

LUKE I Jesus Heals a Leper Text: Luke 5:12–15 Bill Turner

Jesus Cures the Incurable

1. **We live in a broken world that is suffering because of sin, sickness and death**
 - a. Including harmful viruses, Bacterial Infections, Diseases, Cancer...
 - b. and one of the most horrible and humiliating diseases is **Leprosy**.
 - **Horrible** — because it is a disfiguring disease...
 - **Humiliating** — because lepers were hated by others until they began to hate themselves
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I. JESUS CURES THE INCURABLE

A. THE LEPER (5:12)

1. **THE DISEASE: There was no more feared disease in ancient world...**
 - a) No Disease that Reduces a Human Being for so long to such a hideous wreck
 - b) Like a Flesh eating Bacteria... They Had Sores All Over Their Body
 - c) Luke Says this man was: “full of leprosy” meaning in it’s most advanced stages
 - d) Lepers were typically beggars b/c there was no way they could support themselves.
Sometimes their families deposited food in remote places. (R. Kent Hughes, Luke)
2. **THE EFFECT: was just as horrible mentally as it was was physically—**
 - a) The Stigma of Shame, the Humiliation, the Isolation...
 - b) They were the Untouchables — Completely Cut Off From Society
 - c) **A Dr. A. B. MacDonald, who worked at a leper colony, said:**
‘The leper is sick in mind as well as body. For some reason there is an attitude to leprosy different from the attitude to any other disfiguring disease. It is associated with shame and horror, and carries, in some mysterious way, a sense of guilt, although innocently acquired like most contagious troubles. Shunned and despised, frequently do lepers consider taking their own lives and some do.’ (Barclay)
Lepers were hated by others until they actually began to hate themselves.
3. **THE FAITH: This Leper Had FAITH! And His Faith Gave Him HOPE!**
 - a) He Forgets the Shame of His Condition, He Forgets the Embarrassment...
He Forgets the Crowds and Goes Directly to Jesus
 - b) He Didn’t Say “IF you can” — He Said, “If You are WILLING, you can.”
→ He Had Faith Jesus Could Heal
 - c) He Didn’t Just Ask Jesus—He Worshipped Jesus,
→Falling on His Face and Bowing to Him
 - d) This Was Not a Demanding or Presumptive Faith
→ it was a Humble, Honest, and Desperate Faith

B. THE SAVIOR (5:13)

1. **Lepers were hated by others until they began to hate themselves...**
—But Jesus had compassion on this man (Mark 1:41)
 - **Not Only is Jesus Holy—He is Compassionate...**
 - **Not Only is Jesus Powerful—He is Approachable**
 - **Not Only is Jesus Able—He is Willing**

2. Jesus Touched the Untouchable...

Which would've made Jesus unclean...

But Jesus is the Source of Spiritual Cleansing!

3. Jesus Cures the Incurable...

Because Jesus is the Author, Sustainer and Source of Life

C. THE LAW (5:14)

1. Jesus Healed This Man of His Leprosy—but wants him to fulfill the requirements of the Mosaical Law

- a) To Show himself to a priest with the proper offering for cleansing...
“as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.”
- b) So he can be declared clean and fully accepted back into society to begin a new life

2. Leviticus 14 details God’s instructions for a person healed of leprosy...

- a) The Priest Met the Man Outside the Camp to Verify He Had Actually Been Healed
- b) The Man would present two clean birds for an offering...
along with some cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop.
- c) One of the birds was killed in a clay pot (so that none of its blood was lost). This was done above fresh water (symbolic of cleansing).
- d) Next the live bird, along with the wood, yarn, and hyssop, was dipped in the blood, and blood was sprinkled upon the leper seven times as he was pronounced “clean.”
- e) The live bird was then released in the open fields to fly away to freedom.
- f) After the bird is release the cleansed man then washed his clothing...
shaved his head, beard, eyebrows, and hair,
he bathed, so that like a Newborn, He was Able to Begin A New Life
He then joined his family, and friends to rejoice/ celebrate for 7 days

3. On the 8th Day—He was to Offer an Unblemished Lamb for sacrifice

- a) The Priest took some of the blood of the Lamb and smeared it on the offerer’s right ear, thumb, and toe, then coated each smear with a second anointing of oil...
- b) Symbolizing that the man would listen to God’s voice, use his hands for God’s glory, and walk in God’s ways.
- c) His shaved head was then anointed with the remaining oil¹

D. THE NEW LIFE

1. Imagine the Joy in this man’s Heart!

- He Was Healed By Jesus
- He was Made Clean by the Blood of the Lamb
- And He Could Now Begin a New Life

2. Can You See How This is a Spiritual Example for Us?

¹ This symbolism cited by R. Kent Hughes, Luke vol. 1, explaining the procedures of Leviticus 14

II. WE SEE AN EXAMPLE FOR US

A. AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE MUST DO...

1. WE MUST HAVE AN ACUTE AWARENESS OF OUR SIN... (Psalm 32:3–5)

Leprosy is Symbolic of Sin in many ways:

a) **Both Start Inwardly — But Metastasizes Outwardly**

(1) Jesus said: from within the heart comes murder, adultery, Hatred, covetousness

b) **Both LEPROSY & SIN: Start Out Small — But Then Spreads**

(1) Starting Small within it spreads outward

(2) Eventually Consuming a Living Person with a Slow Motion Death

c) **Both LEPROSY & SIN: Defile Everything it Touches (Isaiah 64:6)**

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

d) **Both LEPROSY & SIN: Disfigures and Scars**

(1) Adam & Eve in Garden had a pure, pristine environment & relationship w/ God

(2) But Sin Destroyed, Disfigured and Scared the world and still does today

e) **Both LEPROSY & SIN: both Separate:**

(1) Leprosy separates the infected — Sin separates us from God

f) **Both LEPROSY & SIN: Lead to Death**

(1) Even while a leper is alive he is in a state of death...

(2) Without Christ we are dead men walking

(3) Ephesians 2:1 – “You He has made alive who were dead in trespasses and sin.”

We can only know God well when we know our own sin. All those who have known God without knowing their wretchedness have not glorified Him but have glorified themselves.” –Blaise Pascal

2. WE MUST SEEK JESUS—The Only One Who Can Save Us

a) He Ignores the Shame & Embarrassment of his condition in public

b) He Ignores the Crowds watching him and Afraid of him

c) And He Goes Directly and Openly to Jesus Personally

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jer 29:13)

3. WE MUST HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE JESUS

a) He Fell on his Face Before the Feet of Jesus...

b) Because He Knew Who Jesus is – the Holy Son of God

c) *Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (James 4:10)*

4. WE MUST WANT TO BE MADE CLEAN

a) To Be Cleansed from the curse of Sin

and Cured from the Penalty of Sin that Separates us from God

b) Jesus asked a man: “Do you want to be made well?”

You have to Want to be Saved—it’s not going to happen by accident

c) David Had Been Living in Secret Sin

Cast Himself Before the Throne go God in Prayer (**Psalm 51:1–2; 7-10**)

5. WE MUST HAVE A REAL FAITH THAT JESUS SAVES

“he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

- a) Some people are Presumptive towards God—They Presume to Speak FOR God...
—just assuming God will give them what they want.
- b) This is a Humble Faith... He says **“IF you are willing...”**
- c) This is a True Faith... **“...You CAN make me clean.”**

B. AN EXAMPLE OF HOW JESUS RECEIVES US...

1. WITH COMPASSION: Jesus reached out and touched the leper...

- a) Many times Jesus healed someone by just speaking the command...
- b) or healing someone from a distance
- c) But here He reaches out and touches the Leper and heals Him!

2. WITH TRUE HEALING

- a) JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF CLEANSING
- b) JESUS CAN CURE THE INCURABLE: DEATH
- c) JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE

3. WITH FORGIVENESS

- a) JESUS CAN FORGIVE THE UNFORGIVABLE: Which is Sin Against God
 - **Not Only is Jesus Holy—He is Compassionate...**
 - **Not Only is Jesus Powerful—He is Approachable**
 - **Not Only is Jesus Able—He is Willing**
- b) HE WANTS TO HELP YOU! TO HEAL YOU! TO FORGIVE YOU! (**John 6:37**)

C. AN EXAMPLE OF HOW WE THEN SHOULD LIVE...

1. WE HAVE A NEW LIFE: A Life of Thankfulness...

- a) Wanting to Be Saved by Jesus Only to Ignore Him and Go Back to the World
is an Insult to His Grace...
- b) We're Saved by Christ—We're NOT Going Back! > We Have a NEW LIFE Now!

2. WE HAVE A NEW LAW: A New Covenant of Grace

- a) Jesus is the Lamb of God sent to be sacrificed for the sins of the World!
- b) He Purchased the Church With His Own Blood!
- c) We Are Called to Faithfulness in His Kingdom (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

3. WE HAVE A NEW PURPOSE: To Honor and Glorify God!

- a) To Seek First the Kingdom of God and HIS Righteousness...
- b) To the Love the Lord with ALL Our Heart, Soul and Mind... and To Love Others
Jesus said: If you love me you will keep my commandments

4. WE HAVE A NEW SPIRITUAL NATURE... (2 Cor 5:17)

You're new creation in Christ; old things have passed away; all things have become new.”

CONCLUSION:

1. Jeremiah 29:11–13 You Have a Future and a Hope with God

(Leprosy and Sin List from Lowell F. Johnson)