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Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

Mark: 1:40-45 | Spiritual Leprosy

June 28, 2020

INTRO:

Last week we saw how Jesus made prayer His priority.

Regardless of how busy Jesus was, He got away alone to be with The Father to pray.

Martin Luther said this about prayer:

"Work, work, from morning until late at night. In fact, I have so much to do that I have to spend the first three hours in prayer (to get it all done)."

Contrary to human nature - more time in prayer = more productive you become.

And over the past several weeks, I've been encouraging you to pick up the phone and ask one person per week how you can pray for them.

I want to encourage you to do that again this week, and just watch what the Lord does with these prayers.

We left off last week at verse 39.

³⁹ So He traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. NLT

In that single verse, Mark summarizes weeks, if not months of time as Jesus continued to stay on mission—

By preaching, "**Repent, and believe the Good News.**" ^{MK 1:15} _{far - state}

Josephus, a Jewish historian, reported that there were 240 towns in Galilee.

That's a lot of places for Jesus to preach.

And that brings us to today's lesson.

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Mark: 1:40-45 | Spiritual Leprosy

It's at one of these towns. We learn this...

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:40-45

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

41. Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean!" NET

42 Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. NLT

43 Immediately Jesus sent the man away with a very strong warning. NET

44a. "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you.

44b. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been cleansed." NLT

45a. When the man left, he began to talk freely. He spread his story so widely that Jesus could no longer enter any city openly. GW

45b. Instead, Jesus he stayed in places where he could be alone. But people still kept coming to him from everywhere. GW

This is the Word of our Lord, Amen.

PRAY:

Father, the Psalmist writes, "**Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.**" (Psalm 41:4) *In Christ's name. Amen.*

*Today's lesson is a perfect example of grace
3. nesting Thank You!*

EXEGESIS: Mark 1:40-45

40. A man with leprosy came to ^{Jesus} Him and begged Him on his knees, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." NIV

It's hard to describe what this man did.

His behavior is unbelievably offensive, not only to Jesus, but to everyone around.

Not only was it offensive, but it was also ^{illegal} against the law of Moses—Mosaic Law.

Lepers were to stand fifty paces away from everyone. One hundred fifty paces if it was windy!

Lepers had to live away from clean people.

Lepers lived in garbage dumps.

~~By the first century,~~ they were required to wear bells around the necks.

If someone approached them on the road, they were required by law to shout, *Unclean!* *Unclean!* so that no one would come close. (Lev 13:45).

And yet, this leper broke multiple laws and offended everybody while approaching Jesus. ^{Why?}

This is a man who has nothing to lose.

This man is actually in a position where he must break the law of Moses or die.

~~When you look at the book of Leviticus regarding leprosy, you'll see the word "law" listed five times in reference to the disease.~~

I've learned more about the gory details of leprosy than I ever wanted to know over the past week preparing this sermon.

Don't worry. I'm going to spare you most of those details.

Needless to say, this is a horrible, dreadful way to live and die.

Here's what I want you to know about leprosy.

The leprosy mentioned in the gospels is Hansen's disease.

It's a bacterial infection. It disfigures a person's appearance.

It debilitates his nervous system. And it leads to death.

Even today, there is no cure for the disease, though it can be controlled with lots of medication.

Initial symptoms include numbness in the fingers and toes.

It can take up to ten years for the disease to reach the muscles and bones.

Bacteria attack the nerves, so the sense of touch eventually becomes nonexistent. *is you lose the sense of touch*
At this moment w/ Jesus

To understand the big picture of what's happening, we have to turn to the OT.

And when we do that, we see three Jews who were "struck" with leprosy.

This background will give us the context

The first was Miriam. She was the sister of Moses and Aaron. (Number 12:9-15.)

one day.

Miriam and Aaron were both running their mouths one day about the leadership of Moses.

Evidently, they weren't too thrilled about this little 40-year hike in the desert that their big brother led them on.

They were gossiping and slandering their own brother.

They didn't like the way Moses was handling this crisis.

*- Sand fankin?
- sermon in A sermon*

cf: Numbers 12:2a

They (Aaron and Miriam) said, "Does the Lord speak only through Moses? Does he not also speak through us?"



Remember what happened?

cf: Numbers 12:2b

And the Lord heard it.

ut, dh

The Lord God Almighty told Aaron and Miriam to put their big boy and big girl pants on because He was going to have a little chat with them.



They get called into the principal's office.

cf: Numbers 12:9

The Lord's anger burned against them, and He left.

The Lord's Anger Always Burns Against Sin

As soon as the Lord left, Miriam was struck with leprosy.

She was cast out of the camp for seven days as a punishment for the sin of running her mouth against God's anointed.

Miriam was struck w/ leprosy

Secondly, King Uzziah of Judah. Uzziah was king for 52 years!

Uzziah was a good king. He was a godly King! And the Lord blessed him.

But, he made the mistake that a king is not to make, and he took on the role of a high priest.

Jesus Christ is the only one who fulfills both of those roles—King & High Priest.

This is a serious offense against Almighty God.

Uzziah knows this, but pride gets in the way.

Regardless, Uzziah entered the Temple and began offering incense to the Lord, and as he was doing this—the Lord struck him with leprosy.

He has to leave Jerusalem immediately and live in isolation for the rest of his life.

God “struck” Uzziah with leprosy.

Thirdly, there was a gentleman by the name of Gehazi, and he was the servant of prophet Elisha. (2 Kings 5).

Elisha heals Naaman. Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army.

Gehazi saw the healing. Naaman tries to thank Elisha by giving him some cash.

Elisha says "no thank you,"

Gehazi, on the other hand, sees an opportunity.

Gehazi then goes to Naaman, takes the cash and stashes it in his house, and then lies about the whole thing to Elisha.

How'd that work out for him? He was struck with the very leprosy Naaman was cured of.

Do you see a pattern here?

In all of these cases, the disease was a judgment from God for their sin.

In fact, before the Israelites committed the crime of worshiping the Golden Calf, there were no lepers among the Jews.

But as soon as they sinned, we see leprosy show up. Coincidence?

Now, as a result, and this is a key point for today...

Keypoint 1:

Rabbis viewed leprosy as something that could not be healed because man could not overturn God's decision of judgment.

teachers of the law

Leprosy was punishment for sin, especially slander.

Rabbis called lepers "the living dead."

And the cure to leprosy was as difficult as raising the dead.

Rabbis correlated leprosy with death, so if a leper was healed, it meant that they were given new life—"the greatest of all feats."

So now, with that background...

Back to verse 40.

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

Last week we talked about how most of the people that Jesus healed were unbelievers.

At best, most had minimal faith—faith of a seed.

Today, we see a man who believes.

He is on his knees, humiliating himself before Jesus and those around Him.

Luke notes that "he fell on his face and calls Jesus, "Lord" (Luke 5:12),

Why does ^{Leper} he call Jesus, Lord?

Not only were lepers physically disfigured and socially despised, but they were also religiously defiled.

They were not allowed to go to Jerusalem— let alone to the Temple to worship or offer sacrifices.

Cut off from everyone and everything; they lived without family, friends, purpose in life, occupations, or hope.

Keypoint 2:

The leper saw himself not only as being despised by men but also cursed by God (2 Chron. 26:17–21).

This man knew his Hebrew Bible.

"If You are willing."—He knew he could not presume/assume on Jesus' mercy.

This man doesn't question Jesus' ability to save him, only his willingness to save him.

This man doesn't question Jesus' power, but he had no way of gauging how Jesus would respond.

He knows most rabbi's are going to walk away.

This man has faith— "You can make me clean."

How does he know this?

So what's going? This man has heard the stories of Jesus healing and casting out demons.

He's heard the preaching secondhand, and He responded to the gospel!

He did exactly what ~~he was~~ ^{the Jews were} supposed to do!

Now, as this is going on, I want you to picture the reactions of the crowd.

Horror, disgust, resentful, and angry.

Some probably ran away in fear.

Other people were probably ready to kill this man by pummeling him with large stones.

Others were speechless.

Others, we're watching closely to how Jesus is going respond.

41. Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean!" NET

Scribe If you have the NIV translation, it doesn't say compassion, it says indignant.

That is a poor English translation of the Greek.

Cross the word "indignant" out and write in "compassion."

There are a few other translations that say "moved with anger."

The reason for that is that they are using manuscripts from the 4th and 5th centuries.

Regardless, make that note

So picture this...

As this man lays in the dust begging to be healed, Jesus reaches out and touches Him.

The leper is in the final stage of the disease—Dr. Luke says that he was "full of leprosy."

In Leviticus 5:3, the Mosaic law forbids Jews from defiling themselves by touching anything unclean, including a leper.

Even today, we know what happens when something clean touches something unclean...

Both turn dirty.

Think About this

Jesus could have healed this man with a simple word, but He didn't.



Why is that? Jesus wanted to make a point.

The leper should have never approached Jesus, and yet at the same time,

Jesus should not have touched the leper either.

But, Jesus can't be defiled.

This whole thing is divinely scandalous! Awe some!

42 Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. NLT

As with the other miracles, there is no recovery period or rehab.

this man is now in perfect health

Keypoint 3:

There is no record found in Scripture where a Jew was ever healed from leprosy.

And yet, Jesus just did ^T something that was as difficult as raising the dead.

43 Immediately Jesus sent the man away with a very strong warning. NET

Jesus sent this man out from the crowds quickly,

And then Jesus gives him a warning.

Very strong warning:

There's not a good English equivalent to the Greek context.

Jesus 'growled' at the man to stress the importance of what Jesus is saying next.

Jesus gave him a command.

44a. "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you."

44b. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed." NLT

This man was to high tail it to Jerusalem—90 miles away.

That's like walking from here to Phoenix.

A couple of questions here:

1. Why "Don't tell anyone?"

Probably, because it would create too much chaos.

This headline story would prevent Jesus from staying on mission, just like last week.

2. Why an examination from a priest?

Even though the man had been healed of the disease, he still remained 'unclean' by law until a priest pronounced him ceremonially clean.

Only the priest at the Temple could do that.

Other illnesses had to be healed, but leprosy had to be *cleansed* (Matt 11:5).

Leprosy was the one disease that demanded a ritual ceremony witnessed by the community before the healing could be finalized.

It was an elaborate ritual, an eight-day ceremony that involved offerings presented in the Temple (Lev. 14:1–32).

So this man had to go to the priest to fulfill the law of Moses.

But, is that the only reason that Jesus would "growl" at this man with His command?

Jesus just performed a miracle that had never been done before.

Also
Jesus is sending Jerusalem a message through this man.

Picture this...

healthy
This man shows up to the Temple, tells the priest that he was once a leper and that he's now healed.

The first thing the priest did was make a sacrifice, and for the next seven days, they investigate him.

The priest were instructed to find the answers to three questions:

1. Was this man truly declared as a leper?
2. Was he truly healed of his disease?
3. How was he healed?

Since this man was a leper, only a priest could make that determination.

And since only a priest could make that determination, there was a record of it in the Temple.

1. Was this man truly declared a leper? Yes, his name is on the roster. Check!

Next, a seven-day investigation was going to reveal whether or not he was truly healed.

2. Was he truly healed of his disease? You bet! This guy has never been healthier. Check!

And through the investigation, the priests would have learned about a man named Jesus of Nazareth, who healed the leper.

3. How was he healed? Jesus, the Great Physician, Check!

In other words, the priesthood could not ignore or deny what was going on in Galilee.

the priesthood also investigated for the Baptist - brood of snakes, - Matt 3:7
Jesus is forcing them to do something.

Jesus was not a priest, had no human authority in the Temple.

Jesus was ministering outside the guidelines of the law.

For Jesus to heal, the man puts Himself above the law and priests.

Jesus was sending a message - to them? to us today - Are we doing the same kind of investigation? - Paul/Berens

That He is the Christ—the One to Whom all Scripture points!

next week we'll see how the priesthood responds: MARK 2:1-12

45a. When the man left, he began to talk freely. He spread his story so widely that Jesus could no longer enter any city openly. GW - ups

45b. Instead, Jesus stayed in places where he could be alone. But people still kept coming to him from everywhere. GW

So this guy walks to Jerusalem. It takes him a week, and everybody that he see's passing by, he's telling the story.

Why did he disobey Jesus?

Because he couldn't remain silent.

This man believed that leprosy was caused by his sin divine discipline,

that means this man was under God's judgment.

In other words, there's no possibility of anyone ever curing him, except God.

This is why this miracle created the frenzy that it did.

Moses, Elijah, Elisha performed miracles, but nobody walked away from their miracles, asking if they were God.

From a Jewish perspective, this miracle automatically placed Jesus in a new category.

That is why the crowds responded as they did.

They started to realize that Jesus is not just a prophet, healer, or exorcist.

PREACH:

What does this story mean for us today?

It's a reminder for us today about the truth of salvation.

It shows us how sinners respond in faith to the gospel.

It's a picture of the cross.

How Jesus is the sacrificial substitute for your sin.

his sin

Wow

for the Jews,

Jesus did a miracle that only God can do!

death

then God saved us from our sins

The story

Jesus ^{started} began in the city, while the leper began in the desert.

After this meeting, Jesus must go to the desert, and the leper can now stay in the city.

For this man to be healed and cleansed, Jesus had to trade places with him.

It's a picture of the reality of the gospel—

Jesus traded places with sinners in order to deliver them from sin.

He who had no sin became sin — so that you could have a relationship w/ Him.
Ultimately, Jesus hung on the cross, outside the city to die for you to live.

No matter what your story is, ...we're all spiritual lepers.

We all lived in isolation from God. *Rebellion*

And yet, God provided a way for sinners to be cleansed.

Jesus is the one who reaches out to us! *Seems to go to be true but it is. Thieves, liars, adulterers*

All of us are *lepers* spiritual beggars and spiritual lepers.

The leper's plea, is our plea — *If you are willing.*

Heal me physically & spiritually

We just found out Jesus is willing, the question is, "are you?" *→ First time hearing the gospel → So are 1 Christian → What are you going to do w/ it.*

PRAY:

Father, the Psalmist writes, "**Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.**" (Psalm 41:4)

Leper's plea

In Jesus Name Amen.

Thank You for healing our spiritual leprosy & making a way, through the person & work of Jesus Christ.

Tithes and Offerings:

I want to introduce you to Rob and Lisa Warren, who are missionaries in Madison, Wisconsin. They planted Doxa Church. Doxa means "glory."

They have one of the most challenging mission fields there are - more than 40,000 college students. Most of these students are attending the University of Wisconsin.

The good news is that students are open to discussing spiritual issues. Few of these 40,000 have committed their lives to Christ.

And that's why Rob and Lisa are ministering to them, and that's why a portion of your tithes and offerings go to missionaries like them all over the world.

is here AT ABC

Ways to give:

- 1. Two black boxes in the foyer.
- 2. PO Box 4540 Cottonwood AZ 86326
- 3. Online via our website at RiverBible.org
- 4. Or text 928-421-4030. Give 1

PRAY

Prayer After Service

Online- Prayer box

Live: Ray and Debrey

honors to pray for you.

Please know that I love you.

Have a great week.

Peace & blessings.

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