

## Mark 1:40-45 “Cleansed with Compassion”

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

45 However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

{Jesus tells this man to tell no one and he tells everyone – He tells us to tell everyone and we tell no one – something wrong with that picture.}

**It is hard for us to imagine the disease of leprosy in our day.**

A)For most of us our only **real exposure** to it is in watching the movie Ben Hur.

His mother and sister contract the disease and are banished to a Leper Colony.

B)Today it is called Hansen’s disease after the man who diagnosed the Bacilli

C)Here in America we are pretty much kept away from it – but there are about **10-15 million cases of leprosy world wide.**

1)Approx 5,000 in the U.S.

**The disease has now been arrested even though there is not a cure.**

A)Done experiments using Armadillos –the reason is the disease first attacks the **appendages** – because it is the coolest part of the body.

B)And the Armadillo – is the only animal whose body temperature is about **3 degrees less than ours.**

1)And the Armadillo **lives long enough** to allow the disease to develop.

C)They have discovered that Leprosy has about a **3 yr incubation period.**

**During that time you start to feel fatigued, and your joints ache and feel sore!**

A)**Now a bunch of you are thinking – I got it!** – that is my problem – I have leprosy. {What I thought as soon as I read that. }

B)Once leprosy comes to the surface – **unarrested and untreated it can last anywhere from 2-20yrs.**

Bb)But the **average life span** of a person who has contracted Leprosy and does not get treatment is **7-9yrs.**

C)Luke the doctor – in his account of this story tells us the man was **FULL OF** Leprosy indicating that the man

in our text would have been in the advanced stages of Leprosy. – **BODYCOVERED**

**Understand this would have been a Radical scene: Catch the significance.**

A) A man in this stage of leprosy venturing near a crowd.

B) The Jews were familiar with the laws concerning a leper that were found in Leviticus ch.13

C) In fact Leviticus is the center book of the Pentateuch – Pentateuch= first 5 books of the Bible **Genesis, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut.**

D) The Pentateuch was written by Moses – Leviticus is the center book of the five books

1) And the **two center chapters of the book of Leviticus** are chapters 13,14 which give us the law of the Leper.

Now the intriguing thing in this is ch.13 is a very long chapter that describes in great detail **how to diagnose leprosy. 59 verses**

A) It is the only chapter in the entire Bible that is given to the **diagnosis of a disease.** {All the law could do was diagnose the disease – offered no cure.

B) It had to be **in great detail** because Leprosy was considered highly contagious – and because of what would happen to a leper.

1) **They would lose everything** – Banished from family, friends, temple worship, isolated and put outside of the camp of Israel-

C) So you would not want to mistake someone who had **poison Ivy or psoriasis** as being a leper.

**So a whole chapter was given to describe the process!**

A) So Ch. 13 is about how to diagnose if a person had Leprosy and ch.14 is about **THE PROCESS & OFFERING –if a Leper was ever cleansed.**

B) The whole thing as we will see today is a picture of Sin and the cleansing that Christ alone can bring.

1) Which is one of the reasons why a Leper is never described **as being healed but always – Cleansed.**  
{**Picture of Sin and Salvation.**

C) There was no cure for Leprosy – so you didn't go to a doctor, you went to a priest –

1) **You didn't look to medicine – you hoped for a miracle.**

Cc) **But the thing that is also interesting is there is no record in Israel prior to Christ of the offering mentioned in ch.14 ever being offered**

1) **because there is no record of a Leper ever being cleansed.**

**There is the story of the Syrian general Naaman whom Elijah told to dip in the Jordan.**

A) But he was a Syrian not subject to Jewish law – he **wasn't diagnosed by a priest** – he was cleansed and went back to Syria

B) There was also the story of Moses' sister Miriam who was afflicted with leprosy – for slandering Moses.

1) She was cleansed by God – but that pre-dated the book of Leviticus and the whole setting up of the Priestly ministry.

C) Interesting that because of the story of Miriam the Jews tended to BELIEVE that Leprosy was the **result of God's judgment on secret sin.**

1) They called it the finger of God – His touching a person who had secret sin – **especially the sin of gossip and slander.**

D) **Lepers were considered the Living Dead!** Banished and waiting to die.

E) The Talmud listed 61 things that defiled a person and leprosy was 2<sup>nd</sup> only to touching a dead body.

**So with that as a back drop let's consider this story today!**

A) Our focus today – I want to consider today 4 things

#1 How leprosy was a picture of sin.

#2 This man and his approach to Jesus.

#3 How Jesus dealt with the man.

#4 The application for our lives today.

**#1 How is Leprosy a picture of sin?**

- **Leprosy started below the surface.**

A) Undetected – but eventually it manifested itself. A bright spot or a swelling on the skin.

B) Eventually turn pink and begin to look raw and then it would turn brown and become hardened like a scab.

C) **KJV SWELLING – a RISING of the flesh** – So first of all Leprosy is described as a Rising of the Flesh

1) That is what sin is, a Rising of the Flesh

C) **The Flesh wells up / the flesh wants to be pampered - Pleased/ Flesh rising**

1) *I want my way – I want my needs to be met / I have my rights*

D) Listen, the Root of all sin is Pride – the middle letter of the word Pride is I

1) That is where the problems start – Self Centeredness

**But often times that pride – or some sort of compromise is not seen by everyone –**

A) It goes undetected at first but – eventually it rises to the surface.

B) Seen by all!

- **Leprosy was progressive.**

A) It would start small in one area of the body but it would spread and take over different parts of the body.

Bb) The body would start to be covered in these sores.

B) The **whole appearance of the face is changed**, till the man loses his human appearance and looks, as the ancients said, **"like a lion in the face .**

C)The sores would grow larger and larger. They ulcerate.

1)From them there comes a foul discharge.

D)The eyebrows fall out, the eyes become staring.

1)The **voice becomes hoarse** and the victim wheezes because of the ulceration of the vocal chords.

E)The hands and feet always ulcerate. Slowly the sufferer becomes a mass of ulcerated growths

**Sin is also progressive – compromise leads to more compromise**

A)Starts small – grows – progressive

B)The Bible talks about a Root of Bitterness – roots are below the surface – {fed it grows

1)Plant - Many are defiled

**B)I have counseled men who have had affairs – ruined their families**

1)) Never – Hey Marty let's go get drunk – get some hookers and ruin our lives –

C)) **Never starts like that – starts small –**

1) lunch w/ a female co- worker – CHEMISTRY

2) Begin having - Intimate conversation – personal things shared

E) **LUST - It always starts small** – looking at pics on internet - feeding lust – turns into porn

1) Grows, never stops there{ find a way to fulfill their fantasy

F) **Drugs users never content – smoke pot**

• **The Leper would become desensitized.**

A)Leprosy attacks a person's nervous system – so that they lose feeling

B) Leper **can touch hot piece of metal** & not know that their flesh is burning. Step on a nail or sharp object – not feel it

C) Sin works the same way: **The HS is like the nervous system – Conviction – Alarm**

1) But the more a person ignores the alarm – the more sin grows – the more desensitized they become toward sin

D) Ephesians Paul described it as being **past feeling**

1)No longer a conviction that something is wrong.

• **Leprosy stunk.**

A)Another thing that would happen to the leper is the body would start to rot Body parts would begin to fall off.

B)Nose fall off –fingers, toes, ears

C)The whole process created this horrible stench – most of the time you could smell a leper from 100 feet away.

D)When a leper – was 150 feet away from a person they had to yell at the top of their voice – UNCLEAN/ UNCLEAN.

Once Again – the parallel is clear - the affects of sin destroy and sin in its full glory – STINKS!

A)That woman is dirty – that guy is gross – that girl is really sick - That guy is foul! –

B))Sin when it is in the full stages – SIN STINKS!!!!

- Leprosy is humanly incurable !

A)Interesting that the Bible doesn't refer to Leprosy as being healed - but cleansed.

B)A person is not healed of sin – but cleansed from sin – by the Blood of Jesus.

C)So there we see clearly how leprosy is compared to sin.

#2 So let's now consider the man and how he approached Jesus

A)Setting – at some point maybe 10yrs before – he went to be examined by the Priest.

B)He wasn't going to keep this hidden. The examination consisted of a 14 day process and several washings that would take place.

C)But finally after 14 days the bombshell was dropped - he hears those words YOU ARE UNCLEAN.

1)Be like you finding out – doctor – You have cancer or you have aids/It is terminal – there is nothing we can do.

In one moment HIS life is changed!

A)Immediately banned from, not allowed in the synagogue,

B)He is not allowed to go home and say goodbye to his wife or his kids.

1)Never again can he feel the touch of His child's embrace or his wife's tender kiss.

C)He couldn't even go home to pick up a change of clothes

D)He could not go to his employer and get in wages owed.

Cutoff from the family, no longer welcome at any holiday, any feast or birthday party or bar mitzvah.

A)One moment – It is all gone Cutoff Off hopeless – IMAGINE THAT

B)Banished put out BECAUSE they linked this disease to the idea of some secret sin.

1)He had to sit alone and think why? What did I do wrong GOD!

C)For many long years he sits alone – or perhaps with other Lepers – getting worse – His body covered – rotting – smelly.

1)But one day he somehow hears of this Man Jesus – Special power – Heal the sick – raise the dead, cast out demons.

D)He decided – what do I have to lose! –

The law said if a Leper came unannounced into society – He could be stoned to death.

1) He was going to die anyway.

**So Notice How He comes to Jesus!**

- **He came in desperation** – not going to put it off

**B) People today put off dealing with sin**

**C) PHARAOH IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF THIS**

1) Plague of the frogs - all over the kingdom / all over his palace - in the cupboards - in his bed - everywhere

**D) Cries out to Moses** *OK OK - you win I will let the people go - just get rid of these frogs - Moses says Ok when do you want them gone ?*

- 1) **TOMMORROW** - What ?! Right now - Tomorrow  
- Pharaoh wanted one more night w/ the frogs

**E) How often do we find ourselves saying the same thing!**

*Lord I know that has got to go - but just one more time or I will deal w/ that tomorrow*

- 1) *Lord I will take care of that next week !*

**Can you imagine if you did that w/ your trash at home !**

**A) Ever miss trash day ? Worst - such a pain - piles up for a whole another week**

**B) Or take your Kitchen trash can - needs to go out but you say - tomorrow - later - so it piles up in your kitchen - day after day just grows**

1) Pretty soon the **kitchen begins to stink** - don't want to cook in it - then the stench spreads to the whole house - every room { **Health department shows up**

**C) Kid's diaper – Stinks – waiting for the wife**

**D) Why do we procrastinate in dealing with our sin?**

1) We don't see it as a big deal – until it gets out of control – until we lose something.

**This man is desperate – He has to get to Jesus no matter what!**

**A) He pushes through the crowd – he is pushing through religion, he's pushing through the law -**

**B) He's pushing thru All his preconceived ideas about God and the thoughts that God didn't care about him – wasn't interested in his life.**

1) Pushing through the idea that this was somehow his fault and God's way of proclaiming judgment upon him because of his failings

**He was pushing through all of those things and he comes**

–

- **He came in Humility! – he humbly presents himself to Jesus**

**A) The text says he knelt down – sign of a humble heart – he knelt down**

**B) He doesn't demand – You owe it to me – Doesn't try to say – I got a bad wrap – NONE OF THAT –**

1) He humbles himself and throws himself at the mercy of Jesus!



**1 Peter 5:5 “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”**

C) So first he came in desperation – pushing through 2<sup>nd</sup> in humility –

- He came in FAITH –if you are willing you can make me clean

A) This, my friends is often what is needed in true conversion – true cleansing

B) No where else to go – **nothing else to Choose!** –

C) Not I think I will give this Jesus thing a chance – No – idea is – I am messed up – I am in sin – I need to be cleansed.

### #3 Jesus' response:

- He was moved with compassion

A) Felt this man's pain in his inner man – deepest part of his heart.

B) The greek speaks of the Visera – the upper inner organs of the heart, the lungs and the liver.

C) The word moved carries the idea of being twisted or pained.

Jesus looked at this desperate and humble man and was pained on the inside because of him. His heart Ached

A) **It wasn't just pity** – It was an agony he felt – a wrenching – not just at the sight of the man full of the disease. –

B) **But because of everything it stood for:** The man had been told the finger of God is upon you – God is judging you. Punishing you. – You deserve this.

C) Jesus looked at the whole man – and was **MOVED WITH COMPASSION.**

**That is Still the Lord's reaction today – lives wrecked by sin – the sinner who comes in desperation, humility, and faith –**

A) Jesus Didn't gasp – shrink back – how dare you approach me!

**B) Side note: I think that you and I can know that we are becoming more and more like Jesus when we look at someone in the throws of sin and rather than disdain, our hearts are filled with compassion.**

- So Jesus was moved with compassion
- **And Jesus was willing:** what great words - I am willing!

A) His heart toward any sinner who comes to Him today – for cleansing – I am willing.

B) Sorry – not you

- He touched Him!

A) This man who had not known human touch for close to 10yrs – in fact he couldn't feel it anyway.

B) Suddenly felt the touch of this incredible man and – **IMMEDIATELY – IN THAT MOMENT HE WAS CLEANSED!**

C) There are those who said: **Jesus was breaking the Mosaic law in touching a leper** – to which he could reply – **produce the Leper!**

1) The man was cleansed!

**Picture this scene: Crowd gasps as Jesus reaches out – Suddenly the man's whole appearance is transformed.**

A) The man looks up into the face of Jesus – for the first time – **not knowing what to expect** – Sees a smile – eyes of love – and compassion – maybe a tear

B) He starts to unwrap his hands which would have been covered in clothe to hide the sores and grotesqueness of the deformity

1) Where there once was not fingers – now there were fingers –

C) He touches his face – that at one time was deformed – and it is normal again.

1) Imagine the Joy! – The excitement, the emotion. {I can't wait to talk to this man when we get to heaven.

D) **What Leprosy are you dealing with today – What hidden sin or not so hidden sin – grips you – plagues you.**

E) Listen, Jesus is willing to make you clean today!

**Lastly #4 Personal application:**

- **Believers: Who are the Lepers in your world.**

A) Remember being a Leper is the most defiled you could be in the society of Israel. – unless you were dead.

B) A rabbi once said he would not even buy an egg from a vendor upon a street that a leper had walked down.

C) **Who is the most defiled person that you can think of!**

–

1) Who is the person everyone else avoids and doesn't want to be around.

D) **Pray that Jesus would give you compassion for that person – see that person the way Jesus does.**

1) Ask Jesus how can I show them your love. {Don't call the Church – He is showing you because He wants you to be a part of meeting the need.

- **Unbeliever: Now if you are here today & you don't know Jesus Christ**

**You, like this Leper are unclean & in need of a cleansing touch from Jesus.**

A) Your sin has separated you from a holy God - who loved you so much that He sent His Son to die **on a cross - pay the price for your sins**

Aa) **He alone can make you clean** - Why He shed His perfect sinless blood - applied to our sin red like crimson - white as SNOW!!



B) You can be cleansed - set free - made New - have a relationship w/ the living God !

- 1) All you need to do is see the need like this man did & want to be made clean & come to Jesus humbly in faith - recognizing work is sufficient

b) Realizing that there is nothing you can do You are powerless to change your sinful condition - Come to Him today

C) As many as received Him He gave the power to become sons of God !

- 1) Anyone is in Christ He is a New creation - old things past away all things become new

D) Jesus is calling you today -

- Backslidden:

Perhaps you are here today & at one time you made a commitment of your life to Jesus - experienced His cleansing touch

A) But you have wandered back into a sinful lifestyle/ not talking about struggling / but you are out of fellowship / infected once again

B) Don't be desensitized - turn from your sin today & Humble yourself & come to Jesus & be cleansed !  
**HE IS WILLING - ARMS OUTSTRECHED**

C) The Devil has been lying to you telling you He doesn't want anything to do w/ you - NOT TRUE !!!!!  
**COME - PRAY.**

**One last thing: Don't misunderstand Jesus' words here V. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."**

A) Jesus wasn't saying – I don't want to get too popular right now so don't tell anyone – **Not a matter of Privacy** – Jesus wanting to remain private.

B) **This was a matter of Priority** – Go first to the priest – Go show them so that they can do what is recorded in Leviticus 14

1) offer the sacrifice and go through the process prescribed by Moses

C) **That had Never happened in Israel – the priest probably had to ask one of the other Priests –**

1) do you know what that sacrifice is? Do you Know what the process is I have – never done it – No, me either

**The whole Process was interesting!**

A) Two birds were selected – one was set aside as an offering – killed and its blood was shed. Both were a picture of Jesus

B) The bird that was killed symbolized the death that Jesus would die to pay the price for the sins of humanity.

1) The blood of that Bird was drained into a Basin.

**C)The blood was dabbed on the cleansed Leper's – ears, right thumb and right big toe**

1) to symbolize that everything He hears with his ears – and everything he touches with his hand –everything where he has walked has been covered by the cleansing blood.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> bird was dipped in the blood and then set free – which speaks of new life and Rez.**

A)Jesus didn't just die on the cross but He rose again – but after his Rez He still bore the wounds of being killed

B)Said to Thomas – touch the holes in hands, feet, side,

C)Still bears the scars today – that speak of His love and redemption.

**Symbolic of the fact that the cleansed Sinner – is free now to walk in the reality of their cleansing.**

A)Knowing that what they hear with ears – touch with hands – where they walk – has been covered by the blood of Jesus.

One last thing: The leper was anointed with oil. Oil in the OT was symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

A)The interesting thing is this – there were only 4 people who were ever anointed with oil in the OT.

**B)Three of them make sense to us. Prophets, Priest, Kings –**

1)They were anointed for service. It spoke to the fact that they needed the power and anointing of God's spirit to carry out their ministry.

C)The only other person who was to be anointed with oil was a cleansed leper. – why?

1)It was symbolic of what happens when a sinner comes to Christ to be cleansed.

**He not only cleanses our sin – but He fills us with His spirit – His spirit comes to live in our hearts – to help us to walk in newness of life.**

A)That picture is so profound – end with this today.

B)Some of you here – don't know Jesus, have tried religion – tried to be good – tried to change your life and desires – failed.

C)Because that work is a transformation process – God **does by His spirit to the person** who comes to Jesus by faith.

1)Let Him Change you, Let His spirit work in you – let His spirit empower you to live your life for God instead of yourself.

**Some of you backslidden – part of the reason – You tried to live the Christian life in the power of your own strength – failed –**

A)You **need to come back to Jesus today** – cleansed and learn what it means to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

B)He is willing – the question remains, will you humble yourself and come!