

Daily Reading & Meditation

The Lord Jesus Can Make Me Clean

GOSPEL READING: Mark 1:40-45 SUNDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2021

40 And a leper came to him begging him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." 41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be clean." 42 And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. 43 And he sternly charged him, and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people." 45 But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Meditation: Do you seek the Lord Jesus with expectant faith? No one who sought Jesus out was refused his help. Even the untouchables and the outcasts of Jewish society found help in him. Unlike the people of Jesus' time who fled at the sight of a leper, Jesus touched the leper who approached him and he made him whole and clean. Why was this so remarkable? Lepers were outcasts of society. They were driven from their homes and communities and left to fend for themselves. Their physical condition was terrible as they slowly lost the use of their limbs and withered away. They were not only shunned but regarded as "already dead" even by their relatives. The Jewish law forbade anyone from touching or approaching a leper, lest ritual defilement occur.

This leper did something quite remarkable. He approached Jesus confidently and humbly, expecting that Jesus could and would heal him. Normally a leper would be stoned or at least warded off if he tried to come near a rabbi. Jesus not only grants the man his request, but he demonstrates the personal love, compassion, and tenderness of God in his physical touch. The medical knowledge of his day would have regarded such contact as grave risk for incurring infection. Jesus met the man's misery with compassion and tender kindness. He communicated the love and mercy of God in a sign that spoke more eloquently than words. He touched the man and made him clean - not only physically but spiritually as well.

How do you approach those who are difficult to love, or who are shunned by others because they are deformed or have some defect? Do you show them kindness and offer them mercy and help as Jesus did? The Lord is always ready to show us his mercy and to free us from whatever makes us unclean, unapproachable, or unloving towards others.

Psalm 44: 10-11, 14-15, 25-26

10 You have made us turn back from the foe; and our enemies have gotten spoil.

11 You have made us like sheep for slaughter, and have scattered us among the nations.

14 You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples.

15 All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face,

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body cleaves to the ground.

26 Rise up, come to our help! Deliver us for the sake of your steadfast love!

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Why did Jesus touch the leper*, by Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

"And why did [Jesus] touch him, since the law forbade the touching of a leper? He touched him to show that 'all things are clean to the clean' (Titus 1:15). Because the filth that is in one person does not adhere to others, nor does external uncleanness defile the clean of heart. So he touches him in his untouchability, that he might instruct us in humility; that he might teach us that we should despise no one, or abhor them, or regard them as pitiable, because of some wound of their body or some blemish for which they might be called to render an account... So, stretching forth his hand to touch, the leprosy immediately departs. The hand of the Lord is found to have touched not a leper, but a body made clean! Let us consider here, beloved, if there be anyone here that has the taint of leprosy in his soul, or the contamination of guilt in his heart? If he has, instantly adoring God, let him say: 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.'" (excerpt from *FRAGMENTS ON MATTHEW 2.2-3*)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, inflame my heart with your love and make me clean and whole in body, mind, and spirit. May I never doubt your love nor cease to tell others of your mercy and compassion **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Your gift of healing"

Lord Almighty, You love us so much. You were sent from your Father, sent to save us from destruction. We truly can never make it to Heaven without the help of Jesus the Son, who was sent to earth to help us.

You Lord are full of mercy and grace, please forgive us for our faults. Lord Jesus, in you all healing is performed.

You Lord are the miracle worker. In your Spirit, your gift of healing is alive. In you Lord we can put our trust that you can heal us. **Amen.**