

## 大麻风得洁净——马可福音 1:40-45

### The Cleansing of a Leper – Mark 1:40-45

#### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture Reading: Mark 1:40-45; Revelation 21:3-4; Titus 2:11-14
- Teaching text: Mark 1:40-45 (NASB1995)

**40** And a leper \*came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” **41** Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and \*said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” **42** Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. **43** And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, **44** and He \*said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” **45** But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

- To describe simply the horrific symptoms of leprosy: like a corpse walking with the smell of death. The Mosaic Law requires lepers to live in complete isolation outside the camp (Lev 13:45-46). Of all diseases, only leprosy is called “unclean”, because it symbolizes the filthy condition of the sinner's soul. In the Old Testament, God often punishes sinners with leprosy. (Miriam, Kehasi, Uzziah).
- Conclusion: Leprosy is a divine illustration to visualize the effect of sin so we can see it. Defiled by sin, our souls start to rot and stink the moment we're born. Every Christian must at some point in life have the moment when he sees the filthiness of his own soul and smells his own rottenness so as to cry out from the deepest of their heart - “Unclean! Unclean!”
- Outline:

Title: The Cleansing of a Leper  
1. Faith of the Leper (v40)  
2. Compassion of the Savior (v41)  
3. Authority of the Savior (vv 42-44)  
4. Disobedience of the Leper (v45a)  
5. Longsuffering of the Savior (v45b)

#### **Faith of the Leper (v40)**

- “came to Jesus, beseeching”: This leper totally violates a most basic rule of that society – lepers must be under full quarantine. Imagine the reaction from others! He totally disregarded the disdainful look from others, because he saw his only hope in Jesus.

- “falling on his knees”: Kneeing is a common posture for worship or prayer. It can express urgency of petition. Luke said the leper “fell on his face” (Luke 5:123), that is, total prostration, expressing humility and urgency of the prayer. This is the posture of the soul that a sinner must have before the Lord.
- “If You are willing, You can make me clean”: Key words are “willing” and “can”. “Can” shows the leper’s faith in Jesus’ power, “willing” shows his submission to Jesus’ will. Both are exemplary attitudes we should imitate. Some criticize the leper for lacking faith, as if he only believes Jesus has the power but not the willingness. But actually, what these words show is that he knows Jesus has the sovereign will, and I will submit to whatever His will is and not impose my own will to Him. We all must have this humble attitude in prayer!

### **Compassion of the Savior (v41)**

- “Moved with compassion” : The original meaning for “compassion” is bowels, that is, internal organs. It can be translated as “Being stirred in the guts”. When Jesus saw the suffering of this poor leper, he couldn’t help but be stirred inside. That’s compassion. It is to be stirred internally when you see someone suffering. Jesus doesn't want to see him suffer like this.
- “Stretched out His hand and touched him”: And we may add, “people were all stunned.” You never touch a leper! That’s strictly prohibited! According to the Old Testament law, when the clean touches the unclean, the outcome is always that the clean becomes unclean. But when Jesus touches the unclean, the unclean becomes clean. His holiness cannot be defiled by sin. This is the power of Jesus. He never needs to worry about touching sinners, even the filthiest ones.
- Bodily contact is not a necessary step for Jesus’ healing. Jesus often heals with simply a word (Mark 2:1-12). Still, Jesus often touches them with His hand (1:31). And this verse shows us why - because He is “moved with compassion.”

The leper’s body needed healing, but what his soul needed the most was simply a loving touch. In Genesis, God created man “in Our image”, and the image of the Triune God entails the relationship with one another in an eternal fellowship of love. This poor man has been missing out on such loving relationship for a long time. If there’s anyone whose heart desperately needs to be melted by a loving touch, it was he!

- “I am willing”: Some of you may need to hear this today! This is the heart of the Lord, “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9). Anyone who is not saved is not because God is unwilling to save him, but because he is not willing to seek God’s salvation. The Lord is always willing to forgive.

*“No cases of spiritual leprosy could be worse than those of Manasseh, Paul, and Zaccheus, yet they were all cured. ... Men are not lost because they are too bad to be saved, but because they will not come to Christ that He may save them.”——Ryle*

### **Authority of the Savior (vv 42-44)**

- “Immediately the leprosy left”: The healing is immediate and complete. The lump on his face is gone, the rough skin becomes smooth as a baby, the lost fingers grow back, the rotten smell disappears, the coarse voice is restored. It is basically instant creation of a brand new body.
- “he was cleansed”: The main problem of leprosy is not the pain, but uncleanness. Only the healing of leprosy is called cleansing. Medically speaking, there is no essential difference between leprosy and other diseases. They are all malfunction of the body. Biblically speaking, however, leprosy is the only disease that symbolizes the uncleanness of the soul. What the soul of a sinner needs is a deep cleansing.
- “And He sternly warned him”: Stern warning does not contradict a loving heart. The expression of love sometimes requires a stern warning. When parents sternly warn their kids, it is not because they don’t love them, but they love them so much that they want them to know what is being said is very important. Jesus wants this leper to know what he is about to say is very important and cannot be negotiated, but must be obeyed strictly. He has called Jesus Lord before the cleansing, which means he must obey whatever He commands.
- “immediately sent him away”: Doesn’t imply any anger or disappointment, simply to show the urgency of the matter. Why so urgent? Jesus does not say, nor does the leper need to know. All he needs to know is that his Savior gave him an important mission to do. What an honor! Before this, he was a useless wretch; but now, he can finally do something for the Lord! What a privilege it ought to be!
- “you say nothing to anyone”: Now is not the time for him to witness and spread the gospel. We need not be bothered by this command. Evangelism is important, of course. Not every word in the Bible is addressed directly to everyone in every situation, especially for narratives. Jesus here simply commands him with His authority as Lord that now is not his time to witness.

Principle: to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). We must never worship in a way that contradicts God’s command. For example, some people have “family altar” in their home which sounds very pious, but you never see them in corporate worship.

- “as a testimony to them”: That is, to the priests who examine his body, as Leviticus 14 requires. After a tedious procedure of examination and offering sacrifices, the priest must proclaim him clean. This then would be his time to witness. Jesus wants the priests to face His authority and power directly, and to confess with their own mouth what He has done. Then, if they still refuse to believe, they’d have no excuse. Maybe some would come to faith, and that’s what Jesus originally intended.

### **Disobedience of the Leper (v45a)**

- “and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around”: Exactly what Jesus warned him not to do! The test of faith is always obedience (John 8:31). Some people are quick to judge here - He must not be a true believer! But who has never disobeyed Jesus’ commandment after being saved? The Scripture does not say whether this person’s soul is saved or not. All we can say is that he did show signs of true faith before, but his action here is very concerning. We can only know whether he is saved or not when we are in heaven.

### **Longsuffering of the Savior (v45b)**

- “Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city”: This is why Jesus warned him not to tell anyone! Now people are all zealous to follow Jesus, and whenever he enters a city, he would make a big scene, which would quickly exacerbate the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, and that may send Jesus to the cross before God’s appointed time comes.

There are 240 towns in the regions of Galilee. Jesus wants all of them to see his miracles and hear his message. However, because of this man’s disobedience, Jesus’s ministry is interrupted. Although all this is within God’s sovereign will, this verse does not focus on God’s sovereignty but man’s responsibility. You must see that your sin will indeed interrupt the work of God’s kingdom!

Application: Are there times when Christians do damage out of some supposedly good intention? When your head get hot with zeal, you can’t wait to do this or that for God, like witnessing or other things, and you overlook other important principles, like self-sacrificial love, order of authority, godly character, etc., so that the work of God’s kingdom is hurt.

- “stayed out in unpopulated areas”: Jesus endured the consequence of the sinner’s disobedience without fighting back. He did not execute justice right away. Not that he will never execute justice. Ultimately, God’s righteousness will hold every sin accountable. Jesus knows this sin will either be punished on him soon on the cross, or will be punished on the sinner himself for eternity. Now is not the time for punishment, Jesus simply continues to do what the Father sent him to do.

Application: Do you see Jesus’ long-suffering patience? Many people want immediate justice once they’re in the Lord. Justice at home, justice in the workplace, justice in the world... Learn from Jesus’ long-suffering patience. (Colossians:1:10-11)

- “and they were coming to Him from everywhere”: Those who really want to follow Jesus cannot be stopped. God will always accomplish His glory even with what seems the worst to us.

Conclusion: What are the symptoms of your leprosy? Pride ? Selfishness? Lust? Greed of various kinds? Addictions? As horrific as leprosy is, it is not incurable. It can be healed. Only Jesus has the power to cleanse, and He has a heart of compassion that is willing to cleanse everyone. But only those who are truly broken and humble in spirit and beg Jesus to cleanse their soul will be cleaned.

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