

# Matthew 8:1-3 “Now do it”

**Loving God, loving each other and loving the lost!**

**Matthew 22 verse 37** Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is *the* first and great commandment.<sup>39</sup> And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

**1 Peter 4:8** And **above** all **things** have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

**Colossians 3:14** But **above** all these **things** put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

**John 13 verse 34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**Matthew 8 verse 1** When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.<sup>2</sup> And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Verse 1... When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. **100's and 100's just heard the greatest sermon ever delivered... Now they all descended the mountain, no doubt in deep discussion of what they just heard. This great spiritual discussion is interrupted with the unwelcomed words “Unclean, unclean”**

<sup>2</sup> And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

The tension reverberates throughout the crowd... no doubt some cursed him, certainly many peeled away for fear of contamination.

Dr. Luke describes the man as “full of leprosy”. Final stages of decay... **THIS HORRIBLE DISEASE HAD RUN IT'S COURSE.**

Little specks on **eye lids, palms of hands, bleaches hair white**

"It casts a cadaverous pallor over the skin, crusting it with scales and erupting over it with oozing sores."

**JUST THE OUTSIDE...** inside it attacks the nerves. Like a termites eating away at the wood...

**Sensory deprivation**, numbed to both pleasure/pain  
retrieving you dropped potato in the fire... don't feel it but damage is done.  
Dr. Brand calls the disease a "**painless hell**", and it truly is.

BREAK YOUR TOE, no pain. Toe rots and falls off... eventually almost all appendages fall off.

**Moral stigma as well...** God's punishment to the sinful

**Leviticus 13:45 and 46** Now the leper on whom the sore *is*, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' <sup>46</sup> He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

If a leper even stuck his head inside a house, it was pronounced unclean. It was illegal to greet a leper. Lepers had to remain at least 100 cubits away if they were upwind, and 4 cubits if downwind. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, summed it up, saying that lepers were treated "**AS IF THEY WERE, IN EFFECT, DEAD MEN.**"

**A leper was dressed for a funeral...** their own. **UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!**  
**crowds would part... children would run**

**No cure...** most banished to live with their own in a Leper colony  
**His isolation is progressive.** close friends only  
**Modern day full blown AIDS**

Believed to be highly contagious, *even though not*; they were never offered any alleviation of their misery. Without love, without hope, *no simple greetings in the street*, going to the market and buying food, **shooting the breeze with a few close friends, laughing**, going to work, **getting a**

**wedding invitation**, *going to synagogue and celebrating Passover*. Never again, without hope...Despair, true aloneness!!!

**How long has it been since he shook a hand?, hugged a neck, got a pat on the back**, had his shoulders rubbed, **his hair stroked**, a tear wiped from his eye... **a kiss**. ~~NO TOUCHING A LEPER~~ you too will become unclean!

**I WOULD DIE**. In Seattle LAF room. My parents said no we need touch I must get to Him, maybe He will show me mercy and heal me.

**verse 2 again...** and behold, a leper came and **WORSHIPPED HIM** , saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

It all happened so fast... now Jesus is face to face with a leper... a foul, decaying, desperate and lonely leper.

Maybe he was hiding behind a rock and heard the marvelous teachings Jesus had just delivered.

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn. That was him... no hope of any future or healing... **the perfect posture to receive grace**.

The only way any can come... "unclean, unclean" I am a sinner in need of mercy and grace.

**WORSHIPPED HIM** many translations say he came and knelt or bowed before Him... Humility, broken... "to kiss" toward, worship!

Luke tells us, **"he fell on his face"**. He didn't care about the mockery of others, what people thought... I would rather have the approval of God rather than the approval of man!

**Crazy faith!** Mark's rendition of this same event indicates the leper repeated his request several times.

In a broken, **hoarse voice** (typical of those with advanced leprosy... "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

**Look with me at verse 3...** Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Mark reports it this way... "Then Jesus, moved with **COMPASSION**, stretched out *His* hand and touched him"

**COMPASSION** "Doubled over to the point of sickness, doing something about it"

**Matthew 9:36** But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. We read of Jesus' compassion over and over.

**Luke 19:41** Now as He drew near, He saw the city and **wept** over it,

**John 11:35** Jesus **wept**.

"Jesus wept" Twice the scriptures blot the tears of our Lord, Once looking down upon his lost sheep and weeping over their state and again at the funeral of a friend.

As Ken Gire says, "Who is to say what is more incredible, a man who raises the dead or a God who weeps?"

Then Jesus put out *His* hand **"HE TOUCHED HIM" THE GASPS ARE STILL REVERBERATING THROUGHOUT ISRAEL.**

***The sermon of the move...*** He did not need to touch him. **stand back! stand back!** 6 Feet remember. Be healed... **WAM!**

I don't think He did a little finger touch either. One commentator notes, "touched him" "**expresses more than superficial contact**". The Greek word used here is often translated "**to take hold of**" I think He gave him a bear hug and a kiss. ***The onlookers were appalled.*** **THE DISCIPLES WERE SHOCKED.** And Jesus was now **ceremonially unclean!**

Hughes communicates deeply what occurred, "the leper's healing was dramatic. *Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed."* **Immediately** his leprosy was washed away.

**The healing was instantaneous!** *Moreover, it was of some unverifiable case of mysterious backache going away or hearing restored. Everyone saw it... the face, the brows, the eyelashes, the nose, the ears, the hair were all instantly restored. Stubbed hands and feet were made whole.*

*How did the now healed leper react? How about “**I’m clean, I’m clean, I’m clean.**” That is how I felt when Jesus took away my leprosy.*

What an absolute perfect parallel to all of mankind’s spiritual condition. An outward and visible sign of our innermost spiritual corruption. The leper is a **physical illustration** of the **HEART** of every human being. If for a moment we could see a visible incarnation of ourselves apart from the cleansing work of Christ, we would see ourselves as the walking dead.

\*\*Love, true love, pure love, love that this world doesn’t understand begins, continues and ends in the heart of God. His love is independent of ours, it does not respond to ours it just is.

As Amy Carmichael (A woman of whom it was said, “When she hugs me all my burdens go away”) says, “He, who loved you unto death, is speaking to you. Listen, do not be deaf and blind to Him. And as you keep quiet and listen, you will know, deep down in our heart, that you are loved, As the air is around you, so is His love around about you now. Trust that love to guide your lives. It will never, never fail”

To demonstrate this “Sermon” this divine appointment with this leper was no chance encounter. You see it’s not just about talk, just about belief but it’s about action. Jesus demonstrated His love for us while yet we were sinners He died for us...

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