

I am Willing

Mk. 1:40-45

INTRODUCTION

- A. When Marie Antoinette was on her way to Paris to become queen a command was given that no sick nor crippled ones should be permitted by the wayside, that she might not be troubled by the sight of suffering.
 - 1. So many are like that today—they don't want to be affected by the suffering of others.
 - 2. Many have told me, "I don't go to the hospital, nursing home, or funeral home, because it just creeps me out."
- B. Jesus, thankfully, did not have that attitude.
 - 1. Everywhere he went, Jesus saw the suffering of people, and he helped the suffering of people.
 - 2. Jesus helped suffering so much that everywhere he went those who were suffering would come to him and ask that their suffering might be alleviated.
- 3. Tonight, we want to examine one of those episodes — the cleansing of the leper.

THE NEED OF JESUS, v. 40

- A. A leper came to him, knelt before him and said, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."
 - 1. Leprosy was a terribly dreaded disease.
 - a. There are two types of leprosy, but one type seems primarily in view in the Bible.
 - 1) It began with brownish-red spots on the face, ears, forearms, thighs, and/or buttocks.
 - 2) These spots would become thickened nodules and, losing their skin covering, become ulcers with subsequent loss of tissue and then contraction and deformity.
 - b. Those with leprosy were outcasts from Israel, and they were classed with swine, dogs, and other odious and abhorrent creatures. The leper wanted Jesus to remove his shame and pollution.
 - 2. This leper was desperate about getting Jesus' help.
 - a. He was so desperate that he forgot the Law's requirement that he not come any closer than 6 ft. to anyone.
 - b. That's just how horrible leprosy was — it would cause people to forget about others.
 - 3. This leper worshiped Jesus, he knelt before him. No doubt, he knew that Jesus was more than an ordinary man.
- B. Notice that the leper did not doubt Jesus' ability, only his willingness.
 - 1. He said, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."
 - 2. He knew that Jesus had the power to do so, but he did not know that Jesus would have the care/desire to do so.
- C. This was a man who desperately needed Jesus, and he knew he had nowhere else to turn, because there was no cure for leprosy.
- D. Likewise, with our sins, we desperately need Jesus; we have nowhere else to turn.

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS, vv. 41-42

- A. Jesus, full of compassion, touched him and said, "I am willing; be cleansed?"
 - 1. Jesus was moved with compassion.
 - a. "Moved with compassion" means to "have pity, feel sympathy?"
 - b. Notice here that Jesus was moved with compassion for one man — this wasn't a multitude, but one man; Jesus cares for the individual.
 - c. Notice also, that Jesus was feeling sympathy for this man, because of temporal, rather

than spiritual

- 1) Jesus cares for more than our spiritual problems.
- 2) Jesus cares about what goes on in our daily lives.
2. Jesus touched him and said, "I am willing, be cleansed."
 - a. Jesus touched the man.
 - 1) Although leprosy isn't highly contagious, it can be passed on by touch — especially where one has open sores.
 - 2) Touching a leper also made one unclean, for the leper was unclean (Lev. 13:46).
 - b. Jesus announced that he was willing. He not only felt sympathy for this man, he did what he could to help.
- B. As soon as Jesus spoke these words, the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.
 1. Notice the difference between this miracle and so-called modern miracles.
 - a. Those who perform miracles today say that one needs to learn to walk, that one will recover, etc.
 - b. Yet, when Jesus healed this man, he was healed immediately.
 2. The man, also, was cleaned · he was cleansed of his ritual defilement.
- C. Jesus is full of compassion.
 1. He often showed compassion for those who were down-and-out.
 - a. When Jesus saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them (Mt. 9:36).
 - b. When Jesus saw two blind men sitting by the side of the road, he had compassion on them (Mt. 20:34).
 - c. When Jesus saw the widow in Nain mourning over her only son, he had compassion on her (Lk. 7:13).
 2. Illustration about "Brother's Keeper" case in a Massachusetts court, Illustrations Unlimited, p. 116, #14.
 - a. Jesus could have walked away from this leper; he didn't have to help.
 - b. But, Jesus helped because he cared for the man, and he still cares about people.

THE WARNING OF JESUS, vv. 43-44

- A. Jesus gave this man a strong warning. This man was to:
 1. Say nothing to anyone about what had happened.
 - a. Jesus wanted this man to keep silent about his cure so that it wouldn't cause too much excitement.
 - b. The people would probably think of Jesus as some type of miracle-worker and be more interested in the miracles he could perform than the message he preached.
 2. Show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifice Moses commanded
 - a. Lev. 14 describes the ritual of the cleansed leper and the sacrifice he was to make.
 - b. The fact that Jesus instructed this man to go to the priest shows two things:
 - 1) This man was not above the law.
 - a) Heb 5:9.
 - b) Js 2:17.
 - 2) The man needed to be acknowledged as cleansed by everyone. He was not considered cleansed until the priest declared him so.
- B. Two interesting things:
 1. Jesus knew this man's heart.
 - a. Jesus knew that this man would disobey him; therefore, he "strictly warned him." Likewise, Jesus knows our hearts; he knows when we'll disobey him.
 - b. Jesus knew what was best.
 - 1) When this man went and told others what had happened Jesus couldn't continue his ministry as he wanted.
 - 2) When Jesus instructs us, he knows what is best.

- 3) Let us, therefore, heed his warning since he knows what's best.

THE POPULARITY OF JESUS, v. 45

- A. The leper went about and told everyone what Jesus did.
 1. This leper clearly disobeyed Jesus.
 2. Notice that the man's intentions were good — he wanted everyone to rejoice with him and to know what this Jesus had done.
 - a. Even though the man's intentions were good, he sinned. Just because his intentions were good doesn't mean his actions were good.
 - b. In the same way, just because our intentions are good doesn't mean that our actions are right.
 - 1) Illustration from Agatha Christie's *The Labour of Hercules* and Hercule Poirot said, "These are the good intentions that pave the way to Hell," *Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations*, #5044.
 - 2) Do we have good intentions that are leading us to hell'?
- B. Jesus could no longer enter any city, but was outside in the deserted places.
 1. The crowds were so great that Jesus was being thronged — the people wanted to get near to the man who had such great power.
 2. The people came to him from everywhere » So many people had heard about Jesus that they wanted to get in contact with him.
 3. Why was Jesus so popular with these people?
 - a. Could it not be because they hoped to see Jesus perform some miracle?
 - 1) After Jesus had fed the five thousand and crossed the Sea of Galilee, people learned where Jesus was and brought him their sick so that they might be healed (Mt. 14:34-36).
 - 2) Herod was anxious to see Jesus, because he hoped Jesus would perform a miracle for him (Lk. 23:8).
 - b. Here was the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, and the people were more concerned with seeing a miracle than hearing what he taught.
 - 1) We can do the same thing — we can be more concerned with what Jesus can do for us (the blessings he can give) than the things he can teach us.
 - 2) Let us come to Jesus to learn of him, not just to get his blessings.
 - a) Have you been to Jesus to be taught by him?
 - b) Do you need to come to him tonight?