

Sermon Series: Who is this man?

{The Book of Mark}

Sermon Title: Trading Places [Sermon #8]

October 30, 2016

Pastor S.C. Brown

1. 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.

2. 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, O, He touched me,
And O, the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened, and now I know,
He touched me and made me whole.

Jesus liked to touch people. In the book of Mark we have 8 accounts of Jesus touching people.

1:31- he took Peter's mother in law by the hand and healed her.

1:41- He laid his hand on a leper.

5:41- He took Jairus's daughter by the hand and raised her from the dead.

6:5- he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

7:33- He put his fingers inside a mute man's mouth and touched his tongue.

8:23- he did almost the same thing as with the mute man.

9:27- He raised up a demonized boy.

9:36 & 10:16- He took children into his arms.

Mark 1:40-45

And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." ⁴² And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ And Jesus 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." 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.

Leprosy was and is an awful illness. People were truly outcasts in society. The culture considered them cursed by God and they were unclean according to the law. They had to stay 50 paces {let's say 50 meters} from anyone. And if they came close to someone they had to cry out with a loud voice, "Unclean, Unclean." If someone touched a leper they became contaminated. If they went into a house...that house would be contaminated and everything in it. Dirty.

Josephus the Jewish historian of the time period says that "a leper is not better than a dead person".

Leviticus chapters 13 & 14 give countless details how to diagnose Leprosy and skin conditions. 14 gives the details on what to do to prove you are cleansed of it. A person was to go to the priest offer a sacrifice and go through a long ritual process with the blood of the dead sheep or bird and then the priest would declare them CLEAN.

People who had leprosy had to leave their families, their job, everything. They couldn't even go into the city of Jerusalem.

1. **Notice that the leper 'COMES TO HIM'**. He comes to Jesus. He wasn't supposed to come to anyone. Jesus wasn't supposed to be that close to a leper either. Can you imagine this man's courage? Can you feel the desperation? These people were like ZOMBIES. Like the living dead! He comes to Jesus and falls on his face. He's likely hasn't seen his wife and kids in years. He hasn't experienced friendship or community or smelled a home cooked meal. Hasn't slept in a bed. Hasn't bathed. And beyond all of this....his clothes {according to the law} were to be rags and his hair uncut and hanging down. Hasn't touched a person in years! IMAGINE THAT. How would that feel?

{**Illustration:** a lonely man, who was not a Christian, walks into the Pastor's office one day. He has no family that cares for him. He has no church to love him. He knows a deep loneliness. He sits down and chats with the Pastor about his life and explains to the Pastor that he gets his hair cut once a week....you know why....just to have one time a week when someone touches him with no misunderstandings.}

The man with leprosy breaks every law and taboo to come to Jesus. WHAT FAITH HE HAD! Desperate faith. Same way we all need to come to Jesus.

2. **"If you are willing, you CAN make me clean."**
He believed Jesus COULD do it. He just didn't know if he WOULD do it. You ever met someone who knew Jesus COULD forgive them....they just didn't believe that he WOULD. They're too far gone. Too much in their past. Too much gross sin. "You've done a lot Pastor, but you don't know what I've done."

What would Jesus do? What was his response?

3. Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.”

Don't miss this. Moved with pity....this is big word in the original...It means that Jesus was moved from his GUT'. This is a deep ache. This is Jesus saying, “I hurt for this guy.”

JESUS TOUCHED HIM. He didn't have to do that. Why did Jesus do that? He could've spoken to him. He could have said, “Go your way”....and the man would be healed. Jesus touched him though.

We can only assume why. We don't know. What we do know is that there's something about human touch that is powerful. In fact, if you're arguing with someone....it's like the ultimate shame....the ultimate insult is to say.....”Don't touch me.”

Jesus said, “I will. Be clean.” And...he was clean. IMMEDIATELY. WOW. Jesus is willing and powerful. Rotten flesh would turn to fresh skin. Fingers that had been worn off would appear. Wounds would heal. The feeling would all return. {Cause that's what happens in Leprosy....you lose all feeling....and you basically destroy your body without realizing it} Imagine the joy.

4. And Jesus 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.”

Is Jesus being unrealistic? What? DON'T SHARE? Don't tell anyone? I thought Jesus always wanted us to tell everyone!

Is Jesus just playing games with him....like we tell a little kid NOT to do something....so they WILL do it. Don't smile. they smile.

Jesus STERNLY charged him....this is a very strong word...it means to 'snort with anger' {demonstrate} or to SCOLD. Jesus 'sent' him away. This is the word {ekkbalo}. It means to 'throw out or cast out'.

Jesus gives him something to NOT do: don't tell anyone.
Jesus gives him something TO do: go to the priest and show them!

Perhaps Jesus wanted the priest {the one who would crucify him later} to see the gospel. See the animal killed and the person made clean. See a man who was unclean and impure become pure.

We'll never know. Cause the man disobeyed.

5. 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.

*We assume he didn't go to the priest. We don't know. Seems not. But we do know he didn't keep quiet!

He just told us in Mark 1:38-39 that his mission was to 'preach in the towns of Galilee'. Now he can't do it openly.

Jesus is wanting to keep a low profile. He wants to be 'low key'.

Jesus' mission was to preach the good news and go to the cross and die. This was not what the people wanted him to be.

The people mostly want to get free healthcare from Jesus. They want free food from Jesus. They want to make Jesus the KING. They want a Messiah that will rule and overthrow the Roman Empire.

2 things I want you to see in this story.

1. I want you to see the Parable of the gospel message in this story.

All men are spiritual lepers.
Leprosy is like sin....it goes deep.
We are unclean. We are not just unclean....we are gross.
There is no human cure for sin....Psychology.....nope.
Education....nope.....Finding yourself.....nope. Finding your
'Best Life Now'.....nope.
Sin is infectious. It's numbing. Like Leprosy...you stop being
able to feel things. You hurt yourself and others without even
knowing it. Sin isolates. Sin kills you.

We need to be touched by someone who has the power to
make us clean. To make us whole.
We need someone to trade places with us.
That's what Jesus did and would do.
He traded places with this man.
The CLEAN one would become unclean.
The UNCLEAR one would become clean.
The one who was free to enter the cities and be with people.
The one who was not alone would end up in desolate places
outside the towns.
The one who was an outcast would go home. He'd go back to
his family. He could enter his hometown village and scream out
{CLEAN CLEAN}

They traded places. Jesus trades places with us, too.

That's our only hope. Jesus traded places with you on the cross. Should've been me. Should've been you. It was him.

The one who was clean became unclean so that the unclean could be clean. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

So, this is a parable of the gospel.

2. I want you to see a Parable of gospel ministry.

“We need to lay our hand on some rotting flesh in our neighborhood, in the executive towers where we work, in the city slums.”

There are people around us every day that need to know that Jesus is willing and able to save the worst of sinners.

Who around you is an outcast?

Who around you is a big sinner? Everybody knows it.

JESUS IS WILLING!

Bad people make good soil.

Tell them they can trade places with Jesus.

He's willing. He's able.

Touch someone. How are you going to do it?

Who needs a touch?

Maybe you feel unclean today!

Don't worry.

Jesus is willing to touch you.

He can clean you.

Give him your uncleanness. He'll give you his cleanness.

Do like the Leper. By faith, come to Jesus.