

Mat 8:1 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. [2] And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." [3] Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. [4] And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Biblical Background: -

- In Chapter Seven - The King's Power; **Matthew 8-9 - Healing, Teaching, and Miracles**
- We have been introduced to the person of the King (Matt. 1-4); principles of the King (Matt. 5-7); and now the power of the King.
- Why did our Lord perform miracles? Certainly He wanted to meet human needs.
- Certainly our Lord's miracles were additional credentials to prove His claim as the Messiah of Israel
- A third reason was His concern to reveal saving truth to people.

Matthew 8 - Jesus cleanses a leper. - The outward type leprosy that begins in the extremities slowly begins to rot away the body. A person can be as much as thirty years living with that horrible malady. Incurable by human standards.

Like sin, incurable by human standards. Progressive, it keeps occupying a greater part of a person's life. Slowly rotting away until it hits the vital organs and then the person is destroyed.

The leper (like us) makes his request of Jesus.

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- **When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him:** The miracles of Jesus attracted much attention; but so did His teaching ministry. Matthew demonstrated this by his mention of the *great multitudes* that followed Him after coming down from the Mount of Beatitudes.

Mat 8:2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

- **Behold, a leper came and worshipped (proskooneo – to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure – like the wise men; Jairus; after Jesus walked on the water; Syro-Phoenician woman; John chap. 9 – the healed blind man) Him:** In the ancient world, leprosy was a terrible, destructive disease - The ancient leper had no hope of improvement, so this **leper came** to Jesus with a great sense of need and desperation.
- "Leprosy might begin with the loss of all sensation in some part of the body; the nerve trunks are affected; the muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands are like claws. There follows ulceration of the hands and feet. Then comes the progressive loss of fingers and toes, until in the end a whole hand or a whole foot may drop off. The duration of that kind of leprosy is anything from twenty to thirty years. It is a kind of terrible progressive death in which a man dies by inches."
- According to Jewish law and customs, one had to keep 6 feet (2 meters) from a leper. If the wind was blowing toward a person from a leper, they had to keep 150 feet (45 meters) away. The only thing *more* defiling than contact with a leper was contact with a dead body.
- For all these reasons, the condition of leprosy is a model of sin and its effects. It is a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts its victim and makes him essentially dead while alive; and it followed that almost universally, society and religious people scorned lepers. Rabbis especially despised lepers, and saw them as people under the special judgment of God, deserving no pity or mercy.
- Nevertheless, the leper came to Jesus by himself and despite many discouragements.
 - ✓ He knew how terrible his problem was.
 - ✓ He knew that other people gave up on him as having a hopeless condition.
 - ✓ He had no one who would or could take him to Jesus.
 - ✓ He had no previous example of Jesus healing a leper to give him hope.
 - ✓ He had no promise that Jesus would heal him.
 - ✓ He had no invitation from Jesus or the disciples.
 - ✓ He must have felt ashamed and alone in the crowd.

- **A leper came and worshipped Him:** Despite his desperate condition, this man not only begged Jesus - he also **worshipped Him**.
- How did the leper worship Jesus?
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus by coming to Him, honoring Him as the One who could meet His otherwise impossible need.
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus with his posture, probably bowing or kneeling before Jesus.
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus with the word "**Lord**," honoring Him as master and God.
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus with his humility, by not demanding but leaving the request up to the will of Jesus.
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus with his respect of the power of Jesus, saying that all that was necessary was the will of Jesus, and he would be healed.
 - ✓ He **worshipped** Jesus with his confidence that Jesus could make him more than healthy; Jesus could make him **clean**.
- **Lord, if You are willing:** The leper had no doubt whatsoever about the *ability* of Jesus to heal. His only question was if Jesus was **willing** to heal.
 - ✓ He believed in the *power* of Jesus.
 - ✓ Yet this leper was sure that Jesus was **willing** to use His power for the leper's benefit. "Men more easily believe in miraculous power than in miraculous love." (Bruce)
- **Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean:** This leper sought more than healing. He wanted *cleansing*; not only from the leprosy, but also from all its terrible effects on his life and his soul.
 - ✓ In addition, this is the first place in the gospel where Jesus is called **Lord**. This title that was particularly meaningful in light of the fact that the word **Lord** was used to translate the Hebrew word *Yahweh*, and Matthew wrote his gospel to those who would be familiar with the Jewish context of that word.

Jesus touches the leper and he is cleansed.

Mat 8:3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- **Jesus put out His hand and touched him:** This was a bold and compassionate touch from Jesus. The idea is that the leper kept his distance from Jesus, but He **put out His hand and touched him**. It was against the ceremonial law to touch a leper, which made the touch all the more meaningful to the afflicted man. Of course, as soon as Jesus touched him, he was no longer a leper!
 - ✓ **Touched him:** Jesus did not have to touch the leper in order to heal him. He could have healed him with a word or even a thought. Yet He healed the leper with a touch because that is what the leper needed.
 - ✓ Jesus often varied the *manner* of healing, and usually He chose a particular manner that would be meaningful to the afflicted individual.
 - ✓ [Mark 1:41](#) says when Jesus looked, He was *moved with compassion*. It had been a long time since this leper had seen a face of compassion.
- **I am willing:** Jesus' assurance that **I am willing** simply answered the man's question, and gives us a starting point for the times we wonder if Jesus is willing to heal. We should assume Jesus is willing to heal unless He shows us differently.
 - ✓ How can we know if Jesus is willing to heal us? By assuming that He is willing, but listening to Him if He should tell us that He does not. This is how it happened with the Apostle Paul in [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#); it seems that Paul assumed that Jesus would heal his thorn in the flesh until word came to him that He would not.
- **Immediately his leprosy was cleansed:** The former leper's life was changed forever. He was not only healed, but as he requested he **was cleansed**. Jesus had recently said, *ask and it will be given to you* ([Matthew 7:7](#)). This was certainly true for the now **cleansed** former leper.
 - ✓ This is the first individual healing described by Matthew. Previously, we were told of Jesus' healing ministry in a general sense ([Matthew 4:23-24](#)), but here in a specific case.

Jesus commands the healed man to give testimony of his healing to the priests only.

Mat 8:4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

- **See that you tell no one:** Jesus often commanded people to be quiet about their healing or some miraculous work that He had done for them. He did this because He wanted to keep down the excitement of the crowds until the proper time for His formal revelation to Israel, which was an exact date as prophesied in Daniel 9.
 - ✓ In addition, Jesus' miracles were not primarily calculated to make Him famous or a celebrity (though they certainly did give testimony to His ministry). More so, Jesus healed to meet the needs of specific individuals and to demonstrate the evident power of the Messiah in the setting of love and care for the personal needs of humble people.

- ✓ Therefore, Jesus was cautious about how the multitudes saw Him and why they followed Him. "This motif of secrecy is better understood as reflecting a real danger that Jesus could achieve unwanted popularity merely as a wonder-worker, or worse still as a nationalistic liberator, and so foster a serious misunderstanding of the true nature of his mission." (France)
- ✓ Mark tells us that the leper did not obey Jesus and instead *he went out and began to proclaim it freely* ([Mark 1:44-45](#)).
- **Show yourself to the priest:** Jesus commanded the man to give a **testimony** to the priests, and what a testimony it was! The Mosaic Law prescribed specific sacrifices to be conducted upon the healing of a leper, and when the man reported it to the priests, they no doubt had to perform ceremonies that were rarely (if ever) done (Leviticus 14).
 - ✓ Going to the priest would also bring the former leper back into society. Jesus wanted the healing of the man's disease to have as much benefit as possible.
 - ✓ "This gift was *two living, clean birds, some cedar wood, with scarlet and hyssop*, [Leviticus 14:4](#), which were to be brought for his cleansing; and, *when clean, two he lambs, one ewe lamb, three tenth deals of flour, and one log of oil*, [Leviticus 14:10](#); but if the person was *poor*, then he was to bring *one lamb, one tenth deal of flour, one log of oil and two turtle doves, or young pigeons*, [Leviticus 14:21, 22](#)."

SUMMARY: HOW TO PRAY?

- **COME TO OUR LORD WITH ALL REVERENCE AND HUMILITY**
- **EVEN WITH WEAK FAITHFULNESS WITH ASSURANCE OF HIS POWER**
- **BELIEVING THAT HE IS ABLE**
- **SUBMISSIVE TO HIS WILL**
- **JESUS TOUCHED HIM! SAYING, I AM WILLING!**

"He Touched Me" - Presley

*1. Shackled by a heavy burden 'Neath a load of guilt and shame
Then the hand of Jesus touched me And now I am no longer the same*

Refrain: *For He touched me, Oh, He touched me And Oh the joy that floods my soul
Something happened and now I know He touched me and made me whole*

*2. Oh Since I met this blessed Savior And since He cleansed and made me whole
I'll never cease to praise Him I'll shout it while eternity rolls. (Refrain)*

"How Great Thou Art" - Shea

*Oh Lord my God when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder Thy power throughout the universe displayed*

Refrain: *Then sings my soul my Savior God to Thee, How great thou art! How great Thou art! Then sings my soul
my Savior God to Thee! How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

*When Christ shall come With shout of acclamation To take me home What joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow
in humble adoration And there proclaim my God how great Thou art. (Refrain)*

SAT MORN PRAYER GUIDELINES:

We all want to receive **instruction from the teaching in Biblical prayers** and for the **prayer time** be effective, being **led by the Holy Spirit**. To that end:

- Please be on time at 6:30am to receive the blessings of the weekly prayers in the Bible.
- If you are late, **simply agree in prayer and refrain from praying** in group prayer and **wait until the small group** prayer time.
- Those who pray aloud during the prayer meeting portion, **please keep the prayers short (2-3 minutes)** praying as led by the Holy Spirit. There is only about a 30 minute period for 15 or so to pray.
- **Intercessory prayer** (church, country, leaders) **during group time**; **personal** prayer during small group time.
- **Welcome times of silence** during the group prayer time as we **wait on the Holy Spirit**.