

The Leper - Mark 1:40-45 Transcendent Series

As we begin our study today – I am going to ask you do something right now that is going to be hard for some of you.

A)I want you to picture the grossest, most disturbing, scene you have ever encountered.

B)I don't mean to take you back to that horrible moment in your life –

1)but I think it is important for you to catch the severity of the scene we are about to read.

C)Once you have that moment in your mind – I want you to imagine it being 10 times worse

1)and in then we get a glimpse of what Jesus encountered in the passage before us.

D)At this time in the ministry of Jesus – Huge crowds are following him so picture a massive crowd –

1)a Startling encounter

40 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.

So we have before the account of the cleansing of the Leper

A)"A highly provocative and offensive encounter."

B)It is hard for us to imagine the disease of Leprosy because it is uncommon in our culture.

1)But it was much more prevalent in the 1st century –
2)Although there are Leper colonies today in Africa/Nepal a few other 3rd world countries / Hansen's Disease

C)But In Jesus' day Leprosy was a disease that was considered to be highly contagious

Leprosy starts below the surface of the skin

A)Leprosy has about a 3 yr incubation period. - During that time you start to feel fatigued, and your joints ache and feel sore!

B)Some of you are starting to think – maybe – that is my problem – I have leprosy.

C)Started below the surface – but eventually it manifested itself with a bright spot or a swelling on the skin.

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

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.

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

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

1)The ulcerating sores would leave 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

The Leper would become desensitized.

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

B) Leper can touch hot piece of metal & not know that their flesh is burning.

C)Another thing that would happen to the leper is the body would start to rot off the Body

1)Parts would begin to fall off. - Nose fall off – fingers, toes, ears

Pic of Leprosy in the advanced stages

D)The whole process created this horrible stench –

1) most of the time you could smell a leper from 100 feet away.

E)When I leper – was 150 feet away from a person they had to yell at the top of their voice –

1)**UNCLEAN/ UNCLEAN.** – to warn everyone that a Leper was in the vicinity

Once leprosy comes to the surface –it could last anywhere from 2-20yrs.

A)But the **average life span** of a person who contracted Leprosy was **7-9yrs.**

B)Luke the doctor – in his gospel account of this story tells us the man was FULL OF Leprosy

C)indicating that The man in our text would have been in the advanced stages of Leprosy. –
1)**BODY is COVERED**

D)Because Leprosy was believed to be highly contagious

E)When a person was diagnosed with Leprosy – they were immediately banished

1)Cut off from their family – their friends – from worship

F))There was no cure for Leprosy – so if you saw a spot you didn't go to a doctor –

1)you went to the priest to be examined - You weren't seeking medicine, YOU WERE hoping for a miracle

This man's story probably went something like this:

A)At some point maybe 10yrs before – he sees a spot He couldn't keep this hidden.

B)So he went to be examined by the Priest.

1)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 -

1)**he hears those words YOU ARE UNCLEAN.**

D)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 a His child's embrace or his wife's tender kiss. –

C)He could not even give them a final hug

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

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)For many long years he sits alone – or perhaps with other Lepers – IN A LEPER COLONY

1)**HE IS getting worse – He body covered – rotting – smelly.**

C)But one day he somehow hears of this Man

Jesus – 1)Special power – Heal the sick – raise the dead, cast out demons.

D)He thinks – what do I have to lose! – I am going to go and find him and BEG him to make me clean!

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

A)A man in his stage – never come near a crowd

**B)He no doubt has covered himself – wearing a hood
This has been planned -**

C)When he identifies himself to Jesus –

1)everyone in that crowd probably gasped and quickly moved away from this man in horror and fear

D) Everyone *accept JESUS* - Jesus moved toward him!

E) Notice how the man approached Jesus

- **Imploring = begging – Desperate**
- **Kneeling = humility**
- **Faith = If you are willing you can make me clean.**

Jesus response:

A) He was moved with compassion – Jesus didn't see a Leper – **he saw a man** – a man made in the image of God

B) That is how Jesus sees every person – no matter their plight – **he sees them – a man, a woman – made in the image of God**

1) Jesus saw past the Leprosy – **SEES A MAN – COMPASSION** His heart breaks

C) This is a man who's whole existence was being slowly wrecked by an incurable disease.

He was moved with Compassion

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

B) Jesus looked at this desperate and humble man and was pained on the inside because of him.

1) **It wasn't just pity** – It was an agony he felt – a gut wrenching –

C) One translation even says – that Jesus was angered when he saw him –

1) not angry at the man – but at the disease that was slowly killing this man

So Jesus was moved with compassion

A) **And Jesus said I am willing:** what great words - I am willing!

B) Then we are told that Jesus touched him – this is heavy –

1) **no one would dare touch a leper - fear of being contaminated**

C) And Jesus didn't **NEED** to touch this man –

1) He could simply say be cleansed and the man would be **MADE WHOLE**

This WAS a man who had not known a human touch for close to 10yrs –

A) Everyone was afraid to touch him –

B) But Jesus touched him – I believe to communicate – YOU ARE LOVED

C) **YOU ARE NOT WORTHLESS** - you are important to me and to my father.

D) 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!

JESUS said “I am willing; be cleansed.”

A) In that moment – just like that – the man was cleansed – the Leprosy was **GONE!**

B) Notice that at the end of the story – Jesus tells the man not to tell anyone but go immediately to the priest – to be examined

C) The reason was God had laid out in his word in the book of Leviticus

1) **The book of Leviticus was** like the training manual for the Priesthood

D) All the national laws, dietary laws – are written there in

E) God devotes two whole chapters 13-14 to the inspection of a person -to see if Leprosy

1) And what to do if every cleansed.

In the whole history of Israel up to this point there has never been a record of a Leper being cleansed

A) Miriam prior to the book of Leviticus being written and the Priesthood being established

B) And Naaman the Syrian General – who was not obligated to follow the Jewish laws

C) So for 2,000 yrs priest would memorize those chapters and practice the rituals in training

1) But no priest has ever -examined a Leper who has been cleansed – No one ever had.

D) Until this moment – **THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED**

**NOTE THIS: Leprosy was never referred to as being healed – always cleansed. **

A)Something in that FACT - Leprosy is a provocative picture of sin

B)In this we see the link in our lives to How we are like the Leper.

C)Leprosy starts below the surface- sin does too – the heart

Leprosy was progressive – and so is sin.

A)Sin is never dormant – but it grows and spreads – begins to take over

B)Like leprosy affected a persons outer appearance – sin affects our demeanor –

1)our outlook and attitude toward life and others

The Leper would become desensitized.

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

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

C)Ephesians Paul described it as being past feeling

1)No longer a conviction that something is wrong.

Leprosy stunk

A)the parallel is clear - the effects of sin destroy and sin in its full glory – STINKS!

B)That women is dirty – that guy is gross – that girl is really sick - That guy is foul! –

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

Now on the outside – we might have looked great – like we had it altogether –

A)But the inside of our hearts – wretched

B)In the eyes of a Holy God – our hearts were as foul as this man’s outer appearance.

1)Plagued by bitterness, hatred, greed, pride – anger

C)Biopsy of our hearts – revealed Contaminated

1)Our hearts were as gross as this Lepers body in comparison to the Holiness God

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

A)But when we were in that place God had compassion on us

B)Jesus saw us in our sinful gross condition and moved toward us to rescue us –

C)Note: This leper came to Jesus – but Jesus comes to us

D)To cleanse the Leper all Jesus had to do was speak – be cleansed

1)But to cleanse our sin – He had to go to the cross

To Pay the price for our sin – literally became sin for us – Our sin was put on him – his righteousness – transferred to us

A)Jesus was willing and able to do what no one else could do for us and we couldn’t do for ourselves

B)One touch – Hearts were cleansed – made new

If you are here today – Don’t know Jesus – his heart toward you. – Moved toward you – loves you

A)He doesn’t see you the way others see you or even the way you see your self

B)He sees a person made in the image of God – 1)God loves – Your life has a purpose

C)You were made to live in relationship with God

But your sin has taken it’s toll on you and separated you from the God who loves you

A)Jesus is willing to cleanse you – moving toward you right now –

B)if you would simply do what this Leper did

1)Respond to Jesus – Come desperate –admit sinner savior

C)**Humility** – Humble yourself – admit -I don’t have it all together – can’t fix this

D)**Faith** – Believing Jesus is able AND HE IS WILLING

E)TODAY you can experience his cleansing touch – Sins forgiven – guilt removed –

1) totally cleansed by God – New start

F) Opportunity to respond to Jesus in a few minutes

But before we close up today – I want to ask the question of those of you here who are Christ followers

A) Who are the Lepers in your sphere of influence? – Lepers were the outcast – so who in your sphere of influence in the outcast

B) Maybe it is the kid **at your school** that everyone avoids – misfit – weird

1) Maybe it is the guy at the office who is just a jerk

2) Or the gal who is **so insecure** and tries so hard to be liked – that no one really likes her at all – avoid her – talk behind her back

C) Maybe it is the **homosexual couple** in your neighborhood that never gets invited to the neighborhood barbecue

D) Perhaps it is the Atheist with the attitude

1) The Homeless guy you drive by everyday – no one ever sees

Listen there are people all around us every day – whose lives have been infected by sin –

A) That is being played out in one way or another in their life

B) The outcast, the hurting person, the person making decisions/choosing a path – contrary to God

C) Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever –

D) His heart right now is being moved with compassion toward that person

1) His heart aches – his heart longs – he is drawn toward that person

E) He is moved with compassion – and wants to MOVE US -toward those people in each one of our Spheres of influence

So here is the final question for today:

A) Jesus calls us to be influencers – he calls us Salt and light – He uses terms like Ambassadors –

B) Ambassadors represent their king

C) He calls us disciples – Disciples are learners who long to be like their Master – so the question is this

How can we be like Jesus toward the outcast in our sphere of influence? See/ Feel/ Move

A) See – First we have to see them – The way we see others – get our eyes off ourselves

B) Sometimes we are so self-consumed we miss the opportunities all around us –

1) We don't see the hurting in front of us

C) Divine appointments right in front us –

A couple of years ago – after a Saturday night service Denise and I were leaving the church

A) As we were leaving the parking lot a young couple was walking into it –

B) I was tired – long day – long week – Hungry – thinking about me

1) I pulled out of the parking lot – turned on Anza to come home

C) Denise – Did you see that couple – what couple (trying to pretend...)

1) I think we need to go back and see...

D) Sure enough – Needed help – took to a Hotel

1) Arranged to be picked up for Church – Sunday

E) They responded to the invitation – Life to Christ

Later that day – met with Steve

A) Arranged Bus fare – Ohio family – place to stay

B) We do that sort of thing a lot here – rarely ever hear from those people again

C) About a year later – heard from the girl – her and the guy now married – Child – great Job

1) Church – doing amazing – wrote to say thankyou

D) I almost missed that – Self

First we have to see – get our eyes off of us

A) Feel – Compassion - Daily prayer – Lord give me your eyes and your heart

B) See people the way that you do – See not a problem – a person made in the image of God

C) See not a situation or a circumstance that led to their plight – but a person Jesus loves

D) Imagine what might happen – the impact – if we all began to pray – Break my heartbreaks yours?

E) Don't have a burden for the lost and hurting! Start Praying that the Lord give me one

1st See – 2nd Feel – 3rd Move – See that person – Move in their direction – Reveal Jesus to them

A) Imagine what happen – if students moved toward the misfits –

B) You at your work – coffee to the guy or gal that everyone else avoids

C) The Homosexual person in your sphere of influence – everyone seems to ignore

D) What would happen if we started moving toward these people – Love on them –

Card in the chair pocket – 4 names – in your sphere of influence

A) Not grandma in Kentucky – yes pray for her but I am talking 4 people – you can see, touch

B) If you can't think of 4 people that is ok – ask God to show you four people.

1) Might be a person in your neighborhood or at your work – you see – but don't know yet

C) Start praying for them

Ask the Lord to give you his heart for them

A) Jesus is going to start changing our hearts

B) Working through our lives –

C) We will see people being touched by the cleansing power of Jesus – all around us

Today: You need the cleansing Power of Jesus to touch your life – make you whole – right

**A) Give you an opportunity to respond right now
Pray**