

The 13th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, August 18, 2024

“Close Encounters with Jesus: The Lord & The Leper”

Mark 1:32-45

“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10)

We worship, serve, and follow a God who _____ us so much, He refuses to leave us as we are, and wants to change and transform us.

#1. The Leper's _____.

“A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’” (Mark 1:40)

leprosy = *lepros* =

The OT approach to leprosy was known as “_____ medicine,” which called for social _____ and some sort of strict quarantine procedure.

Since there was no known _____ for leprosy in the ancient world, there was nothing a leper could do to change their _____ in life, and so they lived their pitiful plight without any _____.

His actions may have been socially _____, however, his attitude toward Jesus was both _____ and reverential.

“he fell on his face.” = he flattened himself in _____ adoration before Jesus. The leper saw himself not only as being despised by people, but also _____ by God.

He knew he couldn't presume on Jesus _____ and so, he prefaced his request with the words; “If you are willing.”

His request also exuded _____ based on what he knew Jesus had already done. He'd hear the stories, he knew Jesus' reputation, and he had no doubt about Jesus' _____, “you can make me clean...”

They didn't look upon this man as God's masterpiece, but as a social _____, a disease that threatened their well-being, and that needed to be destroyed.

Despite these reactions, despite the religious rules that governed his life, despite the risk of being stoned to death, the leper is an example of someone who was willing, despite the odds, to _____ and to ask the Lord for healing.

He was a living _____ of James 4:2, “You do not have, because you do not ask.”

What is it that you need to ask Jesus for?

What keeps you from stepping out in faith and receiving all God has for you?

What is keeping you from seeing yourself as God's masterpiece?

#2. The Lord's _____.

“Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.” (Mark 1:41-42)

From the perspective of first century Judaism, Jesus had every right to be _____ by the leper's behaviour. The man had _____ every public health rule, social norm, and even the requirements of the _____.

Instead of turning away from Him, Jesus turned _____ him and met him exactly where he was at—in the midst of his sickness and suffering.

FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE IN JESUS' RESPONSE

• Jesus' _____.

***Splanchnizomai* = compassion =**

It's a _____ word that literally means “to have the bowels yearn.”

Where everyone else saw a diseased leper and _____ and ostracised him, turning their faces away and crossing to the other side of the street, Jesus saw a masterpiece of God, and felt compassion for him. He _____ with the man's plight. He felt the agony of his isolation, distress, and _____. He grieved at the effects of _____ in the world.

• Jesus' _____.

Motivated by this genuine compassion, Jesus stretches out His hand and _____ the man.

We _____ the power of this gesture for both the man and the watching crowd. Since he was diagnosed with leprosy, no one had touched this man. Can you imagine living your life, day in and day out without any physical contact ever. Yet, here, in a moment of total _____, as he lay in the dust begging for deliverance, the Son of God Himself reaches out and heals him with a touch of His hand. Jesus does this in direct _____ of the Jewish Law.

He could have healed the man with a single _____ like He did with the centurion's servant, however, He chose to touch this untouchable. Why? Because I think He wanted to make a point—one that would leave a lasting _____ on both the man and the crowd.

The infinite compassion of Christ was dramatically illustrated in that profound act of _____. His love was such that He was willing to _____ one whom no one else would even come near.

• **Jesus'** _____.

Mark tells us that the healing was _____, in the blink of an eye: "Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed."

He was a horrid, grotesque spectacle one second, and the next, he was _____.

• **Jesus'** _____.

"After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'" (Mark 1:43-44)

The test of true faith is always _____, so as soon as Jesus healed this man, He gave him two specific _____ to follow.

First, Jesus told him not to _____ anyone. This wasn't a suggestion, but a _____.

Second, Jesus sends him to go and show himself to the _____. Although this healing was miraculous, it was still a _____ matter, and before the man could resume his place in society, he needed to fulfill the requirements of the Law as outlined in Leviticus 14.

This healing in back-water Galilee would serve as a powerful _____ to the religious establishment in Jerusalem. Jesus' words also served as a testimony to any onlookers that He didn't _____ the OT requirements.

Where do you need to see Jesus' compassion, willingness, and power in your life?

Where do you need Jesus' healing touch?

What is keeping you from seeing yourself as God's masterpiece?

#3. The _____ of the story.

"But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter." (Mark 1:45)

• It is significant because of the long-term _____ it had on Jesus' ministry. Jesus' instructions had been _____ and unambiguous, however, the former leper proved _____. Although he demonstrated humility and submission in making his request for healing, in his excitement, he went out and _____ everyone what Jesus had done—the exact opposite of what Jesus had commanded him to do.

This testimony only added to the _____ surrounding Jesus, to such an extent, that Mark tells us the crowds became so large and demanding that Jesus couldn't enter a town without being _____. Consequently, He had to withdraw to the _____, and minister on the hill sides or by the sea shore.

We can't ignore the irony here and the _____ between Jesus and the former leper. Mark began this story with Jesus on the inside and the leper on the outside. However, at the end of the story, Jesus is "_____ in lonely places," and the former leper is on the _____.

• It is significant because it provides a wonderful _____ for what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

As sinners, we were all _____ lepers who lived in _____ and isolation from God.

In order to accomplish this plan of _____, Jesus left the presence of Heaven and went into isolation.

On the cross, Jesus was _____. He was rejected by men and even by His Father. Yet, because He was treated as an outcast, believers can now be _____ and welcomed into the presence of God.

For those who are willing to _____ and ask—to come to Him, like the Leper, in humble faith, recognizing their own _____ and asking for mercy—Jesus offers full _____.

Do you need to cry out to Jesus today?

What is keeping you from seeing yourself as God's masterpiece?



Are you willing to step out in faith?

Are you willing to come to Jesus anew and be changed and transformed even more into the masterpiece that you were created to be?