

TT Mk.1:40

We left off last week with Jesus embarking on a speaking tour of Galilee. (over 200 towns)

## The Approach

Mk.1:40 **A man with leprosy came to him** Lit, "approached"  
Mt.8:2 **Behold, A man with leprosy came**

If you had been there – or if you had lived back then, you would know why this is such a shock.

WHO: A Leper

## Leprosy

What is L? Lv.13

(NIV says "infectious skin disease" for the word t[;r'C')

Experts debate about exactly what disease is being described. There is no known disease that fits exactly the description. That's no surprise – diseases and people change.

3:23

Lev.13: Starts with **a swelling, a rash, a bright spot, a boil on his skin, or an itching sore on his head with thin, yellowing hair, then baldness, then these sores it turns to a reddish-white swelling, the hair in the sore turns white and the sore is obviously more than skin deep, the rash spreads.** Next the **swellings** break out in **open sores with raw bloody flesh**

Lk.5:12 **the man ... was covered with leprosy. (full of)**

**leprosy** (advanced stages – run its course)

Lv.13 says in the advanced stages, this disease covers a person from head to toe.

5:00

This disease is the most hideous, disgusting, ugly thing imaginable *physically*. But I haven't even told you the worst part.

Lev.13:45 **"The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46 As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.**

6:10

Notice what the guy in this account is concerned with. **"If you are willing, you can make me clean."**

Instead of requesting healing, he talks about being made clean, because the most horrible thing about this disease was that it made the person ceremonially unclean.

6:29

## Ceremonial Uncleanness:

There are a number of things in the OT that cause defilement (uncleanness) and if touch – you get contaminated and cannot approach God.

Touching human feces, touching a dead body, eating non-kosher food, touching a leper, etc.

7:13

It is passed by touch.

Lv.5:2 **`Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean...--even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean.**

Pop quiz

Hag.2:11 **"This is what the LORD Almighty says: `Ask the priests what the law says: 12 If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'**

**The priests answered, "No."**

**13 Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?"**

**"Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes defiled."**

The point of the whole passage is to show which direction the current travels.

8:51

What is the purpose? (99X) in Lv.

The purpose of the uncleanness codes was to teach a truth about God. (Same as sacrifices –

physical picture of a sp reality)  
- to show the people a picture of God's holiness. God is perfectly holy, pure, pristine and clean. No one can approach him with a dirty heart.

**Hab.1:3 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;**

**Ps 24:3-4 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,**

Sin is dirty, contaminating, disgusting, dangerous, infectious, and ugly. It's a horrible thing, but it's an abstraction – you can't see how ugly it is. And we tend to underestimate how bad it really is.

10:10

So God knew that we needed a physical picture, and so He established this system. God set up a system in which if you got your hands dirty you could not approach him. You couldn't just touch something filthy and then go right into the Lord's presence - God wanted the people to understand his pristine cleanness and the requirement that we be cleansed before approaching him.

It's not that the pictures themselves are evil, they are

pictures of evil. Lv.12 is all about how childbirth makes a woman unclean. (33 days boy, 66 days girl) This is not evil (Mary)

It's just a picture - that when you touch something bloody, messy, etc, must be cleaned as a picture of the heart.

11:35

- and you can just wash yourself. It has to be the specified ritual. ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A DEFILED PERSON CLEAN.

12:20

Leprosy is one of the most graphic physical illustrations of what sin is like spiritually.

It was hideous.

PICTURES

Dr. Hoizinga: The skin loses its original color gets to be thick, glossy and scaly, as the sickness progresses the thickened spots become dirty sores and ulcers, the skin, especially around the eyes and ears begins to bunch with deep furrows between the swellings so that the face begins to resemble the face of a lion.

Fingers drop off and the stumps are absorbed into the hand, toes the same. Eyelashes and eyebrows drop out. By this time one can see the person in this pitiable condition is a leper. By the touch of the finger you can feel it. You can even smell it for the leper emits a very unpleasant odor. Moreover, in

view of the fact that the disease produces agents that attack the larynx the leper's voice assumes a grating quality, his throat becomes horse and you can not only see, feel and smell the leper, you can even hear the leper, and if you stay with him for some time you will find a particular taste in you mouth. All the human senses repulse at a leper. – horrible, hideous, disfiguring disease.

Every one of us is like a spiritual leper. That's the point. Isa.64:6 as a result of sin **All of us have become like one who is unclean,**

Leprosy is just like sin. Sin defiles the whole body, it's more than skin deep – defiling the very core of your being, it's pervasive, it is ugly, loathsome, hideous, incurable, contaminating, communicable, separates, alienate and makes men outcasts from God.

14:30

That was the pic, and if miss that miss the whole point (guess what they did)

Like all the other pictures, they got caught up with the external picture without even thinking about the internal reality. This was the Pharisees' problem.

Jesus had to set them straight: (clean on outside but dirty on inside)

So this man was a walking parable of sin.

Imagine if you were a leper (can't do a ceremony and be cleansed – always unclean) no one would get near. The Jewish traditions made it even worse.

Talmud: no closer than 6' and if wind 150'

16:23

Jews had 61 defilements. #1 dead body, #2 leper - Josephus said they were treated as if they were dead men.

Were walking, contaminating corpses.

In the Talmud one rabbi said, "When I see lepers I throw stones at them lest they come near me."

"I would not so much as eat an egg that was purchased on a street where a leper had walked."

They hated them. – treated them like a disease

They expanded the levitical codes to gross extremes.

Barclay: if a leper so much as peeked his head in a house, that house became unclean even to the roof beams.

17:06

Now you know why Mt. says "**Behold**"

HOW: This man teaches us the proper way to approach God.

1. Reverence

Mk.1:40 **A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees**

Luke 5:12 **he fell with his face to the ground and begged him,**

2. Faith

40 **You can make me clean**

He has absolutely no doubt about Jesus' ability to heal him.

We have found that faith is believing God *can*, not that He *will*. "**If you will, you can**".

(Weather or not he will is his prerogative).

3. Submission

40 **if You are willing**

He doesn't demand/claim.

4. Desperation

40 **he begged**

He had an acute awareness of how loathsome his disease was.

It's questionable whether it's even possible for us to imagine this man's desperation.

18:45

I was reading an article about the psychological effects of a skin disease. Those kinds of diseases are especially difficult...

#1 The person experiences a tremendous loss of privacy.

Your skin is like the PR firm for you – it's the only part of you people see. Other

problems can be hidden, but a skin problem is instantly visible to every stranger.

Your skin is the largest organ of your body, and is absolutely crucial for you to be able to live. It's a vital organ and has a number of vital functions.

It protects you from infections, regulates body temp, it provides sensation, etc. One of the jobs of your skin (and hair) is attractiveness. This disease destroys that.

#2 Think what it would be like – on top of all that, to be a walking illustration of sin. You can just imagine how years of always, whenever you encounter anyone, taking on a disheveled appearance and saying, "Unclean, unclean" would shape your whole psyche.

That's why he came with an attitude of desperation.

20

## The Miracle

Picture it – you are there.

...commotion, panic – someone says "Leper!" crowd parts like the Red Sea.

The whole crowd was panicked and falling all over each other trying to get at least 6' away from this leper, On their faces are looks of fear and anger and disgust, (worried about getting defiled) and all of them are in a frenzy to get away - except one.

There was one who didn't move - one man whose feet stayed planted in the dirt – and only steps he took were *toward* the leper

The crowd wanted to get away - 150' - but they also wanted to see what was going to happen...

This wasted away, decayed, rotting mass of putrid flesh – this walking corpse walks right up to Jesus, falls to his knees, and then on his face. And it turns your stomach when they hear his raspy, grating voice: "... **you can make me clean.**" 21:53

#### **41 Filled with compassion**

Not revulsion, not disgust or fear or anger. For years everyone had looked at this man as if he were nothing more than a disease - now for the first time someone was looking at him as a person - talking to him - loving him.

What was it about the way Jesus looked at him that made it so obvious that He was filled w/ compassion? The word refers to a visceral reaction in the stomach. Apparently some visible indication. A tear? A look like only Jesus can give?

What a contrast to the religious leaders of the day who prided themselves on throwing rocks at men like this.

23

#### **41 Jesus reached out his hand...and touched the man.**

We could add, "and the whole crowd GASPED – and 2 disciples passed out" He touched him!!!

He didn't have to do that. Often he healed with a word - from a distance. But he didn't choose to do that this time. He touched him.

That was probably what this man needed more than anything else - to be touched by someone clean. God seems to have made us that way – we need to be touched.

No one ever had. You were not permitted to touch someone unclean, because it would make you unclean. 24:07

**41 "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.**

I don't know what that was like, I don't know if the fingers popped out one at a time, or... He looks down at the stumps - perfect hands. fingernails – trimmed. Clear, smooth skin (tan - to make the point). Eyelashes, eyebrows, hair!

Now he can go inside a walled

city. Marketplace! He can be around people - he can touch them! He can give his friends hugs, he could get married!

Most importantly of all - He can enter the Temple and worship God! He is clean!!! Imagine the ecstasy that coursed through his entire being at that moment!

Think of him spending that night with his family – just marveling about the whole thing. When the sun came up that morning, he was a miserable being – more dead than alive. He was a hopeless mass of sores and corruption, and his very existence was a burden.

And now he sits, watching the sunset, and he is *clean*.

26:09

Now hold up this picture next to your TV screen, and compare Jesus with the so called faith healers. All the healers of today fade into utter insignificance compared to this omnipotent display of divine power. Line them up, pick any leper, they won't do this.

If you are not permitted to touch something unclean, how is it that Jesus did?

Remember the Haggai passage? But with Jesus it is the opposite.

It flows the other direction. We touch uncleanness we get defiled, he touches it the uncleanness goes away. We touch disease and we get contaminated, he touches it and the disease disappears.

A diseased boil cannot survive the touch of Jesus' healing hand.

27:18

There are a few lessons we can learn from this guy's example in the way he approached Jesus.

1. Faith You have to believe Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be.

2. Submission

Today - claim it - -- blab it and grab it - make demands and He must comply

"If you will..." sounds a lot like "nevertheless, thy will be done."

3. Reverence

His main concern was God, not himself. Did you notice He worshipped first. Did not condition his worship on getting what he wanted.

He wasn't mad at God. He was reverent

What a contrast between him and the Pharisees. There they were - on the outside elaborate robes, beards trimmed, cleaned

washed... On the inside vile, unclean, disgusting

This leper: outside filthy, dirty, vile, ugly, wretched. On the inside beautiful, reverent, worshipping..

4. Desperation

True repentance involves more than just telling God you are sorry. It includes contrition - an element of desperation to be rid of your uncleanness. TT Mt.15

30:02

Many of the things Jesus taught were designed to make people aware of the desperate condition all people are in.

**Mt.15:1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"**

First He rebukes them for ignoring the heart.

Then says 10 **Listen and understand. What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him unclean.**

Disciples don't understand

**17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and**

**then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart**

Then Jesus told them the worst news they had ever heard.

What I am about to say is the worst news you will ever hear. It will give you a lump in your throat.

**18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man `unclean.' 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man `unclean'**

The source of evil is the human heart. Why so much evil in the world? There are so many human hearts.

Our own hearts are the unclean thing that will defile anything it touches! - it is like dung or a dead body.

If I touch a carcass, I can clean up and then be clean, but if the carcass is my own heart, I'm perpetually unclean.

**HAG 2:14 Then Haggai said, " `So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,' declares the LORD.**

**`Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.**

This was devastating. The Jews thought the worst possible thing that could happen to them would be to become defiled by some unclean thing. Now God says they themselves *are* the unclean thing! Everything that touches *them* is defiled!

Jesus is saying the same thing about our hearts. It's not that they have been contaminated by some evil thing - they are the *source* of the contamination! This means cleansing is impossible. Like a leper.

33:13

You see the folly of human religion – purify your own heart by following rules. Our only hope is for Christ to reach out and touch our hearts and make them clean.

There are only 2 kinds of people – spiritual lepers, and former spiritual lepers.

If not cleansed, you cannot approach God (a disaster).

33:58

“But I’m a believer – I have been cleansed.” It’s still important to study about sin, to understand how evil it is.

You will never have proper gratitude until realize the enormity of the vileness you have been cleansed from.

That’s why so important to realize the ugliness of sin.

That’s why I preach on sin even though it offends people.

He who been forgiven of much loves much. We don’t want to be like the 9 lepers who didn’t come back.

34:43

### The Command

Mk.1:43 **Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:**

Originally: “to snort” This word is used in the context of extreme emotion. This was not a passing remark.

**44 "See that you don't tell this to anyone.**

Why? Jesus told the maniac at Gadera Mark 5:19 **"Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."**

Rest of the v. tells why.

**...But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing**

#1 Lv.24 says that’s what a healed leper is supposed to do – it is the priests who decide, and they have a specific 8 day process for verifying that the disease is really gone.

Jesus always followed the Bible – in everything. He never

deviated even at the slightest point.

Jesus is actually submissive here to the authority of the priests.

36:51

**Mk.1:44 go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."**

That word **testimony** here refers to legal proof. It is not up to the individual or his friends to determine if he has really been cleansed. The process in God’s Word is the only thing that can verify it for sure (same goes for spiritual cleansing – your own gut feeling doesn’t prove anything one way or the other).

The emotion is interesting.

Jesus was very concerned that this healing be established legally, officially, forensically.

He wanted it in the books.

Jesus wanted at this time to give notice to the authorities in Jerusalem that the Messiah had arrived.

38:38

In fact, the most natural translation of *eis* would be **as a testimony against them.**

But why not tell anyone on the way? He had a long journey to

J. If he tells someone, and the news gets there before him, the priests will be biased. If he goes straight there, it will trap them in their own ruling.

#3 The third reason Jesus commanded this: the same reason He commanded every other thing He ever commanded – because He is God, and He knows what’s best. He can see the future, and we can’t (which is why it is so ludicrous that we would ever second guess God’s commands).

It’s important not just to spread the news about the Gospel, but to do it God’s way. If you do it any other way, it can hinder the Kingdom.

41:12

The Disobedience

**45 Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news.**

A sad ending. If I had been there I would have been so frustrated “That would have been such a great thing...”

But have you noticed looking back on it that this man’s disobedience did not derail the kingdom of God? Jesus still managed to prove He was God, He still managed to accomplish redemption, the book of Revelation will still take place, and God’s whole perfect plan is still right on schedule.

That’s a great comfort, but that’s not to say there wasn’t some damage done.

42:50

**45 As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.**

Jesus could not get away from the mobs of thrill-seekers who were not really interested in the gospel.

It is the deep desire of my heart to reach the multitudes for Christ. I would love to have huge crowds come and hear God’s Word preached. But our goal is not just to draw a crowd. It’s not enough just to draw a crowd and then preach to them. The important thing is what kind of crowd you draw.

Jesus’ focus was on those whose hearts were open to Him.

When you start attracting crowds of thrill-seekers (who just want a show or entertainment), or any group of insincere people who are not really interested in humbling themselves before God – not really interested in God at all (the true God) – just want their problems fixed, *that* crowd will

hinder the work of Christ. That’s the problem with focusing on people’s felt needs.

Youth pastors: “Why should we use God’s Word to draw students, when free pizza, build your own banana split nights and playing games works so much better?”

44:55

**45 As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places.**

Here we are at the end of the story – and there’s Jesus, sleeping on a rock. Who does that remind you of? Who has to stay outside of a walled city and live alone in remote, deserted areas?

Now Jesus is the “leper” – the incarnation

I hope you are encouraged. There is no filthiness too wretched for Jesus’ cleansing touch. If you have a believing, humble, submissive attitude toward Him, He is not repulsed by you – no matter how disgusting your heart is.

And if you are a believer, you should go out of here rejoicing! Your heart used to be worse than those pictures, and now it’s clean! Jesus took your disease and the consequences of

8

it upon Himself, and has made  
you blameless before God!

47:26

Announcements:

- cards
- surveys
- mother's plants and tapes
- ID-RA-HA-JE
- Offering

Benediction:

1 Thes.3:12,13

**May the Lord make your  
love increase and overflow for  
each other and for everyone  
else, just as ours does for you.**

**13 May he strengthen your  
hearts so that you will be  
blameless and holy in the  
presence of our God and  
Father when our Lord Jesus  
comes with all his holy ones.**