



Living by GIVING STUDY GUIDE

THANKSGIVING EDITION!



“I Feel Like Dancing”

1. READ

Pastor Watley's Scriptures: Mark 1 : 40 – 45 New King James Version (NKJV)

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.

Genesis 32 : 22 – 30 New International Version (NIV)

²² That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴ So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.”

But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

²⁷ The man asked him, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

²⁸ Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

²⁹ Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.”

But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”





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2. REFLECT

[Make sure to review this week's sermon!]



As believers, giving thanks to God is a regular part of our spiritual practice. In fact, as we learned last month in Pastor Watley's *Teach Me How To Pray* series, thanksgiving is one of the four important elements of the A.C.T.S. prayer model (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). Through the act of thanksgiving, we are called to intentionally take the time to recognize how grateful we are for what God has done. However, today it is particularly important for us to take a moment and acknowledge the many things we are thankful for.

Happy Thanksgiving Kingdom Fellowship!
We are thankful for you!

In our lesson for today entitled "I Feel Like Dancing," Pastor Watley explores one of the reasons we should always be thankful to God. Even though He doesn't have to do it, we are privileged to serve a God that will intervene on our behalf to heal, deliver, and restore even the most impossible situations. We don't have to face our problems alone. God is always available to step in when we diligently seek Him. A prime example of this can be found in our scripture for today, Mark 1:40-45. In this passage, we find Jesus conversing with a leper. Sick and desperate, the leper pleads with Jesus to be healed. Verse 40 says, "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.'"





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This verse clearly illuminates the posture of the leper as he makes his appeal to Jesus. He comes to Jesus *kneeling down*, and he humbly *implores* Jesus to intervene in his situation. Instead of arrogantly asking Jesus for something he thinks he deserves, the leper accurately acknowledges that it is up to the Lord to decide his fate. He says, “If you are *willing*, you can make me clean.” He doesn’t say “If you are *able*.” The leper knows that in an instant the Lord can heal him. However, he also knows that his physical healing is not guaranteed, so he petitions the Lord like his life depends on it. This is an important message to us, because as Pastor Watley notes, “there are some things that can only be wrested from the hand of God!”

To **wrest** means to “forcibly pull from someone’s grasp.” Similar to the way Jacob wrestles with the angel in Genesis 32, there are some things that require vigorous and persistent faith. In the case of the leper, he doesn’t leave it up to chance. Even after suffering with leprosy and its effects for his entire life, he firmly held on to hope that Jesus would change his circumstances. And Jesus does! Verse 41 says, “Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” The word “then” suggests to us that what Jesus does next is a direct response to what the leper did. It may not have been on Jesus’ itinerary or His agenda, but when the leper earnestly petitioned, the Lord was *moved* to respond. Jesus immediately answered his prayer.

Once Jesus performs this miracle, He tells the leper to only show the priest as a testimony. However, the leper was instructed not to tell anyone else about the miracle. Now, if you’ve ever truly experienced the miraculous power of God, you know that it is hard to keep quiet when God has done something amazing in your life. Likewise, the leper could not contain himself, and he “went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter.” The leper makes a **public** declaration, of the **personal** miracle, with intensity that was **proportional** to the blessing he received. If he received a little blessing, perhaps he would have given a little praise. But the size of his declaration matched the size of his deliverance.

And yet, even if the leper went back to business as usual and didn’t say a word, I suspect that everyone still would have learned the news. After spending most of his life as a leper, if he showed up one day without spots and bruises, people would recognize the change. That’s also why the Lord directs the leper to “show” the priest, instead of “tell” the priest about his miracle. That’s because when the Lord delivers you, it’s visible. Before you even open your mouth, you begin to radiate God’s grace and mercy on your life, so much so, that other people take notice. You become a walking billboard of what God can do. Compared to your history, where you are now is nothing short of a miracle. And that, brothers and sisters, is a reason to dance, shout, and give thanks!





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3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- What are you thankful for today? How can you make a public declaration to God as a sign of appreciation?
- Is there something you need to *wrest* from God? What do you need to be vigorously and persistently praying for?

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Jesus told the leper to show the priest, but not to tell anyone else about his healing?
- If you were the leper, would you have kept the miracle to yourself as Jesus requested? Or would you “proclaim it freely” and “spread the matter” like the leper in the scripture?

