

## Matthew 8:1-4 I Am Willing (The King and His Kingdom)

When He had come down from the mountain, When he had come down from the MT. – Sermon on the Mount is over  
great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”  
3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” **Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**  
4 And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Matthew the former priest – turned tax collector – writes much about the OT scriptures Jesus fulfilled

A)None bigger than this: The Cleansing of the Leper

B)See in the book of Leviticus God devotes two whole chapters to the subject of dealing with Lepers.

C)Chapter 14 of the Book of Leviticus is all about the process of inspecting a person to see if they have leprosy

1)50 verses are dedicated to that – Because that person’s life would be changed forever.

D)They would be put outside of the camp/city – never able to see their families/friends again

1)Leprosy was a deadly disease – and it was incurable

There was also a stigma attached to Leprosy because several big name people were smitten by God with Leprosy because of their Sin

A)The book of Exodus – Miriam who questions Moses leadership – struck with Leprosy

B)Gehazi the servant of Elijah who lied and took what didn’t belong to him ..... Leprosy

C)Then there was Uzziah the King who took on Priestly duties which was not allowed.

So in the nation of Israel they looked at someone who contracted Leprosy as being Punished by God

A)In fact the Disease was nicknamed the finger of God – God’s hand on a person

B)They felt that someone who got Leprosy was being punished by God for some Sin!

C)Really amongst all the diseases Leprosy was personified as sin

1)In the Talmud – 61 Diseases listed in the Talmud – Leprosy was 2<sup>nd</sup> only to Death

Personified as sin – Great picture of sin the way that it spread.

- **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.

**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*

- **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.

1)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 would 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

- **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 Holy Spirit 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 falls 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 – UNCLEAR/ UNCLEAR.**

**Once Again – the parallel is clear - the effects 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.

The life span of leprosy was approximately 9 years and Luke tells us that this man was Full of Leprosy.

A)So imagine this man – his story – he comes to Caiaphas the High Priest – examined – Spot

B)They follow the examination protocol in Lev. 14

1)BAD NEWS – you have it

C)Religious system could only diagnosis the Disease – no cure

1)Only condemnation – Finger of God and the ramifications that followed

D)This man would have to say goodbye to his wife – his kids – friends – family – workmates

1)Banished outside the Village / town

E)This man has lived in that state for a very long time

One day he hears about Jesus – gets up the courage and he approaches – Yelling unclean

A)The Crowd is parting like the Red Sea – but Jesus doesn't run – he stands there as this man approaches

B)No doubt the stench was horrific – the sight even worse – this man's head swollen like a lion

1)In that stage – his nose was gone –fingers gone – wrapped up rotting flesh

C)This man comes worshipping – says LORD – not sure what he meant – Lord if you are willing you can make me clean.

Note this he doesn't say: If you can will you!

A)He believes he can – He calls Jesus Lord – He believes the reports – Man of God

B)I believe you can do this: My question is are you willing!

1)This is a man who no longer believes in the love of God.

**C)Religion has told him – God is mad at you this is punishment – He no longer believes in love**

**D)So he comes asking – I believe you can – but what I am wondering is are you willing ?**

**That is the question that many wrestle with today  
– Lord are you willing**