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## Sermon Summary # 4

### “Jesus Can Make You Clean!” Mark 1:40-45

One of our primary goals in studying Mark’s gospel is to answer the question: “Who is Jesus?” But my goal is also to go beyond addressing the question of his *identity*. I want us to address the question of his *character*. What is Jesus *like*? What *kind* of person is he? Is he the *sort* of person that I can not only believe in but also the sort of person to whom I can entrust my life? Will I like him? If I come to him, will he laugh at me? Will he ridicule, mock, and ultimately reject me, like so many others have? Will he make me feel ashamed and ugly? Will I embarrass him?

Some are still unsure of Jesus. You don’t know what to make of him. You may be looking for proof that he is who he claimed to be. You may be waiting to hear a voice from heaven confirming his identity. You may be hoping for a miracle like the one this man experienced. Don’t! Instead, look here in God’s Word! See him here in Scripture! Don’t close your eyes. Open them and behold in the verbal portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel the divine glory, moral excellency, and spiritual beauty of Christ.

One answer to our question is found in the way Jesus responded to a leper who approached him.

- Understanding the physical dimensions of this disease
  - Understanding the religious and social nature of this disease in ancient Israel
- "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" (Lev. 13:45-46).
- Understanding the spiritual symbolism of this disease (“cleanse,” not “heal”; cf. Matthew 10:8)

What can we know about this man who had leprosy?

- His boldness
- His reverence
- His submission
- His confidence (cf. Mt. 9:28)

How did Jesus respond?

What we must understand is that in the ancient world, no one, literally no one, ever, by no means ever, touched a leper. No one, that is, except for Jesus!

He was moved with Compassion / Pity (v. 41)

Jesus was heartbroken. He felt this man's anguish. Jesus hurt for him. Jesus probably wept for him.

He physically touched him (v. 41)

Contrast the way in which Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy in 2 Kings 5:10-14, or the way in which Jesus healed the servant of the centurion in Matthew 8:5-16 (see esp. vv. 8, 13, 16). See also John 4:46-54.

He commanded him to remain silent (vv. 43-44)

Jesus tried to discourage the leper from telling others lest they begin coming to him just to see a miracle. He did not want for people to look upon his ministry as a supernatural side-show. He also knew what would happen once word spread of such a miracle (see Mark 1:45).

He commanded him to present himself to the priest, in accordance with the Mosaic Law (v. 44)

This was probably for two reasons: first, to enable the man to reenter society and the religious life of Israel, and second, to bear witness to the priest himself that a true miracle had occurred.

Conclusion:

In what sense are we all spiritual lepers? The good news is that *Jesus can make you clean!*