

# The Untouchables

## May 19, 2024

### SERMON OVERVIEW

#### **Key Passage** Luke 5:12-16 Jesus Cleanses a Leper

The event described in Luke 5:12-16 occurs relatively early in Jesus' public ministry. After His baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Jesus begins His work in Galilee. Jesus has already started gathering His disciples and teaching in the synagogues, gaining recognition for His teachings and miracles. This miracle follows a series of significant events that established Jesus' authority and compassion. It happens after the miraculous catch of fish that convinces Simon Peter, James, and John to follow Him. This period is marked by Jesus performing numerous healings and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God throughout Galilee.

In one of the towns, a man with leprosy approaches Jesus, as described in Luke 5. Seen as untouchable by society, the man falls before Jesus and asks to be healed. Jesus touches and heals him, breaking the social rules about touching those considered unclean. This act not only cures the man but also challenges the community's views on purity. Jesus tells him to show himself to the priest and offer the required sacrifices, helping him regain his place in society. Despite Jesus asking him to keep the healing quiet, word spreads, and more people come to Jesus for help. This story shows Jesus' willingness to care for those rejected by others and highlights his power and compassion.

*Did You Know: The story of the leper is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 5:12-16.*

#### **Sermon Highlights**

Luke 5:12-16 gives us an up-close glimpse of Jesus' encounter with an 'untouchable.' Leprosy was not just considered a physical disease but also carried a social stigma. Lepers were strictly forced to shout 'unclea' as they walked in public. People were to avoid all lepers, and lepers were to avoid all people.

Jesus was the most approachable person ever to walk this planet. This leper took a risk and approached Jesus. Despite the law, this man's contagious condition, and despite the social implications, Jesus reached out and touched the leper. He knew the power of personal touch.

Every day, we encounter people of incredible worth who are already broken. God has attached a high price tag to everyone that reads, "This person is worth the price of my Son." Will you extend a hand, an arm around the shoulder, a warm embrace, an offer to help, an acknowledgment that they are there?

Jesus' response to 'untouchable' people was to provide an up-close glimpse into God's heart. Physical healing was not the goal because even those Jesus healed eventually died. Jesus gives His life, His joy, and His eternal hope that will not disappoint all who come to Him.

*"By no means did Jesus eliminate all suffering. He healed only a few in one small patch of the globe. But he did answer the question of whether God cares. Regardless of how the world treats them, the poor and the sick have assurance, because of Jesus, that God knows no undesirables." Philip Yancey*

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*Don't Miss Out: Summer Fest is more than just an opportunity for kids; it is also an opportunity for you to make an eternal impact through serving! We're expecting a high turnout, so every person really counts. For more information, visit <https://pinelake.org/camps/summer-fest/>*



### READ AND DISCUSS

**Understanding Exclusion** *Read Luke 5:12-13 and James 2:1-5*

- How do you understand the concept of "untouchables" in today's society? Who might be considered "untouchable" in your community, and why?
- Discuss this quote, "In a contagious world, we learn to keep our distance. If we get too close to those who are suffering, we might get infected with their pain. It may not be convenient or comfortable. But only when you get close enough to catch their hurt will they be close enough to catch your love." John Ortberg

**Jesus' Approach** *Read Luke 5:13 and Matthew 25:35-40*

- How does Jesus' willingness to touch and heal the leper challenge your actions towards the marginalized? What steps can you take to reflect Jesus' compassion in your daily life?
- Think about a time when you felt moved to help someone suffering or excluded. What did you do, and how did it impact you and the other person?

**True Healing** *Read Psalm 13 and 1 Peter 5:6-11*

- Reflect on the difference between physical healing and genuine, spiritual healing. How does understanding this distinction affect your perception of Jesus' miracles?
- How can the assurance that "God knows no undesirables" change your approach to those who are suffering, both physically and emotionally?

**Impact of Compassion** *Read Luke 5:15 and Matthew 5:13-16*

- Reflect on a time when observing someone else's acts of kindness or service motivated you to act. How did their example inspire you?
- How can our actions not only help physically but also contribute to the spiritual and emotional healing of others? How can these actions help spread the Good News of salvation?

### TAKE ACTION

Encourage each person to think about how to actively demonstrate Jesus' love this week to someone who may feel excluded or marginalized. This could be through a simple gesture of kindness, offering help, or taking the time to listen to their story. Challenge them to share their experience with the group throughout the week so you can all encourage and support one another in making a tangible impact in our community with the love of Christ. Close by praying that each person in your group will have eyes to see those around them and a heart responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

*LEADER TIP: Has your group considered meeting during the summer? If not, it might be worth discussing a plan to stay connected. Summer schedules can vary, but maintaining regular points of connection is beneficial for everyone.*