

# The Cleansing of the Leper: Divine Grace vs. Human Religion

Matthew 8:1-4

# The Universal Problem

"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart..." **Psalms 24:3-4**

**Every culture sensed the same fundamental problem:**

- We are defiled and separated from the divine
- Fellowship with the divine requires purity
- **The fatal assumption:** We can cleanse ourselves

# **The Great Defiler**

**How Christianity separates from world religions:  
Sin is the great defiler that destroys God's good  
creation**

**What is sin?**

- Disobedience to God's commands
- Rejection of His rightful authority
- **Declaring that God doesn't know what's best**
- **Placing ourselves at the center of everything**

# The Results of Self-Centeredness

When we become our own standard:

- Rising crime and sexual deviance
- Family breakdown
- Murder of unborn children
- Society breaks down

Scripture's verdict: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23

# Total Depravity - Our Condition

**Because of sin's presence, we are totally depraved:**

- Not seeking, desiring, or walking with God
- Naturally chase our own desires
- **Result:** Broken mind, deteriorating flesh, death

"Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander" **Matthew 15:19**

# Leprosy - A Picture of Sin's Effects

"The leprous person... shall wear torn clothes... cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp." **Leviticus 13:45-46**

**God uses leprosy to illustrate:**

- Sin's horrific nature and significance
- **Separation from God and His people**
- Death and disease as evidence of sin's presence

# The Leper's Approach

"And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.'" Matthew 8:2

Notice what's radical:

- This man was prohibited from approaching people
- Jesus allows him to approach and make his request
- Others would yell, throw rocks, avoid him

# The Leper's Faith

**In the leper's words we see:**

- **Faith expressed:** "you can make me clean"
- **Expectation:** "if you will" - trusting Jesus' sovereignty
- **Humility:** Kneeling, acknowledging Jesus as Lord

**Jesus stands at the moment of divine choice**



# Jesus' Response - "I Will"

"And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." **Matthew 8:3**

## **Revolutionary truths:**

- Jesus **touches** the unclean without becoming defiled
- **His purity invades and conquers** the impure
- **Initiative, power, and victory** are entirely His

# The Heart of the Gospel

**God doesn't wait for us to clean ourselves up  
Christ invades our darkness, touches our  
defilement, and pulls us out**

"That which we have seen and heard we proclaim  
also to you, so that you too may have fellowship  
with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the  
Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." **1 John 1:3**

**We get to enjoy the benefits of His work**

# Cleansing Comes with Calling

"And Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.'" Matthew 8:4

The consistent pattern:

- Cleansing always comes with calling
- Grace always leads to obedience
- Jesus doesn't simply heal and dismiss

# The Evidence of True Cleansing

"Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" 1 John 2:4

You cannot:

- Claim to be Christian while rejecting God's commands
- Call Jesus "Lord" while walking contrary to His will

True Christianity: Laying everything down at Christ's feet and doing what He commands

# The Call to You Today

The question confronts each of us:

1. Have you come to Christ for cleansing from sin's defilement?
2. If Christ has cleansed you, are you living as one reconciled to God?

The evidence of genuine cleansing:

A life of grateful obedience to the One who touched your uncleanness and made you clean

Christ calls you not just to receive His cleansing, but to live as His reconciled people