

“He Is Willing!”
(Mark 1:40-45)

I. Introduction.

- A. Orientation. Have you ever thought – as the Roman Church teaches today – that now that Jesus is in heaven, you can’t approach Him as you might have during the time He walked the earth?
1. That you need somehow to be good enough to ask Him for His mercy, His help, even His salvation.
 2. Or that you need to find someone good enough to approach Him for you.
 3. Have you ever asked someone to pray for you because you believe Jesus is more willing to receive them than you?

B. Preview.

1. What you need to see this morning is that Jesus is willing to receive you, if you come to Him in the right way.
 - a. This account of the leper is a good example of this very thing.
 - b. He came to Jesus and didn’t go away disappointed.
 - c. And that for two reasons:
 - (i) Because he came in faith and humility.
 - (ii) And because Jesus is full of mercy and compassion.
2. This morning, consider these three things:
 - a. First, that you can come to Jesus, if you come in the right way.
 - b. Second, that when you come to Jesus in the right way, you can expect that He will show you mercy.
 - c. Finally, that in return for His mercy, there is something Jesus wants you to do for Him.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, when you come to Jesus for His mercy and grace, you should come as this leper did.
1. First, you should come humbly. “And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him” (v. 40).
 - a. It’s not clear from Mark’s account exactly who this leper thought Jesus was – whether He was the Son of God, the Messiah, or a great Prophet.
 - b. But it is clear that he came showing Him honor and approached Him with humility.
 - (i) He came pleading, begging Jesus to help him – he knew he didn’t deserve this help.
 - (ii) He came kneeling before Him – showing Him reverence.
 - (iii) He didn’t come demanding; He didn’t come believing that Jesus had to perform even in light of God’s promise.
 - (iv) He came as a beggar asking for mercy.

- c. When you come to Jesus – even when you come asking for something He’s promised – never forget that you don’t deserve His mercy or grace – you may not demand, but like this leper you must plead.
2. Second, you should come believing that He is able to help you. The leper said, “If You are willing, You can make me clean” (v. 40).
 - a. Jesus didn’t appear in power or glory, but in humility as a man.
 - b. Yet the leper believed He was sent by God and that He had power to heal.
 - (i) The leper believed He could do whatever He wanted to do, as Martha who in the case of Lazarus said, “Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You” (John 11:22).
 - (ii) He believed Jesus could make him clean.
 - c. If you are to receive His help, you must believe He is able to help you as well.
 - (i) You must believe that He is real, not just a fairytale or fantasy.
 - (ii) You must believe that He has the power to do what you ask.
 - (iii) And you must believe He is willing: the author to the Hebrews writes, “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (11:6).
3. And third, you must be willing humbly to submit to whatever He may wish to do for you. The leper said, “If You are willing, You can . . .” (v. 40).
 - a. It’s not that the leper thought He wouldn’t help; he didn’t want to be presumptuous or demanding; he wanted Jesus to know that he was a debtor to His mercy and grace.
 - b. And that is what you must do as well – when you come to Him, you must be willing to submit to His will, His timing and His way of answering your prayer. You must let Him be Lord.
- B. Second, if you come humbly, believing and submissive to His will, what can you expect to receive?
1. In a word, you can expect whatever by faith you are able to receive. Jesus says, “It shall be done to you according to your faith” (Matt. 9:29).
 - a. Notice first, that the leper never asked Jesus to heal him.
 - (i) He didn’t say, “If you are willing, please heal me.”
 - (ii) Rather, he told Jesus what he believed Jesus was able to do. “If you are willing, You can make me clean.”
 - (iii) It may be that professing faith in what the Lord can do, while submitting to what He will do, is the best way to receive His mercy.
 - b. Notice second, how Jesus responded to his faith and humility, “Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed’” (v. 41).
 - (i) Jesus saw his need – that he was a leper, diseased and cast out of society.

- (ii) Jesus saw his faith – that he believed Jesus could heal him.
 - (iii) And Jesus was moved to help him. He was moved by the man’s miserable condition; He healed him as an act of pure mercy.
 - (iv) You can’t come to Jesus demanding His mercy; but you can trust that He will be merciful – that He will be touched by your need and reach out to help you.
2. You can also expect the Lord to extend comfort: “Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him” (v. 41).
- a. Jesus touched this leper, something no one would ever dare to do.
 - (i) Leprosy is contagious – if someone had it, they were to cry out, “unclean,” if anyone was getting too close so they wouldn’t be infected.
 - (ii) If you touched a leper, you would be quarantined for a time until the priest could determine whether you had the disease.
 - (iii) This leper hadn’t been touched by another person – except maybe another leper – since he had become sick.
 - (iv) But Jesus, moved with compassion, touched him.
 - b. Jesus is your sympathetic and merciful High Priest.
 - (i) He is touched by your infirmities and weakness.
 - (ii) And He stands ready to care for you in the same way.
3. Finally, you can expect that Jesus will answer your request, “Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed’” (v. 41).
- a. He gave the command and the leper was healed.
 - (i) The leper believed Jesus was able to heal him.
 - (ii) Jesus responded with a command, “Be cleansed.”
 - (iii) And because of the authority He has over sickness, the disease had to obey and leave, “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed” (v. 42).
 - b. If you come in humility, faith and submission, you may ask for whatever you need and Jesus will hear and answer you. Isn’t this what John said, “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:21-22).
- C. Finally, what should you do when you receive the Lord’s mercy? You do whatever He asks of you.
- 1. If He frees you from His discipline, you should be willing to turn from the sin that caused Him to afflict you in the first place.
 - a. After Jesus healed the leper, “He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the

priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them” (v.v. 43-44).

- b. The word translated “sternly warn” can mean to scold, reproach or reprove. Some commentators believe Jesus was warning the man not to continue in the particular sin that was the cause of his leprosy.
 - c. This is what He said to the lame man He healed at the pool of Bethesda, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you” (John 5:14).
 - d. If you pray and the Lord delivers you from His discipline, you must also be willing to repent of the sin that caused it.
2. You must also be willing to tell others about what He has done for you.
- a. Jesus told the leper to go to the priest to make an offering for his cleansing. He wanted him to do this for two reasons:
 - (i) Because this is what the Law of God required.
 - (ii) And because it was the priest’s duty to determine whether or not the leper had been cleansed.
 - (a) Once the priest had made that determination, he would have to admit that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - (b) When the disciples of John came to Jesus asking if He was the expected One, Jesus replied, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me” (Matt. 11:4-6).
 - (iii) This is how Jesus wanted this leper to glorify God and provide a testimony for Him.
 - (a) This appears to be what Jesus required whenever He healed a leper (Cf. Luke 17:14).
 - (b) Afterwards, it seems he would be free to tell everyone else - it’s unlikely that Jesus’ prohibition was absolute since He had sent him to the priest for the very purpose of proving His Messiahship.
 - b. The leper, however, doesn’t appear to have gone to the priest. “But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere” (v. 45).
 - (i) Understandably, he wanted to tell everyone what Jesus had done for him – which would have been commendable under other circumstances.
 - (ii) But his misdirected testimony prevented Jesus from being able publicly to enter the cities.
 - c. The point is, when the Lord shows you mercy – by granting you forgiveness, saving you from hell, or by healing you or delivering you from some danger or discipline– make sure you take seriously what He tells you to do.

- (i) The right response to mercy is obedience.
- (ii) He wants you to tell others what He has done for you – He wants you to testify of Him – but He wants you to do it in the way He tells you.
- (iii) Sometimes your best intentioned efforts can actually work against the Lord’s glory, rather than for it.

d. Summary:

- (i) And so remember when you come to the Lord to come in humility – knowing you don’t deserve His mercy – in faith – believing He can and will help you – and in submission to how He wants to meet that need.
- (ii) Know that when you come in this way, Jesus will very graciously and tenderly care for your need.
- (iii) Finally, be willing to tell others what He has done for you, but make sure you do it in the way He calls you to. Amen.

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