



*‘Now!’ Sermon Series*

Sermon #7

Sunday, May 19th, 2024

*‘Jesus Touched Me!’*

*Mark 1:40-45*

*Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:*

- Last Sunday we looked at [Mark 1:35-39](#) as we studied the example that Jesus gave us.
- Specifically, we looked at the *‘The Recipe for Regular Reaching!’* as I asked the question: *How does Mark show us that Jesus needed to get away and rest so that He may reach other people in different towns by preaching the Gospel?*
  - **Point 1: *Prioritize your Personal time with God. (V. 35)***
  - **Point 2: *Prepare for the Pressures of Others. (V. 36-37)***

- **Point 3: *Pursue the Plan God has for you. (V. 38-39)***

- I know that last Sunday’s sermon may have seen somewhat ‘simple’, but let’s be real. Mark’s Gospel is simple.
  - *We need regular reminders in our walk with Christ, like the one we received last Sunday, that we indeed do need to be dedicated to spending time with Him, intentionally, no matter what others may say.*

*‘Jesus Touched Me!’*

*Mark 1:40-45*

**Sermon in a Sentence:**

*Jesus touched and cleansed the Leper which shows us the Unthinkable Request by the Leper, the Unique Realization of Jesus’ Power, and the Untrustworthy Response. If Jesus can touch and heal a leper, He can touch us today. The question is, what will our response to His touch be?*

**Intro:**

- *In 1963, Bill Gaither wrote the words to a song that would be sung by the Imperials, Elvis Presley and Steven Curtis Chapman. A song that has touched people for many years.*
  - The song that I’m referring to is ‘He Touched me’.
  - *These lyrics were written shortly after Bill and Gloria were married in 1962.*

- ***In a book written in 2004, it describes how this song came about.***
    - Bill Gaither was asked to play the piano for a revival meeting that was to take place in Huntington, Indiana. He was to accompany Doug Oldham who was providing the music while his father was preaching.
  - ***After the revival, the three men were driving back to Anderson Indiana and they discussed how deeply God moved within the service and how they could feel the Holy Spirit.***
    - ***As they dropped Bill Gaith off that night, Doug said 'You should write a song that says, 'He touched me, oh, He touched me.'***
  - So, Bill went inside and worked all not on the song, and then Gloria reviewed it the next morning.
    - ***Not only does that song hit us where we are realizing what Jesus has done by saving us from our sins, but it also aligns with scripture.***
    - Though inspired by a revival service, touch was an imperative part of Jesus ministry.
  - ***Like we will see this morning, when Jesus touched someone, they were healed.***
- Or, what we find in Matthew 14:35-36 is that the sick begged Jesus to allow them to touch the hem of his garment.
  - ***The touch of Jesus is unlike anything else. And if you are here today and you've been saved by Christ, then you have been touched by Him.***
  - Here are the lyrics that ***Bill Gaither*** wrote, that I believe even this leper could have sung and for those of us that are saved, we can sing it today!
    - Shackled by a heavy burden, 'Neath a load of guilt and shame. Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same.
    - He touched me, Oh He touched me, And oh the joy that floods my soul! Something happened and now I know,
    - He touched me and made me whole. Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole, I will never cease to praise Him, I'll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, Oh He touched me, And oh the joy that floods my soul! Something happened and now I know. He touched me and made me whole.
    - ***In Mark 1:40-45, we find the story of Jesus touching the leper and making him clean.***
  - ***It is believed that this would have occurred in the 'nearby villages' that Mark mentioned in verse 38.***

- What we find in this text today, would have been looked down upon by onlookers.
  - ***But Jesus can and does seek to heal those who need it. With just a touch from the Master, you can be made clean today!***

*\*Read Mark 1:40-45\**

### Question to Ask:

*How does this passage show us the power that Jesus has to heal and cleanse those, that otherwise, would have no hope?*

### Point 1: ***An Unthinkable Request. (V. 40)***

- ‘And a leper[a] came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.”
  - *Since you and I did not grow up as Jews and did not live in this location at this time period, it’s hard for our minds to understand how much of an unthinkable request this was that this leper had made to Jesus Christ.*
    - Word about Jesus had spread all across this region. Word that He could heal diseases and do things that most had never seen before.
  - ***A leper was a person who the culture had casted out, the spiritual leaders had judged as unclean, and the people viewed them as cursed by God.***

- Dr. Daniel Aiken (president at SEBTS) said this to help us understand how unthinkable this request that the leper made really was: ***‘Even one with AIDS today fares far better than the leper of the first century.’***
  - The law of the day stated that lepers were to stay at least 50 paces (feet) away from other people.
  - ***So the fact that this leper was bold enough to come towards Jesus and make this request, shows that He truly needed the Savior’s touch.***
    - ***We’ve got to put down our pride and allow ourselves to be touched by Jesus. No one is ‘too good’ or ‘all put together’, to not benefit from the Master’s touch.***
  - I believe there are 3 things from this text that show us how unthinkable this really was.
- ***Definition of Leprosy. (V. 40a)***
  - ‘And a leper’
  - ***This is not the only case in scripture where Jesus has encounters with Lepers, because it was a very widespread disease in the ancient world.***

- But, the Mishna (oral Jewish law) has numerous instructions regarding leprosy.
- *So, what is Leprosy and does it still exist today?*
  - *By definition, Leprosy is a skin disease that covers numerous different skin diseases. This does include what we call 'Hansen's Disease' today.*
- Scholar James Edwards said *'Scribes counted as many as seventy-two different afflictions that were counted as Leprosy.'*
  - *Leviticus chapters 13-14 is an in depth scriptural manual on how they were to deal with Leprosy.*
- **Leviticus 13:45-46** even says that lepers couldn't be around anyone else in society:
  - "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[a] and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' **46** 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.'
- The Hebrew word that is used in the OT that is often translated to 'Leprosy' is the word **'Tzaraath'** *which is a very broad word that entails many different types of skin diseases.*

- **This Hebrew word can cover boils (like in Leviticus 13:18), burns (Leviticus 13:24), itches, ringworm, and scalp conditions.**
    - JM said *'the most serious type of leprosy in Bible times likely consisted of what is known today as Hansen's disease, a devastating bacterial infection that disfigured a person's appearance and debilitated the nervous system often leading to death.'*
- Today we have many medical advancements to where leprosy is not as big a threat to our health as it was back then.
  - **But in the ancient world it was one of the most feared diseases due to the fact that it was very easy to contract it from someone else by touch or even air particles.**
    - Most medical historians do believe that Leprosy originated in Egypt, due to the bacteria that causes Leprosy, being found in an Egyptian mummy by archaeologists.
- *Due to the infectiousness of the disease, not only did the individual experience immense*

*pain, they also suffered from social alienation. No one wanted to be around them.*

- In third world countries and in impoverished areas, leprosy still exists.
- One of our own, Mrs. Sunnie Gail Pound, tells of the Leper colonies when she went to India and how they were cast out from everyone.
  - *In order for us to see just how unthinkable this really was, we need to see the definition of it but also its social depiction.*
- *Depiction of Leprosy. (V. 40b)*
  - ‘implored him, and kneeling said to him,’
  - Just how bad leprosy was and was viewed at this time, makes it that much more incredible that this Leper came to Jesus.
    - *He knew that it wasn’t socially acceptable to approach Jesus in this manner.*
  - *In fact, this leper’s decision to approach Jesus could compromise Jesus’ ritual cleanliness.*
    - James Edwards said *‘Nevertheless, the leper risks everything, breaking both law and custom, on the chance of being healed and restored by Jesus. No obstacle, not even the decrees of the Torah itself, prevents him from coming to Jesus.’*

- When reading Leviticus 13, you can see how the disease of leprosy can be contrasted with the disease that all of us suffer from, called sin.
  - Leviticus 13:3 *shows us that leprosy is deeper than the skin, like sin.*
  - Leviticus 13:5-8, *like sin, leprosy spreads.*
  - Leviticus 13:44-46, *like sin, shows us that leprosy isolated people and defiled them.*
- *I agree with what W.W. said ‘Anyone who has never trusted the Savior is spiritually in worse shape than this man was physically.’*
  - If you think leprosy or any other physical trial or disease is bad, then try living and then dying without Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
- *We all agree that the flu, covid, stomach bugs, all kind of sicknesses are bad and we stay away from others when we have them.*
  - But why don’t we act that way when it comes to our sin? Our sin is so much more painful, yet we are much more likely to excuse it than to extinguish it.
- *Distinct wording by the Leper. (V. 40c)*
  - “If you will, you can make me clean.”
  - *I think looking carefully at what this leper said is key to seeing just how unthinkable of a request this really was.*

- *The leper does not say ‘Jesus can you do this?’ questioning Jesus ability to heal Him, no, the leper says ‘WILL’ you do this.*
  - Showing that he had faith that Jesus could heal him. He knew that He could, it was just a matter of would He.
- *In your situation in your life right now, it’s not a matter of ‘CAN’ God answer your prayers, heal your disease, save the marriage, bless your finances, it’s a matter of will He.*
  - And as believers in Christ, we have to be willing to trust God with whatever answer He decides.
  - This leper shows **BOLD** faith based on what he had heard that Jesus had done for others.
    - *Jesus is capable of anything, but we don’t know what the future holds. And we must remember Romans 8:28 holds true, even if we think God is making the incorrect decision by not answering our specific request.*
  - ‘And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,[a] for those who are called according to his purpose.’ Romans 8:28

- *This morning it’s not a matter of **CAN** God clean up your mess, it’s a matter of **WILL** He. There’s a big difference between the two.*

- So far, we’ve seen the Unthinkable Request.

**Point 2: A Unique Realization. (V. 41-44)**

- The unique realization that we have this morning is similar to what the onlookers probably experienced.
  - *The leper wasn’t the only scandalous one by coming up and approaching Jesus, but Jesus was in being willing to touch Him and heal Him.*
    - Most people would turn away as soon as possible in order not to get the disease. Jesus doesn’t turn away, He turns to Him!
      - *This should give you and I great hope this morning. JESUS IS NOT AFRAID OF OUR MESSESS.*
        - *No matter how much you’ve messed up, Jesus does not turn away from you just because things are looking bad. He turns to us.*
- From the place of a first century Jew, Jesus had every right to be outraged by this leper.





- *To the people of that day, it looked like Jesus was essentially giving Himself a death sentence by touching this man willingly.*
      - *But He was moved to compassion. To pity. I'm so thankful today that God shows us pity by forgiving us of our sins, no matter how dirty and ugly our mess is.*
  - And then in verse 42, we see Mark use his favorite word, immediately.
    - *In order for Jesus to heal this man, we know that Jesus could have done it with His voice alone, but He decides to touch the man.*
      - It's often in scripture that Jesus touches in order to heal them.
    - We see this in Mark 7:33, and in Mark 8:22-23.
  - JM described the events of the thorough cleansing that we see in verse 42 by saying *'There was no period of recovery or rehabilitation. He who had come disfigured, defiled, and despicable was instantly transformed into a man in full health, completely cured, and ready to be restored to society. His sores were gone. His limbs were made whole. His skin looked like new.'*
- When Jesus cleans up a mess, it doesn't do it partially, but fully.
  - That's why the hymn writer wrote these words in the third verse of the hymn 'It is well with my soul'
    - *'My sin O, the bliss of this glorious tho't my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul.'*
  - Not the part, but the whole is what Jesus did when He died for us. What an unique realization to have this morning.
  - *The Reckoning Charge. (V. 43-44)*
    - 'And Jesus[b] 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."
    - *After Jesus healed this leper, He gave some pretty specific instructions on what the leper was to do next.*
      - The reason that Jesus sent the man to a local priest was following the ritual for cleansing according to Leviticus 14 which involved a very specific sacrifice and process that had to take place.



- *What might cause you and eye to raise our eyebrow, is the fact that Jesus did this sternly and strictly.*
- *Dr. Daniel Aiken gives a strong word on this when he said 'He sends him packing with a command to keep his mouth shut. Jesus does not want persons who merely seek miracles. He wants followers who seek Him!'*
  - Jesus clearly recognized this leper's faith, but Jesus knew that not everyone in the region who wanted His attention actually wanted to know Him, but wanted what they could get from Him (healing).
- *The fact that Jesus said 'for a proof for them' shows us that Jesus wanted the priests to see that Christ had undeniable healing powers.*
  - That He (Jesus), wasn't just a regular guy, but was the Son of God.
- Jesus touched this leper like I hope and pray He's touched many of us in this room.
  - We've seen the unthinkable request, and the unique realization, now we see the untrustworthy response by the leper.

**Point 3: *An Untrustworthy Response. (V. 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.'

- *Jesus had just told the leper not to go out and spread the news.*
  - As briefly touched on a moment ago, the reason Jesus told him not to go and tell everyone about it, was because it placed a restriction on Jesus' preaching ministry.
  - *That's why verse 45 says that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, which is why He was hanging out in desolate places that were far from others.*
- Mark later says in chapter 7 verse 24:
  - *'And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.'*
- While we can understand why the Leper was excited, I want us to see this morning that it's never okay to disregard and disobey what God has told us to do.
  - I believe there's one important thing that we can see here:
- ***Joy Overrides Jesus' Command.***
  - When we first read the leper's actions, they were eagerness to be cleansed, full of faith, and humility before God.
    - *But, just as all of us are susceptible to this, the leper turned to complacency, even disregard for what Jesus had said.*

- *Sometimes we can become so happy for what Jesus has done for us that we totally neglect what He's told and taught us and we're just focused on what He gave us.*
  - I think it's important to point out that Jesus has switched spots with the Leper.
- *When we began studying this passage this morning, the story started out with Jesus on the inside and the leper on the outside.*
  - Now Jesus is outside in lonely places and very early on in his ministry Jesus is already an outsider to human society.
- But, we must remember that our Lord is the suffering servant who bore our iniquities that we could not.
  - 'Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see[a] and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.' Isaiah 53:11
- *What is our obedience to Christ like in how He's touched us? Do we act just like the leper and disobey and disregard Jesus after He's done so much for us?*

**Conclusion:**

- ***While I'm aware that most of us here today don't have leprosy, we do suffer from a disease.***
  - ***That disease is most definitely sin.***

- Our world so desperately needs to be touched by God. That starts with you and I being touched by the Lord Jesus and it changing the course and trajectory of our entire lives.
  - *If any of us have the potential to have a good life, we must allow ourselves to be touched by Jesus.*
- We must allow ourselves to have life changing encounters and interactions with the one who has saved our soul.
  - ***Remember, the question that we ask should not be 'CAN' He heal me, the question should always be 'WILL' He heal me.***
    - I know that as a young child when I trusted in Jesus that He touched me.
- ***That doesn't mean that I don't fall into sin, have problems and issues, it just simply means that I've been touched by Jesus and my life will never be the same.***
  - Have you been touched by Jesus today? As you can clearly see in the text we studied this morning, there is nothing that you have that scares Jesus away from you.
    - ***Jesus is not afraid of your mess. Jesus is not afraid of the struggles that you have.***
  - You have to be willing to be touched by the Author of life, Jesus Christ.

- *This morning we've been able to see that Jesus touched this leper, and that Jesus can and still does touch people today.*
  - **Point 1: *An Unthinkable Request. (V. 40)***
  - **Point 2: *A Unique Realization. (V. 41-44)***
  - **Point 3: *An Untrustworthy Response. (V. 45)***
    - How do you need to ask the Master for a mighty touch this morning?