

Encountering Jesus: The Outcast

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Text: Mark 1:40-45

NOTES

A. Introduction:

1. We'll be studying Jesus for the next 12 weeks (8 weeks in this series, then 4 weeks of advent).
2. We study Christ's life to learn how to handle our own relationships. He is our example and mentor: "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" – Phil. 2:5.

B. Jesus Meets a Leper – Mark 1:40-45 (also in Matthew 8:1-4 and Luke 5:12-16):

1. Leprosy and outcasts.

- a. "Leprosy" was a general term for skin diseases. Any sign of leprosy made the bearer socially & religiously unclean.
- b. Lepers had to withdraw from society and were untouchable. Consequences: physical deformity and loss of physical sensation, social ostracism (including loss of family intimacy), loss of business and income, loss of position—all unless or until the priest pronounced him/her clean. (Following the OT rules about leprosy from Leviticus 13 & 14).

2. Jesus' reaction to the outcast:

a. Emotion:

- i. Jesus was "moved with **compassion**." "Compassion" is also translated "**vexed, outraged, angered**."
- ii. Why the emotion: Jesus' compassion was His response to the marginalized, weak, wounded stranger and His desire to alleviate suffering, a deep sympathy, moving with mercy toward a hurting world. Jesus probably felt anger over the curse, the law, the priests who couldn't do anything for this man.
- iii. **Pastor Derrick:** "Christianity should be emotional. When we look at the realities around us, we should be moved by injustice, pain, and brokenness."

b. Touch:

- i. Jesus "touched" (embraced?) the man. This was extreme, fanatical, wild, unexpected. This was Jesus' deliberate preference to meet society's needs rather than cater to the religious.
- ii. Physical touch has the power to release from bondage and restore dignity. **Pastor Derrick:** "Reach out and touch your world, not just metaphorically but really."

c. Transformation:

- i. On Jesus' touch, the leprosy left the man immediately He could feel again. **Pastor Derrick:** "Imagine the joy of transformation. The leper is cleansed and healed by Jesus' contagious holiness. That's who Jesus is. He embraces sin, disease, the pollution of our world, takes it and leaves it pure."
- ii. Communion is where we celebrate Jesus' power to set us free—a transformation that happens in our lives now and even transcends the power of death – 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

d. Grace:

- i. Jesus broke the law by touching the leper, then enforced it by sending the man to the priest.
- ii. He asked for the man's silence but the healed leper told everyone. Result: The crowds that gathered to see Jesus hindered His free movement.
- iii. Jesus, though He knew this man would disobey Him, healed him anyway. **Pastor Derrick:** "We're called to give undeserved favour when we tell people to do something and they don't do it. EGR (Extra Grace Required) people are not going to meet our expectations but we give them grace again and again and again."

C. Prepare like Jesus did.

1. Before Jesus met the leper, we see Him prepare for the day by spending time alone with God in prayer (Mark 1:35).
2. **Pastor Derrick:** "If we want this grace in our lives, we first need to spend time with Jesus."

DISCUSSION:

1. Who would be equivalent to the leper in our society? Who is a leper to you personally? How do you treat or avoid them?
2. Review Jesus' mixed emotions at seeing the leper. When have you been overcome with emotions at the state of a life / our fallen world?
3. Discuss the impact of touch on a person. Why was Jesus' touch of the leper scandalous? How do we bring touch past metaphor to reality?
4. The leper was transformed physically (healed) in an instant. Pastor said: "He (Jesus) embraces sin, disease pollution, takes it and makes it pure." Do you agree? How do you reconcile this instant purity with Paul's description of the Christian's fight against sin and impurity in Romans 7:18-25?
5. How did Jesus give the leper grace? When is it difficult for us to extend grace to people? How can we prepare ahead of time for the compassion, mercy, and grace needed for the day?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank You for Your touch of the outcast. Help us to recognize the outcasts in our lives and be moved with compassion. Help us to extend touch and grace so that You can do Your transforming work. Amen.