call you his own, to accept you completely; are you willing to offer yourself to Him?

- If you are here this morning and you have not received Jesus as Lord, you are like that leper. You are unclean spiritually b/c of the sin that has stained your heart and life. But Jesus was willing to heal and then cleanse that leper -- and he is willing to heal and cleanse *you*. Like the leper, fall on your knees before him. Plead with him, saying "If you are willing, you can make me clean!" And I promise you, he is able and willing to make you clean. You will be clean and spotless, all sins forgiven; you will take the first step towards becoming a sinless, perfect being: And all heaven will rejoice.
- So humble yourself. Fall before Him. Be healed and cleansed!
- Christians, you have been healed, if you have received Jesus as Lord; you are not symbolized by the leper. But you may be unclean. You may have been defiled through:
 - impure thoughts -- anger, bitterness, lust, greed, pride
 - improper speech
 - hurtful actions
- We too cannot cleanse ourselves. We too need to fall on our knees before him, saying:
 - "I know I have failed you. I see that I have lived a life unworthy of your calling. I have no right to come before you, to pretend to worship you, in this condition. But I know what it is like to be clean before you, and I want to be clean again! I want to have a perfectly clean conscience, with nothing separating me from you. I want to rejoice when I think of you, and not feel frightened knowing how I've failed you. If you are willing, you can make me clean."