



I Am Willing

Text: Mark 1:40-45

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1. Read Mark 1:40-45. The leper's condition not only left him in physical pain but also ostracized relationally. It is likely that someone in this situation would question the goodness and love of God. It could have affected his mental and emotional health as well. In what ways have things you long to break free from caused you pain: physically, relationally, spiritually, mentally, and/or emotionally?
2. The leper suffered from his condition through no fault of his own, but often our own "mud" gets on us because of choices that we make. T.A. highlighted how something that we look to as a source of pleasure, even something that is a good gift of God meant to be enjoyed, can become a source of displeasure, discontent, and anxiety. How have you seen this to be true in your life?
3. Read Psalm 51. In this psalm, David repents after being confronted about his sin of committing adultery with Bathsheba and then his subsequent cover-up, including sending her husband to certain death on the battle field.
 - a. How does David model the three key ingredients for getting clean: desperation, confidence, and willingness?
 - b. Describe what each of the three ingredients (desperation for Jesus to make a change in your life, confidence in Jesus' ability and willingness to make you clean, and your willingness to whole-heartedly commit to change) in your own words.
 - c. What is present in the life of someone who has each of these ingredients working in their lives?
 - d. What would be absent?
 - e. Which of the three ingredients presents the greatest struggle to you right now?
4. There is also a connection between how the leper joyfully told his story of healing and how David promises that he will praise the Lord and teach others about Him. How can willingness to share our own stories of struggles, past and present, be used by God to bring others to Him?
5. Spend time encouraging one another by sharing a one sentence summary of one way you have found freedom and cleansing in Christ. Remember that if you have trusted in Christ, you are fully loved and fully forgiven, no matter what. You have nothing to hide. You have a story to tell. Here is a possible template for you to use: "Before Christ, I was stuck in bondage to _____, but then Christ set me free by _____, and now I _____."

Challenge: If you are truly willing to be freed and made clean, what do you need to commit to and act on this week? To cry out in desperation in prayer to God for cleansing and freedom? To open up to your

brothers and sisters in Christ, such as in your Grow Group, and invite them to pray for you regarding this issue? Share with the group what God revealed to you through this message this week.

Prayer: God, we confess that we get stuck in the mud. We confess that we sometimes question your goodness in our pain. Lord, we want to be free. We want to come to you and be healed. Help us to cry out to you in desperation and commit to change with our whole hearts no matter how hard or painful that might be. Help us to trust the people in our life that can pray for us, hold us accountable, and help us walk in freedom. God you can use even the hardest things in our life to bring us closer to you and to bring others closer to you. Use our stories. Give us the confidence to share what you have done in our lives with those that desperately need freedom for themselves. Thank you that we have a Savior we can trust, that we can believe in confidently for healing, who Himself suffered greatly. Free us God. In Jesus name, Amen.

STUDY DEEPER

Lies, Truth, and the Holy Spirit

The root of the flesh is a lie about who God is and who we are. Satan brings us into bondage of the flesh by convincing us that God is not the loving God he says that he is. In doing this, Satan convinces us that we cannot find fullness of life by being wholly dependent upon God. This is the lie of Satan.

The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), and the truth in Greek (alethia) literally means “not covered.” The Spirit of truth confronts the deception of the flesh by uncovering the truth about God and the truth about us. He brings the true God and our true identity out of hiding by lifting the deception that covers our eyes and hearts. He does this by pointing us to the person in whom the true God and true humanity were fully manifested to us: Jesus Christ.

The true God breaks into our deception-filled world through the Incarnation. In and of itself, however, this doesn't lift the deception of the flesh from our hearts and eyes. We are yet dead in sin, blind and lovers of “darkness rather than light” (Jn 3:19). As long as the god of this age blinds us (2 Cor 4:4), we inevitably and habitually suppress truth. Thus, the light of God's revelation in Jesus would fall on blind eyes and never benefit us if God's plan stopped there.

But God didn't stop there. God knew that if we were ever to see who God is and who we are rightly, he not only would have to be revealed to us, he would have to be revealed in us. So God didn't stop with sending his Son to dwell among us; he also sent his Spirit to reside within us. God not only speaks to us and lives the truth for us in his Son, he also opens our eyes and ears to see and hear this truth by sending his Spirit.

The main work of the Holy Spirit, then, is not to supplement what the Son did but to apply what the Son did to our lives. He guides believers into all truth (Jn 16:13) by pointing us to the one who is the truth (Jn 14:6).

Whereas Satan blinds the minds, the Holy Spirit opens our minds and causes us to see the truth. The Holy Spirit manifests the truth of our fallen condition and thereby produces conviction and repentance in our

lives (Jn 16:8-11). The Holy Spirit opens the hearts and minds of people so we are able to receive the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord and in him we become children of God. The Holy Spirit also infuses people with the love of Christ so that we may live in truth.

The Spirit of truth is simply pointing people to the one who is truth, Jesus Christ. He is confronting and reversing the deceptive assumptions of the flesh in our lives. He is unveiling the true God for us, revealed in Jesus Christ, so that he might reveal our true identity as people who are loved by God.

—Adapted Seeing Is Believing, pages 54-57

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