

1. Jesus enters Simon and Andrew's home and immediately responds to the need of Simon's mother-in-law. What does Jesus' healing of this woman teach us about his authority and compassion (1:29-31; see also Matt. 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39)? Notice both the immediacy of Jesus' response and her response after being healed. In what ways should experiencing Christ's grace move us, like Simon's mother-in-law, toward grateful service to others? (See Ps. 103:2-3.)
2. In 1:35 we read, "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed." What do Jesus' frequent withdrawals to a solitary place to pray teach us about the relationship between ministry and communion with God (1:35-39; see also Luke 5:15-16; 6:12; and Matt. 14:23.) What might it look like for you to establish regular periods of solitude and prayer, particularly when your responsibilities and opportunities for service become demanding?
3. The leper approaches Jesus with faith but also with humility: "If you will, you can make me clean" (1:40). And Jesus does will it! He not only heals the leper, but stretches out his hand and touches a man that, by virtue of this disease, was regarded as ceremonially unclean (see Lev. 13:45-46). Why does Jesus touch the leper? As for the leper, he trusted both Jesus' power and his willingness to heal him. Are there areas of your life in which you believe that Christ is able to help but doubt his willingness to receive us (see Heb. 4:15-16)?
4. In 1:43-45, Jesus gives the now-former leper man specific instructions consistent with the Old Testament requirements for someone cleansed from leprosy (see Lev. 14:2-4, 10-20). Instead, the man publicly spreads the news, making it increasingly difficult for Jesus to enter towns openly. The passage therefore raises an important question about the difference between genuine gratitude and obedience. (See Deut. 30:15-20; John 14:15; and Luke 17:11-19.) Have you ever been so excited about what God has done for you that you overlooked what he has commanded you to do? How can gratitude for Christ's grace be expressed not merely in words or enthusiasm, but in careful obedience to his Word?