

HE TOOK OUR PLACE | Easter 2026

INTRO:

There are moments in Scripture that don't just show us what Jesus can do—they show us what He's like. In [Mark 1](#), a man covered in leprosy comes to Jesus with a desperate question: "Are you willing?" What follows is more than a miracle—it's a preview of the cross and the empty tomb. Because the same Jesus who touched the unclean then is the One who went to the cross and rose again to make sinners clean today.

SCRIPTURE:

Mark 1:40–45 NIV

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴²

Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:

⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

BIG IDEAS:

1: THE LEPER'S BROKENNESS

A: The Nature of Leprosy

- Ranged from the common skin disease ALL THE WAY to modern Hansen's disease
- Could cause loss of feeling OR extreme pain
- Was considered incurable

B: The Consequences of Leprosy

- Lepers were considered 'unclean'

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- They had to live ‘outside the camp’ or the people/community
- They had to declare themselves unclean and keep a great distance (50 paces)
- They had to wear their garments torn and keep their hair unkempt
- Various rabbis spoke of lepers as “the living dead,” whose cure was as difficult as raising the dead

C: The Connection To Sin

- Throughout the scriptures, leprosy is used as imagery for sin (in some cases it was judgement FOR sin)
- Like leprosy, sin makes a person ‘unclean’ (not simply sick or unwell)
- Like leprosy, sin severs community and relationship—creates distance
 - (most clearly seen in separation from God!)
- Like leprosy, sin leads to death
 - Leprosy could lead to death in some cases
 - Sin leads to death in ALL cases ([Rom 6:23](#)—the wages of sin IS death)
- Like leprosy, sin is incurable—one must be cleansed of it (not healed)

2: THE LEPER’S FAITH & REQUEST

A: The Leper Knew to Come (Bring his leprosy) to Jesus

- Even though socially and lawfully disagreeable
- Jesus is/was the answer for his disease

B: He Humbled Himself Before Jesus

- He didn’t demand or consider himself worthy (entitled to) cleansing
- He asked

C: He Confessed Faith in Jesus’ Ability

- He believed Jesus ABLE to cleanse

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- He wasn't sure IF he was WILLING
 - “Would Jesus care for a leper like me?”
 - “But he's my only hope”
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3: THE RESPONSE OF JESUS

A: The Indignation of Christ

- Some translations say that he was filled with ‘pity’ or ‘compassion’
- The more likely word here is indignant—he's mad
 - The compassion part of Christ's character is NOT in conflict with his righteous anger
 - The compassionate Christ shows up next
- He is angry! With who? For what?
 - He is angry at the works of the devil
 - He is angry at the condition of this man—the result of this awful disease
 - He is NOT angry at the man for seeking him (and even breaking the laws surround leprosy)

B: The Action of Christ

- Before he says a word... he stretches out his hand and touched the man.
- We cannot minimize the impact this would've had on the man!
- This might have been the first human touch he's felt in years.
- What is Jesus doing here?
 - He's restoring his humanity
 - He's demonstrating the love and compassion of God
 - When everyone else feared, rejected, and ran away... Christ drew near and embraced the man.

C: The Words and Command of Christ

- I am willing.

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- These words further reveal his desires to cleanse and restore the man.
 - The man wasn't sure IF Jesus was willing. This settles it.
 - Be clean!
 - The command has the authority and power to cleanse the man of his leprosy.
 - He is able to wash, to cleanse the toughest disease—the plague, the stain and shame of sin.
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4: THE EXCHANGE OF PLACES

A: Jesus and the Leper Change Places

- Don't miss this detail in the story.
- The leper at the beginning was the outcast and due to his uncleanness was severed from society
- Jesus, now due to the report of this miracle
 - Can no longer enter a town openly
 - Stayed outside in lonely places
- But the leper... he's got new life
 - He was considered the living, walking dead
 - Now he's got a brand new life—truly a fresh start
- In other words... this miracle had a price, a cost that Jesus would pay.

B: Jesus Took Our Place On The Cross

- It was our sin, it was our payment, it was our debt on that cross.
- We deserve the punishment for our sins
- Jesus took our place so that
 - We could be forgiven
 - We could be cleansed
 - We could be made righteous

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- We could have eternal life

C: The Resurrection Is Proof

- Jesus is who he said he is — he’s the son of God
- Jesus’ words are true — he paid the price of your sin, he is the way, the truth, and the life...
- We must confess, repent, and believe—Call on his name (like the leper)
- FURTHER, the resurrection is not just proof... but new life
 - The leper experienced ‘new life’ in being restored to community
 - WE experience ‘new life’ spiritually, in being restored to right relationship with God (free from sin and death)

RESPONSE | “Living Hope”

A: We are all the leper

- We have a need for cleansing—not from a disease, but from sin
- We must come to Jesus
 - Repent, confess, and believe
 - Trusting and believing that ‘he took our place’ - paid the price for our sins

B: Jesus is still willing. Jesus is still able!