

Mark 1:40-45

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[0 : 00] Please turn to the Gospel according to Mark. The Gospel according to Mark will be in chapter 1 as we continue to proceed together in a look at this picture as we continue to proceed together in a look at this picture.

And a leper came to him, imploring him and kneeling, said to him, If you will, you can make me clean. Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once and said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priests and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to them.

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.

Behold the glory of our God in the life of Christ. Let's pray. Father, we praise you for your holy word to us. We recognize that it is inspired, that it is infallible and it is sufficient.

[1 : 23] It's a guide and a rule for holy living. And so I pray by the power of your spirit today that you will break through the obtuse nature of our minds and through the callous nature of our hearts.

Change us this day into the image of your son. Find us progressively more like him as a result of the time we spend together this morning. Let this morning not be wasted on anyone in our hearing. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So I'm taking a little break from preaching and coming back. And I come to a text that I essentially assigned to myself as I kind of helped the guys and broke it up and given them some assignments to preach over the last three weeks.

And I come to another healing. We see another healing. We've seen quite a few so far. We see a man with an unclean spirit. We see Simon's mother healed. And then many others.

You see a whole city gathers together at the door. Verse 33. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. We know that Jesus did this as a major part of his ministry.

[2 : 27] All of his days ministering, he was moving around and healing people. Luke puts it this way. Chapter 6, verse 19. The Gospel of Luke. And all the crowd sought to touch him for power came out from him and he healed them all.

John chapter 21, verse 25. The last verse of the Gospel of John. John records, Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

So Jesus did a lot of miraculous things. Lots of signs. And these signs were intended to validate the message that he was bringing.

Jesus' primary ministry was not a ministry of healing. He did these things, to be sure. But his primary ministry was a ministry of preaching.

Chapter 1, verse 38 and 39. And he said to them, Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also. For that is why I came out.

[3 : 32] To preach. And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. What was he preaching? Verse 15 of chapter 1. He says, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the Gospel. This is the message that he was preaching. The good news that the kingdom of God had come to bear in his life. That he was leading the procession of the kingdom of God, coming and bringing redemption to the world.

So the miracles validated the message. Here we have one of two accounts of lepers being healed. We can presume that many other lepers were healed, as this was a fairly common ailment of the

time.

Right? The other, there were ten lepers, if you recall that story, recorded in Luke chapter 17. So, I've been wrestling with, What do I do with this?

Right? Once again, we see King Jesus, the sovereign over all things, exerting his authority over sickness. What a thing to praise him for. But we've seen that already, haven't we?

[4 : 37] We've talked about that. What do we say? What is the fresh thing to bring to you? And I've just been blessed beyond belief at the richness of this text. So let's look at it together.

Right? We see in verse 40 that a leper comes to him. Right? Comes to Jesus. And we know that he is now in a city. You look in verse 39. And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

So he's going into these cities that are in a province that's north of Jerusalem. Right? Galilee of the Gentiles. He is occupying, going into the synagogues, and he's preaching the gospel.

And wherever Jesus goes, there are great crowds. Right? They follow him everywhere he goes.

Verse 33 again. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. People are flocking to him.

Right? To be healed. And we hope to hear the message, the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God. We find here, though, a leper. And this term in the Greek has a very broad meaning.

[5 : 35] Right? It simply means to scale or to peel off. And in fact, it was used broadly to speak of all kinds of skin ailments. So, if you have psoriasis, right, which many people suffer from that type of thing, the Greeks would have called you a leper in that way.

Right? But that's not believed what we're talking about in this case. This would have been a person who was outcast because of the nature of their disease. Not dry scalp. Right? That's not what's going on with this individual.

It's likely, most people agree, that this is what's today called Hansen's disease. I was going to pronounce for you the...

Nope. I'm going to do it. I can do it. *Mycobacterium leprae* is the official name of this thing. It's a bacteria. It's a bacillus that multiplies very, very, very slowly.

And I want to read to you a little bit about this particular disease. Right? It typically begins with a lighter patch of skin. Nobody panic if you have a lighter patch of skin. Right? Usually on the brow, on the nose, on the ear, the cheek, or the chin.

[6 : 40] If you miss some sunscreen spots on your face in the summertime, you don't have leprosy. The patch begins to spread in all directions. And one of the early signs is the eyebrows and eyelashes disappear.

Then spongy, tumorous swelling grows on the face and then on the body. The disease becomes systemic. It involves the internal organs as well as the skin. Fingers and toes can be reabsorbed into the body because the bacillus invading the bone marrow impairs the blood supply, causes the bones to shrivel.

It causes the extremities to shrivel. So fingers and toes literally can pull back into the body. And because of the loss of feeling, which is the major thing that's happening, it's attacking the nerve system.

Right? Because of this major loss of feeling, the primary thing that ends up happening to lepers is that they hurt themselves not knowing that they're hurting themselves. They lose sensation in their hands and in their feet.

And so they do things that cause great damage. I read some modern day accounts of a woman who wore her fingertips completely off, who had Hansen's disease, washing dishes.

[7 : 43] And a man who destroyed his palms raking. Right? Like we all know when to stop raking when we're getting the blisters. Right? It's time to go inside and look at blowers online. Right? But these people can't feel this happening to them.

And so what often happens to them is they get these horrible wounds and then there is no antiseptic. There's no knowledge of how it is that they ought to take care of these things. So they literally begin to rot. They become infected and they begin to rot.

And this is the picture of what's happening to this man, this leper. Right? Now the disease is very communicable because it's transmitted through perspiration droplets in breath.

Right? So lepers in this day were very ostracized. Right? Just for the physical aspect of the disease. People didn't want to be around them. Interestingly, I don't know if this is true of this day.

I don't think anybody could possibly figure it out. But interestingly, modern day, 95% of the human population has a natural immunity to this. Think about Mother Teresa and all the years she spent with the lepers.

[8 : 44] Right? More than likely, she was immune to the even possibility of catching this disease. But it was not understood in this day. So people wanted nothing to do with lepers.

They wanted to be far, far from them because they did not want to contract this disease. And they were forced to go out and live out in desolate places. Right? They often formed communities and lived together.

But beyond just the physical fear of being around lepers, there were some greater cultural reasons that people in this day ostracized lepers. For example, in chapter 12 of the book of Numbers, God gives leprosy as a judgment.

Right? Bildad, in Job chapter 18, speaks of leprosy as a punishment. He says it consumes the parts of his skin. The firstborn of death consumes his limbs.

In 2 Samuel chapter 3, verse 29, this is right after Joab murders Abner, David utters a curse against Joab and says, May it fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house.

[9 : 50] And may the house of Joab never be one without one who has a discharge or who is a leprous or who holds a spindle or who falls by the sword or who lacks bread. He utters a curse on him that his family forever may have one of these things, one of those things being leprosy.

The beginning of Leviticus chapter 13 gives direction as to how the priest was to declare a leper unclean. Priests were given as the judges over what was and wasn't clean.

And if somebody had leprosy, people believed they had leprosy, they were brought for a test. And if they were found to have leprosy, they were cast out. So, Leviticus chapter 13, verses 45 and 46 says, 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. Right? So these are the instructions given to the Jewish people to preserve the health of the rest of the Jewish community.

These people who were given this, they were forced. They had to tatter their clothes. They had to have scraggly, long hair. You wanted to see them from far away. That person has leprosy.

[11 : 08] Avoid them at all costs. One rabbi wrote that it was only safe to be within 150 feet downwind of a leper and 6 feet upwind of a leper. Very strict rules.

Another rabbi prided himself in throwing rocks at lepers because he saw them as the judgment of God. They were sinners. They were to be cast out. Another leper prided himself in...

Not a leper. A rabbi prided himself in never eating food bought from a street that a leper had ever been on. Right? So he would understand, get the history. Is that a leper ever been on this street? I'm not buying food from this market. He would buy clean food in this way. These people were incredibly ostracized. They had to walk around yelling, Unclean! Unclean!

So no one would come near them. People would be very aware of the disease that they carried. So it was more than just the physical. Right? People saw it as a judgment of God on these individuals.

[12 : 04] Right? This man, in Luke 5, verse 12, it says, A man full of leprosy. A man full of leprosy. So this was not an early stage leper.

This man was in this state. Hideous. Infected. Tattered clothes. Hair around his face. Should have been coming and yelling out, Unclean! Unclean!

So that people would scatter from him. But instead, he comes to Christ. Enters into a crowd. Does the very thing that he should not do.

Oh, the shocking nature of his boldness. We can learn something from that as he comes to the feet of Jesus. The account of the same story in Matthew 8.

The leper calls Jesus Lord. Luke 5, 12-14 says that he fell on his face. And we see here in Mark that he comes and kneels before him.

[13 : 02] Recognizing in some fashion, we don't know of course, that he knew that Jesus was the Messiah. We don't know. But he certainly recognized that he was a reigning king. He addresses him this way as he calls him Lord.

And he comes to him and implores with him, If you will, you can make me clean. Now, I love this. We're not going to make much of the leper in this story.

But here is a place that we should observe his life and see the way he interacts with Jesus. As he says, If you will, you can make me clean.

And in this little statement, he recognizes Jesus' sovereign will and his sovereign power. He doesn't expect that Jesus will heal him. He doesn't say in any way that Jesus owes him healing.

But he says, You have the ability. You are Lord. You can heal what's going on with me. And if you see so fit, will you please heal me, a leper?

[14:07] God owes us nothing. We don't call on him as if by our merit, he owes us something. God's will is sovereign and he's also sovereign in his power.

We should pray this way. Lord, if you will, you can accomplish this thing. If you will, please work this out. Do this thing for your glory. I appreciate this leper's pleading with Jesus in this way.

Now, this is not a magic equation to see a response come from Christ. Verse 41 does not record because of the man's imploring, because of the way in which the man addressed Jesus.

Jesus moved. Jesus is moved by one thing. His pity. He's moved by his pity. Notice at the beginning of verse 41. So while we ought to look at the leper's life, model ourselves after him, we ought not see this as an equation, right?

If you will, you can heal me. You can make me clean. This is the way in which we should look and observe and pray to our God. But Jesus moved with pity.

[15:18] Some of your translations may say compassion. Another wonderful word in this case. And verse 41 says, He stretched out his hand, he touches him, and he says, I will be clean.

Right? Not because of what the man had done, but because of Christ's very nature. Who he was. He showed compassion to this man. Psalm chapter 78, verses 38 and 39, speaking of God's work with Israel prior to the psalm being written, says, Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them.

He restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. The compassion that God had on his people as he leads them out of Egyptian captivity and as they sin against him continually and continually and continually and continually.

Here we see recorded in Psalm 78 that he is compassionate, that he holds back his anger, and he remembers that they're but men. Fallen in nature and doesn't destroy them.

Isaiah chapter 49, verse 13, prophesying of our coming Messiah, the one Jesus Christ, says, Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth.

[16:41] Break forth, O mountains, into singing, for the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted. Look at the fulfillment of that very thing as Jesus turns to this leper and touches him.

Matthew chapter 23, verse 36, says, And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

God loves people and he pities our state, both our physical and our spiritual state. And so here we see Jesus turn to the leper and show such pity to him that he reaches out and he touches him.

This would have been shocking. We don't understand the way this disease affected the culture. We don't understand how shocking it would have been for this man to walk in amongst us and then for Jesus in pity and in compassion for him to reach out and touch him.

Leviticus 5.3, the Israelites were commanded not to touch a leper. And here we see Jesus stepping down in such a way and reaching out and touching him and making him clean.

[18:02] Verse 42, we see once again, I think Mark's favorite word, immediately. And immediately, the leprosy left him. Didn't take on some healing power.

Jesus gave him some medicine and over some time, he got better. Immediately, the leprosy left him and he was made clean. Or does this say he was restored? Restored. And we see Jesus' authority once again over this sickness.

Right? He was made well and whole. Hansen's disease, there's a cure for it. Good news, if you're not in that 95% and you happen to go someplace and contract Hansen's disease, in 1982, drugs were invented that can eradicate, they can stop the effects of Hansen's disease.

They can get rid of that bacillum in your system. But guess what they don't do? They don't restore what's been damaged already. Right? If your fingers and your toes begin to pull back up into your

body, it doesn't reverse that effect, but Jesus, in his power, does that.

Makes him whole. And you may be asking, how do you know that to be the case? Right? How do you know that's even possible? Jesus gives him a command and he tells him to go and present himself to the priest. And what he was telling him to do was to travel to Jerusalem, which would have been 60 to 70 miles from where he was.

[19 : 12] And they would have walked. Right? He doesn't say, spend some time here in this town and go through rehab. Make sure you get your legs back under you before you make the journey. Right? He gives him a command to go and do what is proper to make the sacrifice, the cleansing that Moses commanded.

And so he goes and he does this. So he made him whole in this act. Right? Now it's interesting, we see all as Jesus is performing these miracles, he's healing and he's healing and he's healing. We see lots of this terminology, healing. But as it regards leprosy, we never see leprosy and healing put together. It's always made clean. Isn't that fascinating?

I know that you're just going, okay, tell us what it means. Right? Just tell me what it means. Right? I don't know for sure. Is that fair? I don't know for sure why it's always coupled in this way.

Here's my presumption. Here's my presumption. The Jewish culture saw the person that was defiled in this way as unclean. They saw it as a judgment from God and they cast them out.

[20 : 19] These people were cast out from culture. They were cast out from the worship of God in the Jewish synagogue. They weren't allowed to go to the temple to make sacrifice. In every way, they were estranged. Removed from the society because they were dirty in this way.

And I think the reason that it's recorded in this way, that they're made clean, is that they're being restored. Right? Externally, they're being made clean. They're being restored to the ability to enter back into Jewish culture and to attend temple worship.

We see the command to go to the priest and to the temple. And I think that's why. That's this picture of uncleanness and cleanliness. Right? I don't think what we see here is that this man's soul is restored.

I think that simply he is healed, made clean from his leprosy. Right? And that's important lest we think too much of this leper because he's a rather disobedient character.

Is he not? Verse 43 says, And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once. And the Greek word here for sternly charged means in its most literal form, snorted.

[21 : 32] Not the way you would snort something. Right? But like the way a bull would snort. Like a command. Like, I'm telling you what you better do. That's what the kind of strength of this language is.

They're very strong. Sternly charged him. Right? And what did Jesus say? That we will know people are his disciples if they keep his word. Right? So here we see this leper.

He gives him a direct command and the leper does what? The opposite. Right? He does the very opposite of the thing that he commanded him to do. And so I don't think it's right for us to think when we say that the leper was made clean that his soul was made clean.

I think that he was healed of his leprosy. Right? But then we see him being immediately disobedient to the command of Christ. And so we get these two commands. We get both a positive command do this and a negative command do not do this.

Right? So verse 44 he 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.

[22 : 36] So the positive command go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to them. Why would he have wanted this to take place?

Right? This was Levitical law remember still just as they would have paid attention then they were still paying attention to this commandment the priest would have wanted to proclaim somebody clean this man now no longer has leprosy there was a process by which they identified them as a leper there was also a process if they thought they were healed of leprosy that they would do the same that they would proclaim them clean Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem is he not?

and I believe what he's doing is he's sending before him not to everyone he's telling them don't run around don't run around run in your mouth but go to the priests and I think what he's doing is he's sending a witness of himself to the priests certainly this man is going to say I was a leper and now I was made clean by this man Jesus Christ and they would go through the process of inspecting him and certainly then know he was pre-delivering the indictment for their unbelief in Leviticus chapter

14 we get this prescription for the way this happens and this stuff it's so hard you read these old Levitical laws you're like they're supposed to do what?

so let me see if I can get this right something like this the leper is examined by a priest two birds are taken and one is killed over running water in addition they're taking cedar scarlet and hyssop these things are taken together with the living bird dipped in the blood of the dead bird then the living bird is allowed to go free now this is all symbolic the man washes himself and clothes shaves seven days are allowed to pass and then he's re-examined he must then shave his hair again his head his eyebrows certain sacrifices are then made consisting of two male lambs without blemish one ewe lamb three tenths of amount of fine flour mingled with oil and the restored leper is then touched on the tip of the right ear the right thumb and the right great toe with a mixture of blood and oil finally examine for the last time and if the cure is indeed real he's allowed to go with a certificate that he is cleansed right this is an incredible process and I am sure that there's a lot of great depth for us to understand all of the symbols that are contained within but I want you to see that this is what Jesus was asking him to go do as Moses commanded for a proof to them to those priests that he was going to come and preach the gospel to and they would end up having him crucified so that's the positive command go and do this thing we don't know if he ever actually does we don't know if he makes it there or not there's a negative command as well say nothing to anyone we can see how he did with this right it's interesting to me and this is another

I'm not really sure moment I tell you I want to have all the answers to every question you may ever have in life but I won't we constantly see Jesus warning people not to talk about what he's doing constantly all throughout the bible and you go okay well let's just think about why that may be was it that he was trying to delay his death right because he was causing quite a stir those great crowds are already amassing around him and following him around the Galilee of the Gentiles was not like a highly populated place the desert areas where he often was moving through where these people were gathering to meet with him were not pleasant places to be you recall when he feeds the 5,000 later the 4,000 people it's because they came out to a place that there was no food right they were following into these bizarre places he was causing quite a hubbub so was he doing that because he knew it's not quite time I must delay I must delay I must delay and I can take a little bit of answer and comfort in that but God is sovereign over all these things right like he knew exactly the day that he would die he knew exactly the way in which he would die so it doesn't really complete the answer for me but let's just look at a couple of other places here in Mark chapter 3 verse 11 and 12 and whenever the unclean spirits saw him they fell down before him and cried out you are the son of God so the unclean spirits the demons cry out you are the son of God and he strictly ordered them not to make him known interestingly that we see throughout

[26 : 55] Mark demons being more obedient than people to the power of God chapter 5 verse 43 the first part of it Jairus a leader of the synagogue his daughter was brought back to life if you remember this story and then Jesus says in verse 43 and he strictly charged them that no one should know this chapter 7 verse 36 we see the healing of a deaf man and Jesus charged them to tell no one but the more he charged them the more zealously they proclaimed it chapter 8 verse 26 he ups the charge after healing a blind man and he sent him home saying do not enter the village he goes so far as to say you're going to tell people so just don't even go to where people are right just go home so here again is my very best at this and if it helps you I try to confirm my guesses amongst other biblical scholars I think that what

Jesus is doing here as he's working as he's performing these miraculous things to belittle the miracles in order to exalt the message Jesus heals here all throughout the gospels not just people of faith right he heals all kinds of people I think that the leper here is a great case for that a man who is immediately disobedient to the command of Christ I don't believe was regenerate hopefully in hearing of the gospel he did become so later on right so so he he heals and just does so and just spreads it and goes and goes and goes and these huge crowds are gathering to him because of the healing not because of the message right as you see him speak in parables all throughout the gospels he does so and he tells us because he wants people who have ears to hear to understand and those who don't to have no idea what's going on these huge crowds of people that were amassing around because of the miracles that he was performing again Jesus ministry was not primarily a healing ministry right it's a wonderful aspect of his ministry the miracles he performed but it was rather a preaching ministry the miracles validated the message right now in

Christendom particularly the blogosphere if you pay attention to all these things there's a lot of hubbub going around about miraculous gifts of the spirit and do these things still operate and practice in the world John MacArthur had a conference that just caused everybody to get into a tizzy about it right and it's a question worth asking to be sure right and I'll tell you where I stand on this I think that these things do still take place but not as the normal practice that's what I believe I think God still heals people using medicine and doctors primarily right but he still does miraculous things certainly he does I think particularly in places where the gospel is being advanced for a new time he brings miracles along to validate the message to grab people's attention they go whoa what is going on this man he's coming and he's laying hands on people and they're becoming well after they've been sick immediately and it validates the message but here's the thing that we have to be careful about we have to recognize that that's what the healing is for it's for the message right and a lot of the men that run around in the charismatic movement that are big leaders of this movement it's not about the message it's about the healing right about the amazing ways in which God wants to bless your life right God wants to bless our life with himself right not primarily health and he does it sometimes but not primarily Paul had a thorn in his flesh we don't know what this thing was but he prays three times that

God would take it away and God says no my grace is sufficient for you my powers made perfect in your weakness right God wants us to be weak he wants us to be dependent on him last Sunday most of you know many of you know I wasn't here and the reason for that is I went on a hunting trip but not because I went hunting I didn't skip out on church I love being with you guys I would way rather be here than go hunting I missed out because I went hunting with a mountain man who is 15 years older than me and can hike me into the ground and I told him I have really horrible knees and don't need to be super active and he said that's fine because we'll either go out on the forest service property or we'll just hunt out of my property now I've gone over to Wes's house a few times and hunting and when we go hunting on Wes's property you get to walk a hundred yards out of his backyard and climb up into a fixed stand there's no wind it's real nice got little windows that fold down right easy the same weekend last weekend Wes drank coffee while he hunted well not with the guy I went with we got to his place and it was a cabin on top of a mountain and I said yeah let's just hunt out of here and he goes okay we're gonna go to that mountain then and I said or we could go to the other place you had picked out which which also put me on top of a mountain I also ended up in 20 degrees on top of a mountain watching squirrels that's what I did on Saturday but I know I know some of you know this and some of you don't but for about the last 12 years I've had really chronic tendinitis muscle tightness and tendinitis that's it's agonizing and please don't come up to me after the service and tell me all the ways

I should fix it because I've tried a lot of things we're we're working right now with a new kind of radical diet to make it I think this actually may be the thing I need but but it's debilitating for me at times and certainly when you hike me straight up a mountain for an hour that'll happen so I was at home in a lot of pain at that time and I've prayed that God would heal me in my mind I'd be more effective I'd be a better husband and a better father I could cut the grass more efficiently and play harder with the boys I could be at church every Sunday because I'm not I'm at home feeling crippled on the couch in my mind that would be better but I'm always drawn to this this concept that Paul presents to us as Jesus speaks back to him and says my power is made perfect in your weakness right God keeps me so frail because I think he knows that I'm going to rush off without him if I had power and strength to accomplish things that would take great pride in my physical prowess and forget that I need him every day and every hour right I think

[33 : 46] I would often forget that I am not made for this place that I am made for an eternal place and I'm passing through this place that this body is on loan and I get to get a new one someday praise God right I keep hoping that I'll learn those lessons and then God's going to heal me we'll see we'll see so so that's what's going on here so we have to recognize as we look at these types of things these miraculous things and especially in the life of Jesus that it was primarily about the message the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God right that he brought along the redemption of our souls that's found in him right God's light bearing in our dark hearts that is what Jesus came to accomplish that was his task to seek and to save the lost praise God we are beneficiaries of that great mission but the leopard ignores this negative command he goes out verse 45 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 now again I don't believe in any way that this this man thwarted Jesus plans that he

gave him a command and he ignored the command and Jesus said man now I can't go into the towns because people are going to throng to me about healing and it's not about healing it's about the message I'm just going to stay in desolate places certainly our Lord knew this is what was going to happen even as a command of the man he knew he's going to fail at this command but notice the great metaphor of this story the great metaphor of this story the picture that Jesus trades places with the leper the leper comes to him from desolate places the man was an outcast the man could have been only around other lepers he was cut off from the kingdom of God just like we once were when we weren't in

Christ he was a cast off just like we were the sickness of our sinful nature makes us numb to the effects of it does it not the same way leprosy makes people numb to the pain the infection that's going on in them makes us so so numb to what's happening in our lives as we sin we rot rather from the outside in as a leopard does from the inside out right but but because Jesus trades places with us on the cross he brings us in back into the community of faith he places himself in a desolate place where he bears the wrath of God for our sin to make us clean then this a precious picture this is the thing and I went whoa I love this text I don't just have to teach about Christ's authority over healing or over sickness which is an awesome thing to preach about but I get to preach that Jesus takes our place it's exactly what he does with this man he lets him come in and he goes out puts himself out in desolate places so that we would be welcome I want you to turn one place in closing to Titus chapter 3 this is one of my favorite gospel presentations it's short and so rich Titus right before Philemon right before the book of Hebrews beginning in verse 3 of chapter 3 Paul's here instruction to to Titus for we ourselves were once foolish all of us every one of us we're foolish disobedient led astray slaves to various passions and pleasures passing our days in malice and envy and then catch this just with in mind the idea of this leper hated by others and hating one another hated cast out verse 4 but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared the man Jesus Christ is what's being referred to there the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared he saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit you see the metaphor in that you see that what he did is he made this man clean physically but for us he makes us clean in our hearts according to his mercy his compassion would be a way of saying that right not because we give proper response to him but because he loves us he washes us regenerates us renews us by the power of the Spirit he makes us clean verse 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life isn't that good this picture the glory of Jesus Christ as he shows compassion to this man and trades places with him puts himself out in the desolate places so that this man could be part of the community once again I hope this causes you to praise God for your salvation Jesus took your place Martin Luther called it the great exchange took on the wrath for your unrighteousness and gave to us his righteousness that we might stand right the the word justified there in verse 7 we can stand before God and when God looks at us he sees Christ right granted us access perfect access even though we fail still right even as the leper is disobedient immediately my life looks like that sometimes I open the pages of this wonderful book and I'm told to do something and I walk away and I do the opposite of that thing even though because I've placed my faith in Christ I stand right before God and we must this morning ask ourselves we behold Christ his great compassion his sovereign will his sovereign power we appreciate that we have to ask has that been extended to us as individuals right has that been extended has Christ taken my place and I can tell you if you don't know that to be sure just believe that it's sure right your belief is the very evidence that it has believe that [40 : 34] Christ died on your behalf he is the son of God he is exalted now and in him is the righteousness of God let's pray together God bless you