

Connect360: A Personal Touch

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- *Lesson 5 in the BaptistWay Press Connect 360 unit "The reMARKable Journey Begins" focuses on Mark 1:36-45.*

The man with leprosy approached Jesus and begged for his help. "If you are willing, you can make me clean" (Mark 1:40). Both the man's actions and his words demonstrated his belief that Jesus could heal him. Approaching Jesus broke social taboos, but it also showed his boldness. The man believed Jesus could heal him, and he was willing to humble himself and beg for Jesus' help.

Mark 1:41 says that Jesus was "indignant." This might seem strange to us. We know Jesus typically had compassion on people who needed his help. What about this situation might have angered him? It may be that Jesus was angry at the disease and all it symbolized about the effect of sin. Just as sin separates us from God and leads to our spiritual death, the man's disease had separated him from his community and, unchecked, would lead to his physical death. Jesus had not come simply to preach some nice messages that would make people feel better about themselves. Jesus' mission would lead him to a direct confrontation with sin, and victory over death would only come through his sacrifice. The man's condition was a walking reminder of everything Jesus had come to destroy, and it provoked his righteous anger.

Cleansed and made whole

In an act of bold compassion, Jesus reached out and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" (Mark 1:41). The people of the time often thought of sin as something that was contagious. The man's leprosy made

him unclean, and his ritual uncleanness was catching. Yet when Jesus touched the man, Jesus did not become unclean. When Jesus touched the man, the man was healed. In Scripture, miracles are often enacted parables—visible demonstrations of truth about the kingdom of God. This miracle illustrates the way Christ cleanses us from our sin. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ, who did not sin, took the burden of our sin upon himself so he might pay the penalty and make us right with God. We do not contaminate Christ with our sin. Rather, by God’s grace, Christ imputes—or credits—his righteousness to us.

The man’s healing was instantaneous. “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed” (Mark 1:42). In the New Testament, Jesus healed everyone who came to him for help. When we humbly admit our need and come to Jesus, we do not have to fear that he will turn us away. Humility is simply recognizing we need God’s grace and forgiveness. We cannot deal with the problem of our sin any more than the man could heal his own leprosy. We need Christ’s grace, and he gives it freely to all who ask. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

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