

A Life Changing Touch

Mark 1: 40-45

Today we read of one of the greatest miracles Jesus performed while here on earth. Leprosy was a dreaded disease without a known cure. Apart from a divine touch of God, those who contracted the disease faced a slow and painful death. There is only one other account in the Gospels where a leper was healed, and there Jesus healed ten lepers, [Luke 17:12-19](#). The healing of leprosy was so miraculous, it was one of the signs Jesus used to proclaim His deity as the Christ. [Matthew 11:5](#) – *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

The physical suffering of leprosy was beyond imagination, but the psychological suffering was intense as well. Lepers were not allowed to come into contact with others, living a lonely, isolated life. They were required by law to wear a cloth over their mouths, tear their clothing so their infirmity was easily recognized, and cry “unclean” in the presence of others. The life of a leper was difficult to say the least, with little compassion from those around them.

While we are not dealing with leprosy in a literal sense, it always pictures sin. We too were once much like the man in our text. We stood in need of a touch from the Lord, living a life of loneliness and isolation due to the sin in our lives. Let’s look in on the [details](#) of the miraculous moment as we consider: [A Life Changing Touch](#).

I. The Condition of the Leper (40) – [And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.](#) Keep in mind the loneliness and pain this man must have felt from day to day. Each day he woke to more of the same. His condition continued to deteriorate, and he likely wondered if he would be healed. This day would be different however. There was a commotion among the people. Jesus was in their midst. Notice:

A. His Eagerness – [And there came a leper to him, beseeching him.](#) This has the idea of “*calling to one’s side, a summons for help.*” He was in a desperate situation and he was determined to get to Jesus. He had no hope apart from a touch from the Lord. Maybe there were those who scoffed and scolded him to get in his place, but their words fell on deaf ears. He was determined to get to Jesus.

- The world and Satan would have you believe there is no hope for you; that your life isn’t worth the effort and that you are beyond help, condemned to remain in your condition. This world wants to keep you bound in despair. We are not worthy to come before the Lord, but He is the

only One who can help. Let me encourage you to be as the leper and come unto the Lord calling Him to your side for deliverance!

B. His Expression (40) – *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him.*

He somehow knew Jesus was his only hope. He came in an attitude of worship, giving honor unto the Lord. This leper had broken the law by being in a crowd of clean people, coming to within arm's length of the Lord and bowing in His presence, but he was determined.

- A life changing touch will include an expression of worship of the Lord. We must get to the place that we see Jesus as Lord. He is the One who paid the ransom for our sin. He suffered in our place, becoming our sacrifice. We must see Him as the Savior of our souls and the Healer of our infirmities. Many today never get to the place that they are willing to admit they need the Lord, much less coming humbly before Him. Jesus is right for whatever is wrong in your life, but you must come before Him in an attitude of worship and submission.

C. His Expectation (40) – *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him,*

and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. This poor leper knew his condition. He knew his leprosy would bring about death, but he also knew that he was in the presence of one who could heal him. He knew Jesus had the power to meet his need if only He would extend His powerful hand.

- Our healing – physical and spiritual, centers on faith. We must recognize Jesus has the power to provide for our needs. He is able to do all things at His will. This type of faith moves the Lord into action. He stands waiting for those who come by faith. Are you willing to come in faith unto the Lord, believing He is able to supply your need? Many times we fail to see our prayers answered because we haven't got faith to believe! *Mark 9:23 – Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* The leper's condition was very desperate, and yet he believed. We too must have faith in the Lord!

II. The Compassion of the Lord (41-42) – Here we discover the gracious compassion of our Lord. Jesus touched the man and met his need. We find it was:

A. A Compassionate Touch (41a) – *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.* Jesus didn't see a dreadful leper or an outcast to turn away; He saw one who had come in faith, seeking His touch. Jesus saw the man in a way

no one else did. It had probably been a long time since he had even heard an encouraging word; but today was different, today he met the Lord.

- I am thankful for a compassionate Lord. I'm glad as He looked upon me, He didn't view me as nothing more than an unworthy sinner deserving of hell. He saw me as a precious soul He died to save! Jesus looks upon this world today with a heart of compassion. He paid men's debt of sin and wants them to be free of the bondage of sin. There are none so wicked that Jesus doesn't love or none so desperate that He can't help. We serve a compassionate Lord.

B. An Intimate Touch (41b) – *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him.* Leprosy was very contagious and lepers were to have no contact with others. In this verse, Jesus does the unthinkable. He put forth His hand and touched him. Likely it had been years since the man had felt a tender touch. He had not been able to hold his wife or children. He hadn't felt the warm embrace of a friend. He had lived a life of loneliness and separation, but the Son of God touched him! The one thing he longed to feel, Jesus supplied.

- Jesus could've easily spoken the word and the man would've been healed, but He tenderly touched him. Aren't you glad for the tender touch of Jesus? I remember the day He touched me. It was a touch unlike any other. It was the warmest embrace I have ever felt. Many times since, I have felt the touch of Jesus. He wants to touch your life today.

C. An Ultimate Touch (41c-42) – *and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.* ^[42] *And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.* Jesus met the need of the leper. He had the power to cleanse him and Jesus was willing to provide healing. At that moment, the leper was miraculously healed. He didn't have to try a prescription and call back in the morning; Jesus healed him! He was completely whole from that moment.

- Jesus has the power to effectively and eternally heal. At the moment of salvation we are cleansed from sin. The guilt of our past is thrown into the sea of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered again. Our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west. Just like the leper, I didn't deserve what the Lord did for me, but He healed me. My sin is gone and I am kept in the power of the Lord for all eternity. Satan may bring accusations and remind us of our sin, but the children of God are made whole in Christ. We have been set free from the bondage of sin, delivered from condemnation, and completely forgiven! I am no longer dead in trespasses and sin, but alive in the Lord Jesus Christ! I am no longer an outcast, separated from God, but accepted as His child.

III. The Command of the Lord (43-45) – Finally Mark reveals an unusual command from our Lord, but it had purpose. Consider:

A. The Charge (43-44) – *And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;* ^[44] *And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.* Jesus immediately sent the man away, charging him to show himself to the priest. This was done for a variety of reasons. Jesus knew the people were amazed at His miracles. They did serve to prove He was the Christ, but Jesus was more concerned with them seeing Him and hearing His message than being consumed with a desire to see more miracles.

- Jesus was also concerned with fulfilling the Word of God, while ensuring the man understood what had just happened. Consider the thoughts of Dr. Alan Carr: *Jesus didn't just send him away. He sent him to the priest at the temple. This man was told to go and fulfill the requirements of the Law for his cleansing.*

This leper was to go and to present himself to the priest and get a certificate of cleansing on the basis of a ceremony in [Lev. 14](#). The leper was to come to the priest and the priest was to go outside the camp where the leper was.

That's exactly what Jesus did for us. When we couldn't go to heaven where Jesus was Jesus came down here where we are. When we couldn't get to God, God came to us! The Bible says in [Heb. 13:12](#) that Jesus suffered without the gate, Jesus has come down here where we are, and on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem Jesus suffered.

Then, the priest was to take an earthen vessel, two birds, some cedar and hyssop. He was to kill one of those birds and let the blood of that bird pour into the earthen vessel. Then the priest took the blood of the dead bird and applied it to the wings of the living bird. He then took that living bird, with the blood dripping from its wings, out into an open field and he let that bird loose and that bird would go flying up into the air.

The leper would see that blood dripping from the wings of the bird and he would understand the price of his cleansing and the message would come to that leper, "I am clean because of the blood." ⁱ

- Jesus also desired the leper to go before the priest as a testimony to him and those within the temple. This would serve to prove His power and deity unto the priest, as well as the common people.

B. The Conduct (45) – *But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.* I understand the man's great excitement, but we can never

condone disobedience to the Lord. Instead of doing as he was instructed, the man told everyone he met about what the Lord had done. As believers, we are expected to proclaim the Lord, but this man told everyone except the one he was commanded to tell. Had he told the priest, the religious elite within the temple would have witnessed genuine evidence that Messiah had come. The leper missed the Lord's will, as well as a wonderful opportunity to be a witness for Him. Rather than being a witness to the priest, the man's conduct created an environment where Jesus was forced to minister in desert places, instead of being able to enter the city. This limited the number of people who were able to hear the gracious teachings of Christ.

- This passage does not teach that we should refrain from proclaiming the Gospel and making much of our Lord. It does reveal that obedience is essential for service unto the Lord. A life of obedience is more desirable than sacrifices or great deeds within ourselves!

Conclusion: Surely we all can relate to the passage before us. We were all born in sin, needing a touch from the Lord to provide cleansing. If you have been saved, rejoice for your salvation. If you are yet unsaved, come to Christ today. Maybe the Lord has revealed His will for your life, but you have yet to respond in obedience to Him. If so, you need to confess that and commit to following Him in obedience.

ⁱ The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Mark.