

## “Doctrine: AHA! A Transforming Moment”

The Reflection Series

**Scripture:** Mark 1:40-45 (NIV)

*A man with leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”<sup>41</sup> Jesus was indignant.<sup>[b]</sup> He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!”<sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:<sup>44</sup> “See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”<sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.*

**Subject Question:** What three elements in Mark’s account of Jesus healing of the Leper, enable us as modern day believers, to experience several transforming, AHA- moments.

**Compliment answer:** The Devastating Disease, The Divine Desire, The Delirious Devotion.

**Big Idea:** The Three elements in Mark’s account of Jesus healing of the Leper, that enable us as modern day believers to experience several AHA moments are: The devastating Disease, The Divine Desire, and The Delirious Devotion.

**Homiletical Idea:** “AHA, Really? YES!”

**Purpose:** I want the congregation to think critically concerning the actions of Jesus in dealing with a person who has lost hope and perhaps to derive for themselves a few AHA moments of their own.

**Introduction:** Knowing Christ and a life of walking with God, leads to many times, having “AHA” moments—moments when we are simply amazed at not only the actions of God, but more, the very character of this God whom we have grown to love and appreciate. Today we start a series of “AHA” moment sermons... each deal with an interaction between Jesus and another person. In this context, if we read and listen carefully, Jesus surprises us with another nugget of truth concerning Himself, us, and this life of being a disciple.

(It’s for you my Beloved)

### **Ground Work: Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary**

1:40-45 We have here Christ's cleansing of a leper. It teaches us to apply to the Savior with great humility, and with full submission to his will, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, without any doubt of Christ's readiness to help the distressed. See also what to expect from Christ; that according to our faith it shall be to us. The poor leper said, If thou wilt. Christ readily wills favors to those who readily refer themselves to his will. Christ would have nothing done that looked like seeking praise of the people. But no reasons now exist why we should hesitate to spread the praises of Christ.

### **Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 40. - The healing of the leper is recorded in all the three synoptic Gospels; but St. Mark gives more full details. From St. Matthew we learn that it took place after the Sermon on the Mount; and yet not at the very close of his missionary circuit, St. Luke (Luke 5:12) says that the diseased man was "full of leprosy" (πλήρης λέπρας). The disorder was fully developed; it had spread over his whole body; he was leprous from head to foot. This leprosy was designed to be specially typical of the disease of sin. It was not infectious. It was not because it was either infectious or contagious that the leper was bidden under the Jewish Law to warn others off, in the words, "Unclean! Un-clean!" It was in some cases hereditary. It was a very revolting disease. It was a poisoning of the springs of life. It was a living death. It was incurable by any human art or skill. It was the awful sign of sin reaching unto death; and it was cured, as sin is cured, only by the mercy and favor of God. No wonder, then, that our Lord specially displayed his power over this terrible disease, that he might thus prove his power over the still worse malady of sin. St. Mark here tells us that this leper knelt down (καὶ γονυπετώων). St. Matthew says (Matthew 8:2) that he "worshipped **him**," (προσεκύνει αὐτῷ); St. Luke says (Luke 5:12) that "he fell on his face" (πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον). We thus see that the scriptural idea of worship is associated with some lowly posture of the body. But with this worship of the body, the leper offered also the homage of the soul. His prostration of himself before Christ was not merely a rendering of honor to an earthly being; it was a rendering of reverence to a Divine Being. For he does not say to him, "If thou wilt ask of God, he will give it thee;" but he says, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." It is as though he said, "I know that thou art of equal power with the Father, and therefore supreme Lord over diseases; so that by thy word alone thou canst remove this leprosy from me. I ask, therefore, that thou wouldst be willing to do this, and then I know that the

thing is done." The leper had faith in the Divine power of Christ, partly out of his own inward illumination, and partly by the evidence of the miracles which Christ had already wrought. If thou wilt, thou east. Observe the hypothetic expression, "If thou wilt." He has no doubt as to Christ's power, but the words, "If thou **wilt**" show that his desire for healing was controlled by resignation to the will of God. For bodily diseases are often necessary for the health of the soul; and this God knows, though man knows it not. Therefore, in asking for earthly blessings, it behooves us to resign ourselves to the will and wisdom of God.

(It's for you my Beloved)

- A. **The Devastating Disease** (Vs. 40a) *A man with leprosy<sup>d</sup> came to him*
- B. *The disorder was fully developed; it had spread over his whole body; he was leprous from head to foot. This leprosy was designed to be especially typical of the disease of sin. It was not infectious. It was not because it was either infectious or contagious that the leper was bidden under the Jewish Law to wars others off, in the words, "Unclean! Un-clean!" It was in some cases hereditary. It was a very revolting disease. It was a poisoning of the springs of life. It was a living death. It was incurable by any human art or skill. It was the awful sign of sin reaching unto death; and it was cured, as sin is cured, only by the mercy and favor of God. No wonder, then, that our Lord specially displayed his power over this terrible disease, that he might thus prove his power over the still worse malady of sin. (Henry)*
- C. In His day, the leper was unclean and unfit and more, undesirable..
  - 1. To His family...
  - 2. To His Community...
  - 3. To His "Church"...

Consider how lonely and alienated this person must have felt... how hopeless, how utterly useless he considered himself, how devastatingly sad... yet... he had heard about One who could heal the sick and even raise the dead. And so he put away his shame and whatever pride that he may have had left and took the chance to make His way to this Good Man who may... what? Heal Him, touch Him, ignore Him, send Him away...? He didn't know. But he let himself have hope... and as Andy Dufrane said to Red in the *Shawshank Redemption*," hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things."

- D. AHA Moments:

1. With hope makes its way to where it transforms into faith properly placed in the Good Christ, No situation in life has to be a period; it can become simply a comma; something that was. Jesus specializes in doing the impossible, redeeming the seemingly unredeemable, loving the unlovable, and caring, really caring for those who through their own actions or circumstances have been labeled—unclean, unfit, unwanted. AHA
2. Never give up on that wayward son or daughter or friend. Ask Jesus to use their waywardness to drive them to Him. Claim the promise; cling to the “hope” that someday, somewhere, Jesus will have a Divine appointment with them. AHA

(For you my Beloved)

- A. The Divine Desire (Vs.40b-43) *A man with leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”<sup>41</sup> Jesus was indignant.<sup>[b]</sup> He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!”<sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed*
- B. There are really two Divine Desires here:
  1. There is the Divine Desire of the Leper. *A man with leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> came to him and begged him on his knees,* The Leper may have acted out of desperation. You and I might consider the man to have finally come to his senses... a last hope for a lost person. But consider the words of Scripture:
    - a. John 6:44 *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day*
    - b. John 15:26 *You did not **choose me**, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.*
    - c. Ephesians 2:8 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—*

AHA: The very “hope” the leper possessed, or for that matter, any “faith” that you and I have ever had, for healing, for salvation... though we may attribute it to a decision that we made, originated first and foremost in the heart and will of God and was indeed graciously granted, gloriously gifted, to us from Him. In other words, He believed in us before we ever, ever believed in Him!

AHA: Why is that important? Because if our very coming to Him was actually His idea... then our place by Him, our salvation in Him, and our eternal home

with him is secure and set. Because it's in His hands now mine, nor yours. That is not just an AHA moment; that is an AMEN moment.

2. There is the Divine Desire of Jesus. *41 Jesus was indignant.<sup>[b]</sup> He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.*

σπλαγχνισθεῖς (splanchnistheis)	having been moved with compassion, "indignant" Vs.41
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- a. In this instance, Jesus was willing to heal the man. The same had been true for the woman who had the issue of blood and reached out and touched the hem of His garment. And it is still true today. Sometimes the Lord does consider these bodies and the maladies that come in this lifetime. But sometimes he doesn't.

AHA: The leper was healed but eventually He died. The woman got a second chance, but she too would eventually pass. The real healing that transpired here with the leper was the changed life that comes whenever anyone is touched by the healing hand of the Savior. One is never the same!

- C. *"I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.* So is Christ's response to everyone who comes to Him, not always for a temporary healing. But always, always when one considers the malady of one's own sin and the desperate need of a Savior, O the contrite in heart the Lord will not reject, the repentant the Lord will not despise, but will indeed extend the eternal healing touch of the Master's hand to the human heart and with a blood dipped pen write in the Lambs book of life... clean, paid in full; sins forever forgiven, sins forever forgotten.
- D. The real AHA moment to consider here is twofold: first, that God would offer a healing touch to anyone that would accept what he accomplished for us on the cross. And second, that healing touch is for you. To be born again is to have heard his *"I am willing," "Be clean!"* What he is really saying is be mine!

(For you my Beloved)

- A. The Delirious Devotion. (Vs.44-45) *43 Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 44 "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." 45 Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a*

*result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.*

- B. The truth of the matter is Jesus did not want the people to come to him as a healing prophet. His destiny was the Cross. His eyes were upon the salvation for all humankind. His heart was inclined to His eternal reward and place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His goal was not to just touch a few, or to heal hundreds, but to build a kingdom. His timeframe was not just the first century, but to every generation that would follow.
- C. But he must have known that His touch was one that the leper could hardly keep silent about. And in reality, it's not what he desires for those whom he claims for His kingdom.
- D. The AHA moments:
  - 1. The story of the healing of the leper is really our story: We are the ones who need a healing touch from Jesus. We too, are inflicted by a devastating disease, sin. We also however, can see that our desire to be touched and healed by Jesus and His desire to act on our behalf is something that he is more than willing to do,
  - 2. However, we also like the leper should, now be able to help ourselves; out of a have delirious devotion to the one who has healed us we too should feel the inner compulsion to share what He has done. It seems only natural and really, the greatest, truly loving act that should be a large part of our daily living. Thus, to hear the words:
    - a. *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.* (Matthew 5:14) AHA: This is not so much as a command and it is an invitation from a friend.
    - b. *We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.* AHA: We should not see this as something to live up to as much as something to live for. (2 Corinthians 5:20)
    - c. *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:18-20) AHA: Should not be seen as a church problem or denominational program, but for what it was and is: a life purpose and a poignant, powerful, privilege.

(For you my Beloved)

