

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual Friendships ■
Service In & Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

February 7, 2020

Day 1: Mark 1:40

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

Leprosy referred to a number of skin diseases that can afflict a person. Not all of the diseases were actually leprosy. However whether it was leprosy or not, the person was supposed to tie clothes around themselves and declare they were lepers if anyone came close to them. The man with the illness comes to Jesus as a humble person who knows that Jesus is from God. The leper's question acknowledges that Jesus is God's son because only God has the ability to "make clean."

Question: Try to think of some reasons why Jesus might not be willing to heal the man?

Challenge: Look up leprosy to see what the disease is and what it does and how it is cured.

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

Day 2: Mark 1:41

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

The difference between magic and prayer is this: Magic formulas claim power over the spirits or elements and by the correct words can have power over these elements or spirits. Prayer, in humility, acknowledges the sovereignty of the one prayed to and requests action on the part of the deity. The basic difference is between requesting (which implies the other has control) and demanding (which implies you have the control). Jesus has compassion because illnesses like leprosy separate a person from the community and thereby separate them from support.

Question: Why do you think Jesus actually touched the man?

Challenge: Think of the last time you were "filled with compassion" and write down what was happening and what you did.

Scripture: II Kings 5

Day 3: Mark 1:42

Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

In the time of Jesus it was the priest that was supposed to diagnose a person with leprosy. The priest would go through the instructions in Leviticus 13 and 14 and determine if the person was unclean. comes from faith in Jesus as Lord. Leprosy was believed by people at that time to be a sign of God's displeasure or punishment for some sin. Jesus showed that God did not curse the man with illness. Jesus also showed that it was through Him that we find wholeness.

Question: What modern type of illness has the same response today that leprosy had in the first century?

Challenge: If you have had an illness that was cured quickly, how did you feel when you were better?

Scripture: Luke 7:18-35

Day 4: Mark 1:43-44

Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

Jesus sternly orders the leper to follow the correct ritual and show himself to the priest and be pronounced clean according to the Law of Moses. Showing himself to the priest is important if the man is to rejoin the community. Another reason Jesus wanted the man to be pronounced clean by the proper authorities might have been that once the cure was certified by the proper authorities it demonstrated that Jesus has power over illness.

Question: Do you think that Jesus was worried about being accused of malpractice?

Challenge: Why do you think we pay so much for medical care in this country

Scripture: Leviticus 14:21-32

Day 5: Mark 1:45a

Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news.

Even after the stern warning not to tell people about how he was healed the leper did so anyway. It was as if the leper understood the implication of the healing and knew that he could not keep quiet. Telling the story of how he was healed by Jesus was more important than rejoining the community. The healed man challenges us to ask what are we willing to give up to tell folks about our healing?

Question: Can you keep a secret?

Challenge: Under what conditions would you not keep something confidential?

Scripture: Luke 7:36-50

Day 6: Mark 1:45b

As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

During His ministry Jesus was always concerned that people would see the miracles and believe because of them. Jesus calls us to believe even though we have not seen the miracles with our own eyes. We do not come to Jesus because of a fear of an eternity without God but we come to Jesus because we are grateful for God's gift of life through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Question: Why did Jesus go to lonely places?

Challenge: In Jesus' time word of mouth was just about the only way information was spread. What information sources do you trust today and why?

Scripture: Mark 6:30-44