

## INTRODUCTION

I can recall when I was growing up there was a TV show called *The Untouchables*. At the time, I had no clue who or what was “untouchable” in the show. I just know that when my dad was watching it, the channel changer was “untouchable” for any of us kids! I later learned the show was about Elliot Ness, an FBI agent in the 1920s, who brought down Al Capone and other mobsters who were considered to be “untouchable” by the law.

In this message, we are going to see that Jesus dealt with “untouchables” long before Elliot Ness came on the scene. Jesus did something nobody else was willing to do at the time. He was willing to reach out and touch those people who were physically and ceremonially unclean. Thus, they were untouchable to observing Jews. However, Jesus was willing to touch the untouchable.

Let’s read about it in Luke 5:12-15: While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

A couple of weeks ago, I reminded you there is a parable in every miracle of Jesus and there is a miracle in every parable of Jesus. This is an occasion of literal healing that took place 2,000 years ago. But when we take the time to study it carefully, we see it is a powerful parable about how Jesus is *still* touching the untouchables. Because this scripture is about the healing of a leper, you may be tempted to just gloss over this scripture in search of one that applies to you. I believe this passage has a powerful application to each of us; don’t miss it. Let me make three observations that we can learn from this healing event and apply it to our lives today.

### I. OUR SINFUL CONDITION CAN BE COMPARED TO LEPROSY

In Bible times, leprosy was a terrible disease. It is caused by a bacterial infection (discovered in 1874 by Gerhard Hansen). Thus, it is most often referred to as “Hansen’s disease” today. Leprosy caused widespread suffering during the Middle Ages. You can visit old cathedrals in Europe and find “leper squints” in the walls. These were narrow openings through which those with leprosy could peek during church services, because they weren’t allowed inside. For many years the Hawaiian island of Molokai was reserved as a place to isolate lepers. We don’t see leprosy much any more in America because of the advent of sulfa-based medications. However, leprosy, or Hansen’s disease, is still found in many tropical regions of the world.

In the Bible, leprosy was not only a disease that affected a person physically but also rendered them ceremonially unclean. Leviticus 13:45-46 describes the impact of leprosy: “The person with such infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part

of his face and cry out ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.”

In the Bible, leprosy is often used as a symbol for sin. While none of us have the disease of leprosy, we have been afflicted with a terrible malady worse than leprosy—a sin sickness. I believe there is a remarkable parallel between leprosy and sin. I want to show you four ways in which leprosy and sin are alike.

## **Like leprosy, sin:**

### **1. Begins small but spreads steadily**

According to Leviticus, leprosy often began with just a small spot on the skin. It then spread to other areas of the body. Only after 14 days of examination could a priest declare a person indeed had leprosy.

Dr. William Hendricksen writes the following concerning the disease of leprosy: “The disease which we today call leprosy generally begins with pain in certain areas of the body. Numbness follows. Soon the skin in such spots loses its original color. It gets to be thick, glossy, and scaly. The affliction is called leprosy because it makes the skin scaly (the Greek word *lepos*, meaning scale). As the sickness progresses, the thickened spots become dirty sores and ulcers due to poor blood supply. The skin, especially around the eyes and ears, begins to bunch, with deep furrows between the swellings, so that the face of the afflicted individual begins to resemble that of an animal. Fingers drop off or are absorbed. Toes are affected similarly. Eyebrows and eyelashes drop off. The disease can rapidly deteriorate into a terminal illness.”

The progression of sin is very similar. Although we are born with a tendency to sin, our first sins are usually what we would call minor. However, unless we allow Jesus to fix our sin problem early in life, sin grows and spreads like a metastasis until it consumes us. The growth of sin in a person’s life can sometimes happen so slowly that they don’t even notice it.

Perhaps you’ve heard of the proverbial “frog in the kettle.” If you put a frog in boiling hot water, the frog will immediately try to escape. However if you put a frog in warm water and slowly and gradually increase the temperature, the frog will stay until the water until it dies. (That’s what I’ve heard, I don’t plan on testing the theory.)

One tragic symptom of leprosy is that it deadens the nerve endings. People with leprosy often lose their finger and toes because they can no longer feel pain there. If you touch a hot stove, your nerve endings send a quick panic message to your brain, “Remove your finger.” Lepers run the risk of having their fingers or toes crushed or burned because the nerve endings can’t send warning signals to the brain if there is pain present. Sin does exactly the same thing. A person who is consumed with sin becomes desensitized to the warning signals of their moral conscience. It is hard for us to understand how certain people can commit terrible sins or crimes and seem to have to remorse. What has happened? Their moral conscience has lost any feeling it once had.

### **2. Disfigures God’s created beauty**

One of the worse characteristics of leprosy is that an infected person becomes terribly disfigured. Within a matter of weeks, the person is unrecognizable because of the leprosy. The Old Testament word for leprosy is “tssarah” which means “to rot.” It resulted in the sloughing away of healthy skin. Many experts relate that a person in the advanced stages of leprosy looks more like a wild animal than a person.

That’s exactly what sin does to a person as well. Remember Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? They possessed the beauty of innocence. However, their choice to disobey God resulted in a change in their appearance. God announced Adam would have to toil “by the sweat of his brow.” Sin took something that was once beautiful and made it ugly.

When I was very young, I sat next to my mother in church. Since the sermon was “boring,” I paged through her Bible because it had some neat pictures. I can still remember the first picture in her Bible was a replica of a painting of Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden. I’ve since learned that it was a print painted by Thomas Cole in 1828 entitled “Expulsion from the Garden of Eden.” Even though I didn’t know the whole story, I could tell Adam and Eve were in big trouble. The beauty and light of the Garden of Eden can be seen on the right side of the picture, but on the left, where Adam and Eve are is a dark, ugly scene. The artist captured a moment in time when it seemed as if they realized all they were losing. Sin had disfigured their lives. When you are a little kid sitting during a long sermon, you can take the time to really look at that kind of stuff. I remember thinking, “Whatever it was they did—I don’t want any part of it!”

Sin does that to people. Sometimes you can actually see the ravages of sin reflected in a person’s face. On the other hand, you may not see the ugliness on their faces but the Bible speaks of an inner kind of beauty that is God’s plan for everyone. Sin destroys and disfigures this inner beauty God desires for every person. That little child or grandchild who is so pretty and innocent actually has within his/her heart the tendency and propensity to sin. Unless they grow up and trust Christ to forgive their sin and to change their sin nature, that child will grow up and become ugly in his practice of wickedness. Like leprosy, sin disfigures a person from God’s intended spiritual beauty.

**Like leprosy, sin:**

### **3. Isolates from the blessings of God**

One of the most tragic things about leprosy was that infected persons were not allowed to be with their families. They were thrown out of their homes and town and had to live alone. But often lepers lived together: misery loves its own company.

Many of you have seen the classic movie *Ben Hur*. Do you remember the scene in which Ben Hur, played by Charlton Heston, finds his mother and sister living in a leper colony? It was an ugly scene of human misery. That’s a pretty accurate picture of the hopeless and helpless condition of lepers. Ben Hur breaks the law because he takes his mother and sister to find Jesus because he believes Jesus can heal them. When he gets them to Jesus, it is too late, Jesus is already carrying His cross to Calvary. In the movie Ben Hur follows Jesus to the cross and

watches Him die. When he returns, he finds his mother and sister have been cured. Although that was only a screenplay, many of the elements of that movie were based on the Bible. Hollywood has come a long way –in the wrong way–since then!

Lepers were forcibly separated and denied contact with those they loved. To make matters worse, they were also considered ceremonially unclean. This meant they were excluded from any spiritual blessings or activities. Blindness was another common symptom of leprosy that increased this helpless feeling of isolation. Because lepers cannot “feel” with their hands, they are not able to function like other blind people. The disease caused them to have a terrible sense of isolation. They felt, alone, despised, rejected and hopeless.

How tragic! That is exactly what sin does. It isolates a person from the blessings of God. In Isaiah 59:2 we read, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” If you ever have the sense that God seems “far away” the very first place you need to look is to see if there is sin in your life. Sin separates a person from God. That has two different applications, depending on whether or not you are saved.

### **For an unbeliever, sin prevents the gift of eternal life (relationship)**

That means that sin keeps you from having a saving relationship with God. Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The only thing that will keep you out of heaven is sin. Every person is born with this seed of sin that develops into a full-blown case of terminal wickedness, like leprosy; that is, unless you come to Jesus and allow Him to heal you of this sin problem.

If you are a Christian you might have tuned me out thinking, “This message is only for lost people. I’m saved, so it doesn’t apply to me.” Oh yes it does! Sin in the life of a Christian does exactly the same thing; it isolates you from the blessings of God.

### **For a believer, sin prevents the enjoyment of the abundant life (fellowship)**

You can be saved, and your sins can be forgiven but if you still allow sin to creep back into your life, you will miss out on maintaining good fellowship with the Lord. It isn’t a terminal case of sin, it’s a chronic case that will just make your life miserable.

### **Finally, like leprosy, sin**

#### **4. Leads to death**

While leprosy itself was not actually terminal, in the times of Jesus, people usually died from the complications associated with it. In the Talmud, there was a rabbinical prayer that was prayed over a person who was found to have leprosy. It was not a prayer of healing; it was more like a funeral prayer. A leper was considered dead from the moment they were declared to be unclean. That is an accurate description of sin as well. The Bible says sin always leads to death. In James 1:15 we read, “Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full

grown, gives birth to death.” When I was in college I memorized that verse in the King James Version and it uses the word “lust” instead of “desire.” The way I remembered it was that I said it was Satan’s “LSD.” Lust...Sin...Death.

A person with leprosy was still breathing, walking around, eating, and talking but was considered the walking dead. A person without Jesus is already dead, even though they are walking around, breathing, eating, and talking. Paul confirms this by these words he wrote to Christians in Ephesus: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...” (Ephesians 2:1) He didn’t say they were going to die in the sins; he said they were already dead.

Try to put yourself in the sandals of a person with leprosy for just a moment. It starts with a red spot on your skins and spreads to the rest of your body. You are ostracized from your family and friends. Your body begins to change and take on the look of a wild animal. You begin to lose all sense of feeling and to make matters worse, people consider you to be dead already! Can you think of anything more tragic than that? I can. There are people reading this who are infected with terminal sin. They may not even be aware of it. It started small, but has spread throughout your life. It has disfigured the intended beauty God planned for your life. It has isolated you from the blessings of God and you are *dead* right now in your trespasses and sins. That’s a pretty sad scenario but I’ve got *good news* for you. Just as the leper in our text found hope, there is hope for anyone who is afflicted with this sin condition. That leads to my second observation in this message:

## **II. OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO SEEK A CURE FROM JESUS**

This leper does a courageous thing. He heard about Jesus so he fought through the crowd to find Him. He fell on his face and begged Jesus to heal him. Without a doubt, that was the *most important* decision this man ever made. He found himself in a hopeless and helpless condition yet he didn’t give up hope. He sought the right help. If you are suffering from the affliction of terminal sin, you can do the same thing. This leper serves as a good model to us on how we should seek Jesus. He demonstrates two qualities I believe are required before a person can be changed by Jesus.

### **1. He demonstrated HUMILITY**

He approached Jesus with a willingness to humble himself. The Bible says he fell on his face before Jesus. If you truly want to seek Jesus, you must be willing to fall on your face before Him.

The Bible says, “God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.” (I Peter 5:5) I am convinced the reason some people will never be saved is because they are too proud to even admit they need help. They deny they have a problem. It would have been like that man looking at himself and saying, “Leprosy? No, it’s just a minor skin irritation. You should see some of the people down in the leper colony, I’m a lot better off than they are!” The attitude of most people in America is, “Sinner? Not me. I’m no worse than anybody else around me. In fact, I’m *better* than some of those folks who go down to your church.”

Or some admit they have a problem but they think they can fix it themselves. Can't you just hear the leper saying, “Yeah, I've got a problem, but I am using this new herbal ointment my brother told me about. I am going to clean up this leprosy with my own medicine.” As I have told you many times before, the most misguided “spiritual statement” you hear Americans quote is: GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES. They really think it's in the Bible! It's not only *not* in the Bible; it's a dangerous saying.

The leper in our story didn't believe God helps those who help themselves. He realized he *couldn't* help himself! That's why he threw himself on his face before Jesus and begged for help. The truth is *not*: God helps those who help themselves. The truth *is*: God helps the helpless—when they come to Him in humility and beg Him to help.

## 2. He demonstrated FAITH

He said to Jesus, “If you are *willing*, I know that you *can* make me clean.” Before Jesus can change you, you must believe Jesus can heal you. We need to study that statement for a moment. I've heard people try to get very picky when they talk about how to pray, saying, “Don't ever use the word ‘IF’ when you pray, it shows a lack of faith.” They will warn you to never pray, “Lord, IF it is your will.”

I recall a conversation I had with a young man several years ago. He believed it was God's will to provide physical healing in every case. He told me it was a lack of faith to pray, “Lord if it is your will.” He told me that we don't have to ask whether or not God is willing to heal, instead we should just claim it by faith. That sounds nice and preachers have made millions of dollars preaching that kind of doctrine—but is that biblical? Not according to this text.

What is faith? I once read this statement in a popular book on prayer: Faith is not believing that God can—faith is believing God will. That sure sounds good. But is it correct? This leper said two things, both of which violate what a lot of people are teaching today. First, he said, “*If* you are willing.” And he also said, “I believe you *can* make me clean.”

Our poor leper must not have heard some of our modern faith preachers or read some of the books on faith. If he had, he would have approached Jesus and said, “I know you *will* heal me so go ahead, I *claim* what's mine!” Ouch. You can't handcuff God to His Word and use it as some magical incantation. It's not about reciting the correct formula and demanding that God respond the way you desire. Simple faith is just that: simple. It says, “God I believe you *can* but I am not going to presume upon your will. This is what I desire but only if *You* are willing.”

Do you have a need? Tell God you are absolutely certain that He can meet your need. Express to the Lord the only issue is His willingness to do so. Fall before Him in humility and ask Him to help you. Verse 12 says the leper “begged him.” That is how faith operates. It doesn't show a lack of faith to pray, “Lord *if* you are willing, you *can* do anything.”

Here is the final part of this wonderful miracle:

## III. CLEANSING ONLY COMES BY THE TOUCH OF JESUS

Notice the three statements Jesus makes to the leper. It is the same thing He says to every person afflicted with terminal sin who approaches Him in humility and faith. First, Jesus says:

### **1. “I am willing!” God wants everyone to be saved**

Jesus recognizes the faith of the leper who has confessed he believed Jesus *could* heal him. I can’t say Jesus was willing to heal every leper in Israel. No doubt there were thousands of lepers during His ministry He did not heal. I believe Jesus can heal everyone. I don’t understand why it is not His will to do so. However, I can say with confidence that God wants everyone to be saved. How do I know that with certainty? His Word declares it. Look at 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Now let’s learn something very important about God’s Will people often miss. According to this verse is it God’s will that every person be saved? Yes. Is everyone going to be saved? No. You may think, “Whoa! I thought God’s will was *always* done.” Not necessarily. For God’s will to be done, our will must agree with His. It was God’s will for me to be saved but it wouldn’t have happened unless my will came into agreement with His when I was 9 years old. That’s why Jesus taught us to pray, “Your will *be* done on earth as it is in heaven.” We must pray for it to happen, and we must obey God so that His will *may* happen.

I don’t have the time or the place to go into a detailed study of the Will of God at this time, but please understand a basic principle: *God’s will is not always done*. Here’s the next step in that logic: *Not everything that happens is God’s will*. God gets blamed for a lot of things He didn’t will. Often after disaster strikes, someone says, “Well, it was just the will of God.” Be very careful how you understand the will of God.

What we *can* be certain about is that it was the Will of God to heal that particular leper but it wasn’t God’s will to heal *every* leper. But it *is* God’s will to save everyone but forget the everyone and thing about yourself. It is God’s will to save you—particularly. Will you align your will with God’s will? Notice the second thing Jesus said:

### **2. “Be clean!” We must see there is healing in the touch of Jesus.**

The most amazing thing about this story appears in verse 13 where it says, “Jesus reached out his hand and touched him...” Jews were forbidden to touch lepers. To touch a leper would make that person ceremonially unclean. Kosher Jews were not even allowed to breath the same air; that’s why lepers had to cover the bottoms of their faces. Everywhere they went they had to cry out “Unclean! Unclean!” This was a warning so clean Jews could avoid them. The Talmud stated that a leper could not get within six feet of a “clean person.”

Try to imagine this scene: Jesus is walking along when suddenly a leper breaks through the crowd and falls before Him begging Jesus to heal him. I can hear as the other members of the crowd gasp in horror. They cover their mouths and turn away from this leper who has broken the law and approached Jesus. Then Jesus shocks the crowd. He reaches out touches him. Not as a doctor who is examining a patient, but he reaches out in compassion and touches him with

healing power. He touches the untouchable. I love that scene don't you? Nobody else will touch this poor man. How long do you think it had been since he had been hugged or touched by another human? He was hungry for any human touch, and Jesus touches him with love and healing.

I certainly don't understand exactly how His healing works, but I know the Bible teaches that every time Jesus healed someone, there was a “power of goodness” that “went out of Jesus into the sick person.” In Luke 8, we are going to see a sick woman who slips through the crowd to touch Jesus. He realizes someone has touched Him because He said, “I know that power went out of me.” (Luke 8:46) I believe whenever Jesus healed someone, it “took something out of Him.” The same thing is true of our salvation. When Jesus bore our own sins in His body, the Bible says He “became sin for us.” (2 Corinthians 5:21) Whether it was sin, sickness or sorrow, Jesus took them upon Himself so we would no longer suffer. That beautiful old hymn says, “He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own; he bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone.” (“I Stand Amazed in the Presence”, Charles H. Gabriel, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

In that instant, the leper's disease immediately disappeared. One second before, he was terminally ill and ceremonially unclean. In the next moment, he was physically well and ceremonially acceptable. That is a beautiful picture of the moment of salvation. You grow up to it, and you should certainly grow after it, but regeneration takes place in an instant. In one split second Jesus touches you, and says, “Be clean!” In that second you pass from death into life. One second you are terminally afflicted with sin, unacceptable to God. In the next second, you are forgiven and accepted by God.

How does our cleansing for sin take place? When we accept what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross. What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. 1 John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” I want to tell you, “There is a fountain filled with blood-drawn from Immanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose ALL their guilty stains!” (William Cowper, “There is a Fountain,” *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991) Hallelujah! Has that happened to you? We aren't through with the story yet, because the third thing Jesus says to the leper is found in verse 14.

### **3. “Go show!” If you've been touched, you will testify**

He said not to tell everyone. Instead Jesus told the leper to follow the Old Testament directions in Leviticus and let the local priest examine him and certify that he was clean. There had not been a leper cleansed in Israel since the time of the prophet Elisha. This would be the *first* such miracle this priest would have ever seen. Notice Jesus said, “as a testimony to them.” Priest is singular, but then Jesus uses the plural “them.” Why? Jesus knew this priest would tell other priests who would tell other priests. That's why verse 15 says, “the news about him spread all the more.” The network of priests talked about this miracle to everyone. So many people heard about it that once again, Jesus had to escape to a private place to pray.

The important application to us is this: *If you've been touched, you will testify.* Have you done that? If you have been saved have you given your public testimony? Have you followed Jesus by being baptized which is your first and most powerful testimony? Have you joined a local church to testify and identify with other members of the body of Christ? Have you been sharing your testimony with others? This cleansed leper couldn't wait to tell others Jesus had made a difference in his life. I can imagine that for the rest of his life he told that story over and over again.

Has that happened to you? Can you look back at a time when Jesus touched you and you were saved? Have you testified to that change? When I was a youth pastor I would take my guitar and lead the teenagers in singing this old chorus, "While I was praying - somebody touched me (3x) - it must have been the hand of the Lord." Then we would sing, "It was on a Monday, somebody touched me (3x)..." and if you were saved on a Monday, you would stand up. Then we would go through the days of the week. People would stand up on the day of the week they had been saved. It was great to see the teenagers jumping up clapping their hands on the day they had been saved, they would keep standing. After naming all the days of the week, we had a verse for those who knew they were saved but just couldn't remember the exact day. We sang, "Glory hallelujah, somebody touched me..." That was always a great, evangelistic tool, because if there were teenagers there who weren't saved, they couldn't stand up, so it would really get them thinking. There were dozens of kids who would come up to me at the end of the evening and they would usually say the same thing, "David, when we sang that song about the days of the week, I realized that I have never been saved." Then they would get saved. After that they could sing, "Somebody touched me."

If you had met this leper he would have gladly told you about his healing. He wouldn't say, "Well, I *think* I was healed." Or "I hope I was healed." He would say, "Praise the Lord! I *know* I was healed and here is how it happened!"

What would happen today if we sang that old chorus? How many of you would stand up on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and so on. How many of you know without a shadow of a doubt you have been saved - but you can't remember the exact day of the week. You could stand up on the "glory hallelujah" verse. But how many of you would still be sitting in your seat? If you have been touched by Jesus, you will want to testify.

## CONCLUSION

Jesus is still in the business of touching the untouchables. You may feel like you are too dirty, or too wicked for Jesus to touch you with His forgiveness today.

You may remember the movie "The Elephant Man," based on a true story of a man living in London during the 19th century. John Merrick was terribly disfigured by neurofibromatosis. His own family rejected him because of his hideous appearance. Dr. Fredrick Treves found John working in a circus as a sideshow freak. Dr. Treves took John to a London hospital and began to treat him as a person instead of some sideshow oddity. He provided books for John and soon discovered he was a kind, intelligent person.

After a newspaper reported on John’s progress, Madge Kendall came to visit him. Madge was a talented actress and a beautiful woman of high society. She was also a committed Christian. On one visit she presented John Merrick with a copy of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. He felt like an ugly beast cowering before a fairy princess. He was at such a loss for words he opened the book and began to read. His voice was squeaky and broken as he read the words from the second act: “See! How she leaned her cheek upon her hand that I might touch her cheek.”

As he read that line, Madge Kendall slipped quietly into the seat beside him. She responded with the words of Juliet she had memorized from her years in the theater. John read and she recited the rest of the act together. When it was done, Madge Kendall leaned over and kissed his swollen, leathery cheek. And Dr. Treves later recorded that from that moment on, John Merrick was a changed man!

Sin has disfigured each of us until even our righteousness is as filthy rags. Compared to the perfect holiness of God, our sinful lives are hideous and grotesque. But the Lord Jesus Christ leaned over at Calvary and kissed our sin-shriveled lives with the mercies of heaven and since that day, none of us have ever been the same.

Dear friend do you need cleansing today? Will you come to Jesus and fall at His feet and say, “Lord, I need help. I have a sin problem. I know I’m going to die from this sin unless you forgive me. I know you *can* save me. Will you? I ask you right now to touch my sinful heart and take away my sin.”

Are you a Christian today who has known the cleansing of Jesus but you have allowed sin to creep back into your life? Why don’t you humble yourself and come to Jesus today for a second touch. Why don’t you pray, “Lord, I know you have forgiven me, but I have become defiled by my impure thoughts, or my unclean actions. I know what it is to be clean before you and I want to be clean again! I want our fellowship to be restored to what it once was. Will you cleanse me today?”

## OUTLINE

### I. OUR SINFUL CONDITION CAN BE COMPARED TO LEPROSY

"The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp." *Leviticus 13:45-46*

Like leprosy, sin:

1. Begins small but spreads steadily
2. Disfigures God's created beauty
3. Isolates from the blessings of God

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. *Isaiah 59:2*

For an unbeliever, sin prevents the give of eternal life (relationship).

For a believer, sin prevents the enjoyment of the abundant life (fellowship).

4. Leads to death

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. *James 1:15*

### II. OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO SEEK A CURE FROM JESUS

Two requirements:

1. Humility (Fall at the feet of Jesus)
2. Faith (Believe that God CAN cleanse you)

### III. CLEANSING COMES ONLY BY THE TOUCH OF JESUS

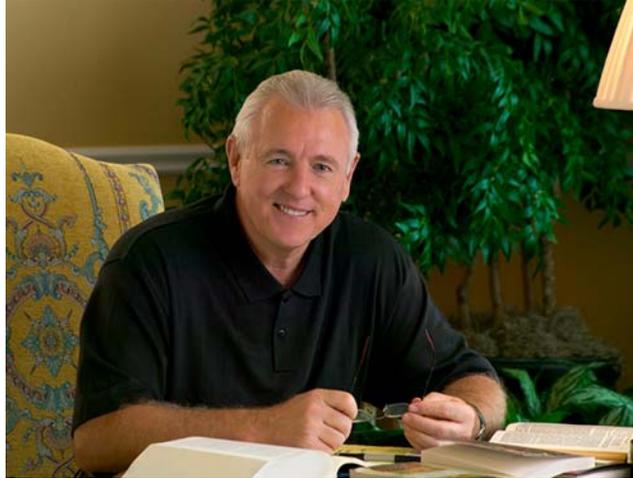
1. "I am willing!" God wants everyone to be saved

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 *Peter 3:9*

2. "Be clean!" There is healing in the touch of Jesus

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 *John 1:7*

3. "Go, show!" If you've been touched, you will testify



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes