

Jesus and the leper

From reading notes 8/26/19

Introduction

- We have talked quite a bit about faith over the last few years, especially as it relates to healing
- I want to share two more stories (this week and next week) to further examine the issue
- In our story today a leper approaches Jesus for healing. **Note:** There are several similarities between this passage (I've never preached it) and the woman with the issue of blood (shared it several times)

Text

Matt 8:1-3 (ESV) (1) *When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. (2) And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." (3) And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

Context

- Just finished the *Sermon on the mount*
- There was a crowd that listened to him **Matt 5:1** (ESV) (1) *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.*
- And apparently they followed him as he came down the mountain
- From that crowd this man comes

The man's faith

- Unlike other stories - Jesus doesn't speak directly about his faith
- But faith is known by her actions - "you can tell what I believe by what i do"
- So today we're going to look at this man's actions to see what we can discover about his faith

He believed Jesus was worthy

- He kneels down before Jesus
- Paying him honor, acknowledging his greatness
- Have we lost this? Are we so proud that we think Jesus works for us? That He is our

servant?

- It's time we kneel again before the King of kings and Lord of Lords!

He believed Jesus was worth the effort!

- See him boldly coming to Jesus with his need
- Tom says *Come get yours* - and that's what this man was doing
- I think sometimes we hang back and wait for someone else.
- This man (and others in Scripture) make getting to Jesus with their need a priority
- How about us?

He believed Jesus was able

- At the core - he believed Jesus could make him whole
- See the statement in v2 "You can make me clean"
- There is no doubt in Jesus' ability!

The man's doubt

- Such great faith!
- Not just a profession of faith *you can make me clean* but the actions back that faith up!
- He had doubt too - a doubt that plagues us when we pray for healing, etc.
- It's expressed in the phrase *if you will* - are you willing
- **Thought:** This is our doubt too...
- Am I good enough / worthy?
- Is God *in the mood*?
- **Note:** This is the point of this story!

The Lord's response

We know the *end of the story* but let's look at a couple of things!

Received him in spite of his unworthiness!

- Jesus wasn't too busy - but received the man as he came to him (think about the crowd pressing in, etc.)
- The man's action was illegal - he had leprosy and should not have been in among the people
- Jesus doesn't exclude him as unclean (praise the Lord! He welcomes the unclean, the unwashed, the outcast)

- **Note:** Sometimes religion keeps people from Jesus - but he never erects barriers. See **John 6:37 (ESV)** (37) *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*
- After he heals the man - he sends him to the priests so that the law might be fulfilled, and as a testimony to those under the law
- See his teaching in **Matt 5:17 (ESV)** (17) *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*
- He would go on to Calvary to fulfill the law - paying the price
- See **Matt 8:4 (ESV)** (4) *And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."* - Jesus kept the law!
- See also notes re: [Thoughts re: Atonement](#)

Revealed rather than rebuke

- He could have gotten upset and told the man learn more, etc
- Instead he reveals himself (by healing) but also taught the man something that we can learn today
- *I am willing* - Jesus is willing to heal the sick
- Remember last week - healing is part of the Gospel message - it reveals the nature of God!
- The question for us today: *Is Jesus still willing to heal?"*
- The short answer: yes! That's part of what he purchased at Calvary
- Which begs the question: Why am I not healed?
- Not due to a lack of His provision
- Might be a lack of faith
- Might be a lack of surrender (see the man kneel)
- Might be a lack of persistence
- Might not be the right time - see Jesus didn't heal him during the preaching
- We pray *Thy will be done!* We know that he's willing - so we press in and take it - waiting patiently as we trust

Healed him because of His grace

- Jesus heals the man immediately
- Proving his: payment for the man's sin, desire/willingness and ability!

Applications

What do we do with this story, and the things about which we're praying

Disheartened by the effort?

- Have we given up
- Has the press of the *crowd* caused us to stop seeking His provision?
- I know it's hard, but keep praying

Discouraged by your failure?

- This man didn't let the leprosy stop him
- Enemy focuses us on our failures
- Jesus paid it all - we have to trust in the blood

See the Lord's response

- I am willing, be healed
- **Rom 8:31-32** (ESV) (31) *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*