

Weak and Wounded Sinner, Come!

Luke 5:12-16

In our text Jesus heals a leper of his disease. Before we examine the text, let's take look at leprosy.

(1). The definition of leprosy - 'the numbing disease.' Many people think it's a skin disease, but it is really a nerve disease. *It destroys nerves within and over time becomes visible on the skin.* The term leprosy occurs 68 times in the Bible, 55 times in the OT (*tsara'ath*) and 13 times in the NT (*lepros*). It has terrified humanity since ancient times. For many centuries and in many countries, leprosy was considered a curse of God, often associated with sin. *It did not kill*, but neither did it seem to end.

(2). The desensitization from leprosy - The leprosy bacterium attacks the nerves. The disease lingered in lepers for years, causing the tissues to degenerate and deform the body. It was the work of Dr. Paul Brand (the late world-renowned orthopedic surgeon and leprosy physician who trained our own Janelle Flaming) that illustrated the value of sensing pain. Because the leprosy bacillus destroys nerve endings that carry pain signals, patients with advanced leprosy *experience* a total loss of physical pain.

(3). The destruction and dysfunction with leprosy - When lepers cannot sense touch or any personal pain, they tend to injure themselves or be unaware that injury and harm are being caused by an outside agent. For example, lepers hands would be burned because boiling water or heat sources could not be felt. In poor countries, toes and fingers would be eaten by rats while lepers slept.

Leprosy is a brutal visual of sin. It starts within. Our sense of right and wrong is attacked and deadened. We become desensitized to the spiritual pain of a life lived apart from God. We end up doing things that seem harmless, but the consequences of our actions destroy us, turning us into dysfunctional people. Our text is about a leper covered with sores who comes to Jesus, illustrating how a sinner who has messed up his or her life *and begins to feel the pain of self-induced actions* can find healing in Jesus.

I. Come in your desperation - "*there was a man covered with leprosy...*" (v. 12)

The lie that is most often repeated within religious circles is that you don't come to God *in* your sin. Not so. This man was 'covered' with leprosy. That meant the skin blemishes were from head to toe. "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves my full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15). We welcome the person who senses their sin.

II. Come in humiliation - "*he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing..."*" (v.12)

The sinner recognized that he had no claims on grace; no merit for mercy. He laid himself prostrate on the ground and threw himself onto the sovereign mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Come with expectation - "*Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean.*" (v. 12)

This is likely the most difficult part for any leper. It is the expectation that Jesus can cleanse. It is the heartfelt belief that there is Hope and you spell it J-E-S-U-S. Others call Him 'the Higher Power,' still others acknowledge God, but it is the expectation that *Jesus alone can make clean* which is the key.

IV. Come to Jesus and find transformation - "*Immediately the leprosy left him.*" (v. 13)

"*He is able to save them to the uttermost them that come to God through Him*" (Hebrews 7:25). Spurgeon once preached a messages on the thief on the cross being saved by Christ and said, "If a dying Savior saved the thief, my argument is, He can do even more now that He lives and reigns."