

# The Lonely Leper

## Mark 1:40-45

We're looking at the Gospel of Mark. And we've been looking at the lives that are transformed by Jesus Christ. We're calling it powerful life changing encounters with Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to make a difference in your life in my life. He came to touch us and change us. No believe should receive Christ and then go on with the same old life that you always had. Jesus came to give you a new life. And he said that in John 10, 10, I come that you might have life and that you might have it to its fullest, that you might have an abundant life. If you're not having an abundant life, the Lord needs to touch you again. And you just need to ask him to do that in your life. So pray for that.

We are looking at the gospel of Mark. Mark wrote an unusual gospel. It's the shortest one. And it's all about pictures of people. It's not chronological and it's not theological. It is focused on Jesus, meeting people and Jesus touching their lives. And they're never the same. He wanted people to know this Jesus, this same Jesus that I'm writing you about the same Jesus that Peter told me about the same Jesus that I have encountered can come in your life and witty comes in. He will touch. He will change. You will never be the same. We're looking at 26 of these characters that have been touched by God. And I don't know how many of them will get through because, uh, you know, we get interrupted in all these other things, but we're looking at the one, the Lord places before us this morning, we have one of those 26 characters that's significant and was touched by the Lord.

Jesus Christ. I call him, the lonely leper. Turn with me to mark chapter one. And you say, we are still in chapter one. Well, you know, with Romans, it took us a long time to get out of chapter one, too, First, mark chapter one, mark chapter one versus 40 to 45. And while you're finding that, uh, let me give you a little bit of background. Remember what happened? Jesus was baptized down in the Jordan River, near, uh, the area of Jerusalem.

Then he traveled back up to Nazareth, where he preached and read from Isaiah 61 and declared that this was fulfilled in their ears this day. The refused to listen, rejected his claim, chased him out to a cliff and would have thrown him over but he escaped from them.

After this he left Nazareth, went over to Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, a fishing town. There he called several men to follow him. Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Then on the Sabbath he entered into the synagogue and they're in the synagogue, a demon possessed man, screams out and says, I know who you are. And Jesus says, "Shut up get out of here" and delivers the man from the demon. Everybody is astounded. No one has authority like this, but Jesus. So the word about him spread.

After that they left the synagogue, went about 90 feet straight in front of the synagogue to the house of Simon, Peter and Peter, Andrew lived there. And we told you about that

whole housing complex, how they had multiple homes together and a courtyard in the middle.

Then Jesus encounters Peter's mother-in-law and finds that she's with a high fever. And he reaches down and touches her and heals her. And she is raised up to immediately minister to them. The word spreads even more, so, more and more people are hearing and more are coming every day for Jesus to touch them.

The very next morning, Jesus gets up from Peter's house and sneaks out and goes to a solitary place to be alone with his heavenly father to get refocused and to hear the voice of the Lord and to know what he's supposed to do. The disciples find him later in the morning, he said, Lord, what are you doing? You didn't have breakfast yet. Lord, what are you doing? Everybody's looking for you, Lord Jesus, why aren't you doing, what are you supposed to do? Jesus says, "I've come to serve my father. And he gave me directions. I must preach all around this area." And so he left Capernaum and went out to preached in other areas and then circled back to Capernaum. We're not exactly sure where this event took place, but we suspect that it was again near Capernaum.

***<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." <sup>41</sup> Jesus was moved with compassion (indignant). He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"***

***<sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.***

***<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: <sup>44</sup> "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." <sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. 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.***

## 1. The Nature of the Disease – Leprosy

(ie) my weed poisoning./ (ie) Dr Brand, missionary

There was no cure for leprosy. There were no remedies, no medicine, no injections, no therapy, no drugs, and no homeopathic remedies either. Leprosy was a sentence to a slow, painful, and horribly disfiguring future and certain death. Leprosy was more than a death sentence. It was life imprisonment without hope of parole and cruel and unusual punishment of your flesh rotting off your bones while you lived. The disease was painful, humiliating, embarrassing, disfiguring and ostracizing.

## 2. The Demand of the Law – Leviticus 13:1-59

*Miriam's Leprosy (Numbers 12), Naaman the Leper (2 Kings 5), Uzziah's leprosy, Four lepers in Samaria during famine (2 Kings 7)*

It was required to use a clapper, and the cry "Unclean, Unclean." Everyone hated you. You lived alone or in a leper colony where you picked up other diseases and strains. You watched other people disfigure, limbs fall off, and die. You were forever condemned to live in isolation from family and friends.

## 3. The Response of Jesus – "I am willing...be clean!"

Compassion on him – words? *Splagchnizomai = moved with compassion – literally bowels moved, softened. – I WILL!!! BE CLEAN!!!*

**The Savior's Touch** – a touchless person – never a handshake, embrace, hug, or kiss. You don't touch a diseased person. But Jesus touched the unclean leper. Luke 5:13

*"Does Jesus care when my heart is pained, too deeply for mirth and song. When the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long. Oh, yes, he cares. I know he cares. His heart is touched with my grief. When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares."*

## 4. Jesus' Command – Go, show yourself to the priest

Go show yourself to the priests, 7 day quarantine. Obey the law. Get examined. Get your ticket home, then go and tell. Luke 17, ten lepers healed. But where are the 9?

### Application:

We all have leprosy. Leprosy of the lips, mind, heart. Poisoned, infected, diseased by sin. It's going to keep us out of heaven where nothing that defiles can enter in. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse our diseased heart.

**Maybe you're an emotional outcast, a leper, unloved, unwanted, untouchable, or rejected. Maybe you have need for physical healing. Maybe you need a touch in another way. Sometimes we need a second touch. (ie) My story of Dad.**

**Perhaps you know a leper, a lonely person, someone who feels rejected, unloved, unwanted, ugly, not needed, or unworthy. Can you be the hands and compassion of Jesus to that person? Reach out and touch someone.**

## 2 The Demand of the Law

Listen to these words from Leviticus Chapter 13 *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest. The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. If you were unfortunate to have a bad skin infection then the consequences were severe— "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.*

**(ie) Dr Paul Brand, a Christian missionary who conducted some of the most influential research on the disease, relates his investigation of why lepers in a colony in India were missing so many fingers and toes. There were isolated incidents of these digits being knocked off and recovered -- but many seemed to lose them at night, with no trace left. When attendants stayed up all night to watch, they found that rats were chewing off fingers and toes at night -- but the victims did not wake, for they felt nothing. As the leprosy spreads, many lepers go blind -- not because of the disease itself, but because, without feeling in their eyes, they forget to blink. So as leprosy advances, the leper hardly looks human. No fingers. No toes. Face disappearing. Isolated from others. No one wants to draw near, no one wants to touch. And in a sense, they can't touch, for they cannot feel another person.**

**Surgeon General in 2023**, the US Surgeon General released a worrying report about the deep sense of loneliness that many Americans are experiencing. The report, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation," found that approximately 50 percent of adults in the country are feeling lonely, and that people of all ages are spending significantly less time with others.

### Lonely People Everywhere

**Widows, widowers, elderly whose children abandoned them, divorced, separated, unmarried, abandoned, abused, arrested, imprisoned, bankrupt, debt-ridden, the fired, let-go, laid-off, kids on the street, street people, prostitute and trafficked kids, and the dying. People with post-traumatic stress disorder, the depressed, chronically ill, psychotic, manic-depressive, bi-polar, multiple personality disorders, the terminally ill, the suicidal, those with dementia, Alzheimer's, and those locked in nursing homes. They are all lonely, isolated, needing a hand and a heart to touch them.**

# People Need the Lord

Everyday they pass me by  
I can see it in their eyes  
Empty people filled with care  
Headed who knows where  
On they go through private pain  
Living fear to fear  
Laughter hides their silent cries  
Only Jesus hears

People need the Lord,  
people need the Lord  
At the end of broken dreams,  
He's the open door  
People need the Lord,  
people need the Lord  
When will we realize  
people need the Lord?

We are called to take His light  
To a world where wrong  
seems right  
What could be too great a cost  
For sharing life with one who's lost?  
Through His love our hearts  
can feel All the grief they bear  
They must hear the words of life  
Only we can share

People need the Lord,  
people need the Lord  
At the end of broken dreams,  
He's the open door  
People need the Lord,  
people need the Lord  
When will we realize  
that we must give our lives?  
For people need the Lord,  
people need the Lord