God’s Overflowing Love

Compassion – Mark 1:40-43

**40﻿ A man with leprosy﻿ came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” ﻿41﻿ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” ﻿42﻿ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. ﻿ (NIV)**

*The word “compassion” is filled with rich meaning. In the original Greek, the word literally means to be moved in the gut; to have your insides ache. It refers to the inner organs. The Latin literally means to “suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another.” This word indicates an intensely emotional reaction of unbridled sympathy and heartfelt concern for another.*

Leprosy was contagious, hideous and painful and most often incurable. The man in our text had an advanced case of leprosy (see Luke 5:12). He must have been a pitiful and ugly sight. He was also banned from being a part of society and had to live outside the city.

With words the leper uses he is making a twofold confession: 1) He admits his absolute unworthiness and 2) His childlike trusting faith. Luther says “The leper teaches us how we should believe and pray especially in our bodily needs. This is called the right prayer in such a matter, namely to believe that God can help, and yet not set for him the time, measure or goal, how and when he should help us.”

Lepers were to touch no one or be touched by others because this would make all parties unclean. Jesus, however, does not worry about ceremonial laws and touches the leper. However, rather than Jesus Himself becoming ritually unclean through contact with the leper, Jesus’ touch transmits purity and holiness to the unclean man and restores him!

This was an unheard-of act of compassion which must have moved Him. And, it strengthened the leper in his conviction that he had not asked for help in vain.

We may not have a terrible sickness like leprosy but because of our sin our soul is diseased and uglier than any illness that is known these days. BUT, Jesus reverses the flow of uncleanness. Jesus entered our diseased and unclean world and took all of our ugly sins upon Himself by His death on the cross. He continues to forgive us and make us righteous in His sight. 2nd Corinthians 5:21 states it well: **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”**

Our physical ailments may not go away immediately or at all, but our sins are forgiven instantly when we call out to the Lord.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for leaving the holiness of heaven and coming to this sin-filled world to redeem all sinners and make us holy in your sight. Please wash away all my sins. Amen.