

Chris Murphy
July 30th, 2023
Luke 5: 12-16
Cleansing of the Leper

Prayer...

Introduction:

Story of visiting Dublin Church Saint Mark's- Pastor Dez

He was proud that the church in the 18th century had a special place for lepers.

Today, the skin disease leprosy is rather rare, but in Jesus' day it was common.

People with leprosy in the days of Jesus had to cry out unclean in order to protect others from getting the disease. They were ostracized for having a skin disease. People with leprosy had to live in separate colonies away from everyone else.

In our story today, a man with leprosy seeks out Jesus. He puts his face to the ground and begs Jesus. If you are willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus responds with a heart of compassion. I imagine he looks directly into the man's eyes and touches his skin gently saying, I am willing- Be made clean. The man is amazingly healed. His skin becomes clear and Jesus gives him directions to go to the priest, show him his skin, make an offering and be cleansed. Jesus gives these directions in order for the man to be restored to the Jewish community as a healthy person who is clean. Jesus tells the man to not tell anyone that Jesus healed him, but word gets out that Jesus heals people and more people come to him. Jesus found ways to slip out from the crowds to deserted places in order to prayer.

I want to talk about three things from this story that seem powerful to me.

1. The man begs Jesus to heal him. This shows he has faith that Jesus can heal. He takes responsibility to seek out Jesus for his healing. In our own prayer lives, how often do we fall before Jesus in prayer and seek him to heal us or to respond to some need in our

lives or the world. Do we seek an intimate encounter with Jesus? Do we seek healing or instead do we often walk through life not even pursuing an encounter with Jesus. Some people don't even know that it is possible to experience Jesus today. If you need healing in any area of your life, remember to pursue Jesus and ask for his touch of healing for yourself or someone you love.

2. The second powerful thing in this story is that in response to the request implied in the statement , If you are willing you can make me clean, Jesus say I am willing, be made clean. And Jesus actually heals the man. Jesus heals the man with leprosy. He shows compassion. He is not afraid to touch the man. This is a remarkable story and it suggests that Jesus responds to our cries for healing and comfort with a heart of compassion for us. This story shows how God is by nature loving to the vulnerable. The question we must ask ourselves, is are we willing to cry out to Jesus and to trust that he will bring us the healing we need. This

healing might be comfort from grief. It could be healing from a broken relationship. It could be emotional or physical healing.

3. The third part of the story is that Jesus reconnects the man with community. We all need community. Isolation and loneliness are unfortunate circumstances for many people. We as the church get to offer the community that people so desperately need. As Jesus reconnects the man to community, Jesus finds some time to escape into nature to pray. Jesus finds strength from his father in heaven in solitude, but in this story he also helps a man move from loneliness to community.

I love the stories of Jesus healing the sick, like the man with leprosy, because these healings remind u of the power of Jesus and his compassion for the world. Jesus reveals to us that God's nature is compassionate and loving.

This week I was driving around town and realized that I was nearly out of gas, so I went to one of our local gas stations. Since we are in Oregon,

a nice gentleman came up to my window and offered to pump my gas. I asked him how he was doing and he said that he was a little tired and that someone had treated him poorly. He told me the story of what happened and I told him I was sorry. He went on to share that a lot of people look at him as a lowly gas attendant who has not done anything in his life, but that actually he was a firefighter for more than ten years and he saved people's lives. I thanked the man for his service and for his help taking care of me that day. He seemed grateful for our conversation.

I share this story because in our lives we will encounter people who may feel underappreciated. All we need to do is be present with people as Jesus did for the man with leprosy. Sometimes the major healing people need is just being seen and being appreciated. Paul Landis is one person in our church that does this extremely well. He reminds our men's fellowship often that showing kindness to strangers can make all the difference.

Everyone needs to be seen. We all need community. Loneliness is real and a kind word and a compassionate listening ear can often provide the healing that people need.

I wonder if you know someone who needs your presence of compassion and love. I wonder if you might be feeling like the man with leprosy and need someone to come to you with kindness.

Yesterday, I had the privilege of sharing an encouraging message on love from 1 Corinthians 13 for the wedding of Tom and Angela, members of our church. My simple reminder for Tom and Angela and it is a reminder for any relationship, is that the key to a healthy relationship is maintain deep connection. Being fully present and kind with a spouse, friend, or even stranger will provide the gift of connection that can help love be known.

In our walk with God this is why prayer is so important. Prayer is our tangible way to be present with God. Every day we are invited to look into the face of Jesus and share our hearts and Jesus like he did with the

man with leprosy will look into your face and say, I am willing, I love you. I offer you healing, I offer you myself.

Please pray with me...

Luke 5:12-16

12 Once when he was in one of the cities, a man covered with a skin disease was there. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 13 Then Jesus[a] stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I am willing. Be made clean." Immediately the skin disease left him. 14 And he ordered him to tell no one. "But go, show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." 15 But now more than ever the word about Jesus[b] spread abroad; many crowds were gathering to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. 16 Meanwhile, he would slip away to deserted places and pray.