

TRANSFORMING MOMENT

MARK 1

Text: Mark 1:40-45

Introduction:

This passage finds the Lord Jesus in the midst of a tiring and trying preaching campaign. We are told in verses 21-34 that just the day before, Jesus had taught in the synagogue, v. 21-22; cast out a demon, v. 23-28; healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law, v. 29-31; and healed many sick folks and delivered others from demonic possession, v. 32-34.

You would think that Jesus might need a period of rest after such a frenzied schedule. However, v. 35 finds Jesus up and in the place of prayer well before daylight. When His disciples find Him, He tells them it is time to go into the neighboring cities to preach; for that (ministry) was the reason He came to the world, v. 36-39.

In the midst of His preaching and teaching ministry in Capernaum, He is interrupted by a single man, a leper. It is this personal encounter that I want to focus in on this morning. While there were great crowds there to be healed, helped and taught, one man managed to get

a Moment With The Master. Let's look in on this scene and witness for ourselves A Transforming Moment.

1. THE CONDITION OF THE LEPER (VS 40)

A. His Disease

We are told that this man, who approached the Lord Jesus, was a leper. Of all the diseases and afflictions that devastated the ancient world, none was more feared or more fearsome than leprosy. A brief description of this horrific disease might be in order today.

The disease usually started with a person beginning to feel a little tired. For no reason necessarily he would just have a feeling of fatigue, and then the joints would begin to get sore. And then that man one day noticed that little white spots were appearing all over his skin, just little white spots. And then those white spots began to harden into nodules and they turned from white to pink to brown and became very scaly. And then those nodules began to spread all over the body; they would afflict the face first and the very configuration and the appearance of the face would change, and there would be wrinkles and nodules covering the face until they tell us that a man covered with leprosy like that would begin to resemble a lion.

And then those nodules would begin to ulcerate and they would be filled with puss and they would begin to run all over the body and there was a foul odor that would be discharged from the man, it was a terrible stench, you couldn't even stand to smell the odor. And there was a taste in the mouth of the man that came when leprosy got hold of him. The nodules would cover his vocal chords and when he breathed there would be a wheezing sound as he breathed, and when he talked there would be a rasping in his voice.

So, you see, this disease of leprosy just began to totally consume a man until a man's body became little more than a pool of slime. All over his body he would have these nodules. His eyebrows would begin to fall out, his hair would turn white, and inch by inch this man's body would begin to rot. As he walked he would leave wet spots where the puss would pour out of his feet and the extended members of his body would begin to fall out. Fingers would fall off and the toes of the feet would begin to fall off. And another thing about leprosy is that it attacked the nervous system in such a way that a man would lose all sensation of pain. So when a man got into the grips of leprosy he might accidentally put his hand in the fire and he would feel no pain and he'd burn himself tragically. And he'd step on a thorn maybe out in the path somewhere and he'd feel no pain as the thorn ran through his finger. So what a man became was a walking death. It lasted an average of about 9 years and a man finally just collapsed into a

pile of corruption. It was a terrible physically debilitating disease.

As if this weren't enough, the terrible social isolation that went hand in hand with this disease, must also be considered. When it was determined that a man had leprosy they would banish him from the village, he was no longer allowed to have communion with other people. He had to leave his family, he had to leave his friends. It was unlawful for a leper to approach within 50 feet of a clean person. If it was a windy day, the rule changed to 200 feet. He could not touch his family, he could only see them from a distance. Many families brought food and clothing for a while, but after a time, most families had a funeral service and regarded the afflicted person as a dead man.

He had to tear his garments so people would recognize that he was a leper. He was to dress as a mourner going to a funeral service: his own funeral service! Over his upper lip he had to wear a cloth so he wouldn't spread the contamination and every time he saw people coming the leper was required, from a distance, to cry, "Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!", and it would warn the people that a leper was on the premises and they would pick up stones and they would begin to throw the rocks at him so he would get nowhere around him. So here is the condition of this man, here is the picture of this man the Bible says was filled with leprosy.

(Note: This is a horrible image, and some may say, “Preacher, no one here has leprosy. Why do we need to hear this?” I would answer that this way: In the bible, leprosy is far more than a disease. It is also a type of sin! While no one in this room may be a leper, everyone in this room has problems with sin! And, of all the diseases mentioned in the Bible, none pictures sin any more clearly than does the disease called leprosy. In Leviticus 13, we are given the regulations for diagnosing and dealing with leprosy. Allow me to point out a few similarities between leprosy and sin.

1. Leprosy is deeper than the skin

Leviticus 13:3

And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.

a. Sins is the outward working of the inward condition.

Matthew 15:18-19

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,

adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

2. Leprosy starts out small and then spreads.

Leviticus 13:7

But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the priest again:

a. So it is with sin many times; it starts out with something small and then grows into something large.

Illustration:

David's problem started out with a little laziness and led to adultery

3. Leprosy defiles everything it touches.

Leviticus 13:44-46

He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head. 45And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry,

Unclean, unclean. 46All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

4. Leprosy isolates

Leviticus 13:46

All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

5. Leprosy destines things for the fire.

Leviticus 13:52

He shall therefore burn that garment, whether warp or woof, in woollen or in linen, or any thing of skin, wherein the plague is: for it is a fretting leprosy; it shall be burnt in the fire.

B. His desire

1. His words indicate a desire to be free from his disease.
2. His words declare his faith in Christ's ability.

2. THE COMPASSION OF THE LORD (vs. 41-42, 45)

Mark 1:41-42

And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

Mark 1:45

But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

- A. Revealed in His touch

- B. Revealed in the transformation

3. THE COMMAND OF THE LAW (VS 43-44)

Mark 1:43-44

And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

- A. The demands of the law.
- B. The desire of the Lord.