

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for July 10, 2016**

**The Humble Messiah**  
**Mark 1:40-45**

I. The plea for purity (1:40)

*40 And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean."*

- "And a leper came to him,"
  - Leprosy described various skin disorders
  - Included Hansen's disease but many other skin disorders as well
  - Leviticus 13 describes the various types of skin diseases for the priests to examine as clean or unclean
  - What do we know about the man in our text?
    - Luke 5:12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."
  - It would seem probable that this man had a severe/developed form of leprosy
  - What do we know about leprosy medically speaking?
    - It did not kill, but neither did it seem to end
    - It lingers for years, causing the tissues to degenerate and deform the body
    - More likely a disease of the nervous system (attacks nerves)
  - Symptoms:
    - Start in the skin and peripheral nervous system (outside the brain and spinal cord),
    - Then spread to other parts, such as the hands, feet, face, and earlobes
    - Patients with leprosy experience disfigurement of the skin and bones, twisting of the limbs, and curling of the fingers to form the characteristic claw hand
    - Facial changes include thickening of the outer ear and collapsing of the nose
  - The largest number of deformities develop from loss of pain sensation due to extensive nerve damage
  - For instance, inattentive patients can pick up a cup of boiling water without flinching
  - What do we know about lepers socially?

- Lepers were ostracized:
  - Leviticus 13:45-46 “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.”
    - Rabbinic literature hints at spatial limitations for lepers (walled cities and wind)
    - Rabbis boasted of throwing rocks at lepers
    - Interacting with a leper was like interacting with a corpse
  - The Leper drawing near would risk making Jesus and crowds unclean
  - Notice the faith of the leper in this abandonment of his outcast life
- “implored him, and kneeling said to him,”
  - Attitude of leper: humility, worship, desperation
- "If you will, you can make me clean."
  - Understood Jesus’ power, authority and ability
  - Knew it rested solely on God’s will or plan

## II. The merciful miracle (1:41-42)

*41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” 42 And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.*

- “Moved with pity,”
  - Motivated by pity, mercy and compassion
    - Not for the show as everyone watched
    - Not super healer with no emotion
    - He had compassion and was moved when he saw people
    - He is called our merciful High Priest who can sympathize with us
- “he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, ‘I will; be clean.’”
  - Why would anyone touch a leper?
  - Stretched out hand and touched would make people unclean
    - Not Jesus, He could actually make people clean
- “And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.”
  - “And immediately” the leprosy left like demons and diseases before
  - Whatever limbs were worn had now been restored

### III. The meek mandate (1:43-44)

*43 And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them."*

- “And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once,”
  - Mark is emphasizing the follow up to the miracle rather than miracle itself
  - Jesus is trying to get the show on the road
  - Jesus’ desire to be humble not flashy
  - Man had to leave Galilee and go to priest in Jerusalem anyway
  
- “and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone,”
  - Not just ending the scene quickly but giving specific instructions
  - Say nothing to anyone sounds counterintuitive! Why?
    - Not the only time 5:43; 7:36; 8:26
    - Mark 5:43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.
    - Mark 7:36 (Deaf) And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.
    - Mark 8:26 (Blind) And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”
  - Jesus does not want people’s faith resting on miracles
  - Jesus came for more than miracles, He is downplaying this miracle
    - Purpose was preaching (Mark 1:38-39)
  - Jesus not fitting the model of an insurrectionist or rebellious insubordinate
    - Mark writing to a Roman audience
  - Jesus not like other flashy miracle workers who want fame
    - Mark 10:45 Son of Man came not to be served but to serve
  - Application: Why do you do what you do?
    - Jesus could have got more attention in this scenario
    - Pharisees drew attention in their own giving and fasting
      - Imagine if they had healed this leper
    - Is it for your fellow man to see?
  
- “but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded,”
  - Jesus desired to uphold the Law requiring declaration of purity
  - Leviticus 14 required process for cleansing:

- Inspection of priest outside camp and bird offering
  - Shave head and wash body and clothes
  - Clean to come in camp but must live outside tent for seven days
  - 8th day is two male lambs and a one year old ewe lamb offering
    - In Jerusalem
- Jesus desired to uphold and fulfill the Law
- “for a proof to them.”
  - This process would allow the leper to be formally pronounced clean
  - This would enable him to return to normal life in society

#### IV. The rising reputation (1:45)

*45 But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.*

- “But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news,”
  - Blatantly disregards Jesus’ charge
  - How could he not spread such marvelous news!?
- “so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.”
  - This forced Jesus out of cities into deserted locations
  - Nonetheless people were still streaming to Him
  - Despite Jesus’ humility, people came flocking to Him
  - Does not return to Capernaum until “some days” go by
    - Even so, packed house when that happens (Mark 2:1-2)