

# (Luke) 17 - Fish & Man With Leprosy

by Ed Miller

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of pleasing Jesus and obeying Him in soul winning, which is a mighty miracle of God that happens when we just set our hearts to please Him.*

**Duration:** 57:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 4:14-19, Luke 4:38-39, Luke 5:1-11, Luke 8:26-39

**Topics:** "Leprosy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of both having the power and the will to do God's work. He shares a personal experience of losing his best friend just before Christmas, highlighting the difficulty of measuring the value of a friendship. The preacher then leads the congregation in prayer, asking for God's guidance and presence as they meditate on His word. The sermon focuses on the story of Peter in Luke chapter 5, highlighting the principle of obeying Jesus and pleasing Him rather than worrying about soul-winning. The preacher encourages the congregation to trust in God's power and to faithfully obey His commands.

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## Transcript

Okay. Okay, let's bow please before the Lord. Commit our time on the end.

Our Father, thank you again for your precious word and for the Holy Spirit who ever lives in our heart. And we just pray as we meditate again as we fellowship around your precious word that you would indeed draw our hearts together and to focus in a living way upon the Lord. We commit our time unto you in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus.

Okay, I'll ask you please to open. We'll be in Luke chapter 5 but if you can open to Luke chapter 4 for a little bit of review. Good morning.

We are in the Gospel of Luke and we're meditating on Luke's wonderful presentation of the Lord Jesus as the Son of all mankind. Not just the Son of the Jews, but the Son of everybody. In our discussion, we've come to the second great division in the book and that is chapter 4, verse 14 all the way to chapter 19, verse 28.

You notice that's a big segment out of Luke. And we call that the Galilean ministry of our Lord Jesus. This is the ministry of the Son of all mankind and in that section, Luke divides it up into two different parts.

What Jesus did and what Jesus said. Basically, I mean there will be some overlapping but pretty much from chapter 4, verse 14 to 9, verse 50 is what Jesus did and mostly He did miracles. And so we call Him there the Friend of all mankind.

And then beginning at chapter 9, verse 51 all the way to 19, verse 28 what Jesus said and there are many of His parables and His teachings. So Luke divides the Galilean ministry into these two parts. Jesus, the Friend of all mankind.

Jesus, the Teacher of all mankind. Now last week in a panorama, I tried to give an overview of the ministry of our Lord Jesus especially as the Friend of all mankind. In other words, His miracles.

What He did. And I showed you that Luke stresses four areas over which Jesus showed His amazing authority. He showed authority over demons.

He showed authority over disease. He showed authority over death. And He showed authority over nature.

Now if you'll glance at chapter 5, verse 31 it's important and we stressed it last time but this is right in the middle of the miracles. And it was in the greatest miracle of all. The miracle of salvation.

God saved Matthew and when He recorded it, He put it right in the middle of the miracles. He gives ten miracles and so He gives five miracles and then He tells how He came to the Lord. Then He gives five more miracles.

And that's in order to illustrate the greatest miracle of all is when a person comes to the Lord. And so Matthew to celebrate His salvation throws this great banquet in honor of the Lord Jesus. And it was at this banquet chapter 5, verse 31 and 32 that our Lord Jesus said this.

It is not those who are well who need a physician but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance. The point that I made and am emphasizing again is this.

Right in the middle of all the physical miracles was a spiritual miracle. And at the banquet where He celebrates the spiritual miracle He announces the fact that He is a soul doctor. The sick need a physician.

I've come not to call sinners but the righteous to repentance. In other words, He's saying I am a spiritual doctor and the miracles that I do physically they're literal. I'm not saying He didn't really do them.

But they're all redemptive. They all have a spiritual message. And He called attention to that so that we would read a little deeper when we saw the miracle in order to see the spiritual reality.

So what He did on the outside always pictured what He wants to do on the inside. He healed the blind not just so they could see but so that we could know that He heals the spiritually blind. He healed the deaf in order that we might know He that has an ear to hear.

Let Him hear. We have ears in our heart. Every miracle He did was to teach us how to live before Him spiritually.

We don't need to be humped over as we walk before God. He healed the lame to teach us how to walk. And so every miracle He did had a spiritual background to it.

And what we're trying to do as we go through this is to look at the miracles and then show the spiritual intention behind each one. That does not mean we don't believe literally He did the miracle. He really did cleanse the leper but in order to show that He cleanses sin.

So we'll look at the miracle and then try to dip in God assisting us to see the spiritual reason for all of this and how He was the friend of all mankind. If you glance at chapter 4, 38 we left off with this first miracle the healing of Peter's mother-in-law who was suffering from a high fever. This takes place in Peter and Andrew's house.

They co-owned the home. Luke 4, 38 And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever and they made requests of him on her behalf.

And standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately arose and waited on them. Now we looked at this one last time.

If you missed that and would like it of course Lillian would have the tape. The spiritual message is in the words of verse 39. Standing over her he rebuked the fever it left her and she immediately arose and ministered unto them.

Now when the Lord touches me or us His people the fever leaves and without convalescence see in the natural after a fever you're going to have to take it easy for a while. But when the Lord touches immediately you rise and serve. And the principle behind the fever has to do with ministry.

She arose and served others and served the Lord. For years in my own life I thought that I had to move from natural weakness fever to natural strength. And my whole Christian life was in fits and starts.

In other words I got real weak and then I heard a good sermon or read a good book or something and said alright I'm going to do it. And then I got up in the energy of the flesh and I started off and then after a while he just teetered out again. And then you determine again.

So it's fever, chill, fever, chill. And you determine I'm going to do it. And I'll get up early and I'll memorize or I'll study the scriptures or whatever it is.

And then after a while you just fizzle again. That's because I was moving from natural weakness to natural strength. In this miracle of the fever he gives the key to all ministry.

It's moving from natural weakness to supernatural strength. Not natural strength. And that delivers you from all the fits and starts and then fizzling out and all of that.

When the Lord touches you then you're able to rise up and empower not your own minister to him and to others. And so that's the idea of this fever. And how the people of God need to learn this secret of ministry because the church quite honestly is suffering from a high fever.

And they just need the touch of the Lord so they can learn to minister in his strength. This morning I'd like to continue looking at the Lord's Galilean ministry and we'll look at two miracles. In chapter 5, 1-11 the miraculous catch of fish and then verses 12-16 the cleansing of the leper.

Now we're not going to spend a lot of time on each miracle but it will be my intention as God helps to look at the miracle in terms of the spiritual the redemptive principle. Because when you get them all together you've got a complete course on how to live the Christian life. And of course the big answer is by a

miracle.

And he illustrates. He breaks it down. And so we'll look at each one of these.

Follow along please as we read the record here. The first 11 verses. It came about while the multitude were pressing around him and listening to the word of God he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.

By the way, that's just another word for Galilee. And the Sea of Tiberias is another word for Galilee. So when you see those three it's always the same.

And he saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And he got into one of the boats which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And he sat down and began teaching multitudes from the boat.

And when he had finished speaking he said to Simon put out into the deep and let down your nets for a cat. And Simon answered and said Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing. But at your bidding I will let down the net.

And when they had done this they enclosed a great quantity of fish. And their nets began to break. And they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them.

And they came and filled both of the boats so that they began to sink. And when Simon Peter saw that he fell down at Jesus' feet saying depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Amazement it seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken.

And so also James and John the sons of Zebedee who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon do not fear. From now on you will be catching men.

And when they had brought their boats to land they left everything and followed him. As the first miracle the healing of the fever had to do with Christian servants the miracle of serving in his strength. So I think it's clear that the spiritual message of this miracle is in verse 10.

The end of verse 10. Do not fear. From now on you'll be catching men.

The spiritual reality behind this miracle is evangelism. It's soul winning. It's mission.

Fear not. From now on you'll be catching men. Now I'm not reading this application into the story.

Jesus put it there. Jesus is the one that said compared fishing to fishing for men. And soul winning and so on.

In a sense this is connected to the healing of the fever of Peter's mother-in-law because it's an enlargement of that miracle. See that taught us how to serve in his strength. This is also serving in his strength.

But now it reaches out not only to Christ and his people, but evangelism going out into the world and bringing others in. Let me make a couple of observations about the miracle that will help us tie it into the spiritual message. The first observation of course is this, that all evangelism, all soul winning is a mighty miracle of God.

Just as really as Peter's mother-in-law had to learn how to really serve in the strength of the Lord. So now Peter's going to have to learn how to fish and how to evangelize and it's a mighty miracle. It's an awesome thing to think about being a fisher of men.

In fact it's a scary thing. If you ever tried to share the Lord with your family or your friends you might already say well that is scary. That's a frightening thing.

I want you to glance please at verse 10 because there's a key here. Jesus said do not fear. From now on you'll be catching men.

Why do you think that Jesus said to Peter don't fear. You'll be catching men. What does fear have to do with it? You see in the Greek it's actually stop fearing.

Stop being afraid. He was already afraid. And Jesus said there's no need to fear in this whole idea of soul winning because I'm going to make you a fisher of men.

Now what was Peter afraid of? Let me give you the background. You see this is not the first time Peter heard those words. I'll make you fishers of men.

Mark fills us in. In the gospel of Mark in chapter 1 verse 16 and 17 it's about two months before this. And they're outside the Sea of Galilee and they're doing the same thing.

They're cleaning their nets. Jesus walks by. And as he was going along I'm reading from Mark 1, 16.

As he was going along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea. They were fishermen. Jesus said follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

And they immediately left their nets and followed him. That was two months early. And Jesus said I'm going to make you a fisher of men.

Well for two months he had nothing to do but think about that. And it scared him to death to think about the fact he's a fisherman. All his life he's been a fisherman.

Is Jesus telling him he's going to have to change vocations now. I'm going to make you an evangelist. It scared him to death because Peter thought I am no preacher.

I'm embarrassed to get up in front of people. I don't know how to talk to others. I don't want to be a fisher of men.

Why did he say that to me? I don't want to speak in public. I'm no John the baptizer. I suppose he thought of John.

And Jesus said from now on you're going to be a fisher of men. And he got his hand on me for that. I don't want to be a missionary.

And so he was scared and he felt unqualified. Peter felt like I know how to fish for fish. But I don't know how to fish for men.

I know about fish. I know how they travel. I know when they eat.

I know when is the best time to fish. I know where to fish. I know the best spot.

I know the Sea of Galilee. I know when the squalls come. I know the weather.

I'm a fisherman. But don't talk to me about teaching and preaching and sharing. I'm not an evangelist.

Then Jesus comes along in verse 3 of chapter 5 and in a sense he says Peter do you mind if I borrow your boat as a floating pulpit? I need to teach the people. And I can't prove this but I have an idea Peter sighed with relief. And he said oh that's what he meant a fisher of men.

He wants to use my business. He wants to use my resources. He wants to use my boat.

He knows I'm not a teacher. He wants to teach from my boat. That's fine.

And I think Peter sighed with relief and said you got it right now Lord. You be the teacher. You be the preacher.

You be the evangelist. And I'll be the businessman. And yes I give you my business.

You can use my boat. You can use my boat as a pulpit and so on. My business is a tool for you to use.

Then after he finished in verse 4 he finished his little sermon. He sort of put the heat up a little and said to Peter launch out into the deep and let down your nets. Again I'm reading into Peter's mind but I have an idea Peter said something like this in his heart.

He said Peter I mean he said Lord stick to preaching and I'll stick to fishing. You know how to preach. You're good.

I know how to fish. And quite honestly the advice you're giving me is not good fishing advice. Actually it contradicted everything about fishing because late morning and early afternoon is not the best time to fish.

And to fish you don't go out into the deep. You go along the shoals and that's where they're feeding and so on. And besides they spent the whole night fishing and there were no fish in the area.

Now try to get into Peter's heart. This whole idea of evangelism and his fear and telling others about the Lord and he's sort of saying Lord you preach I'll fish. I know how to fish.

And you know how to teach. In verse 5 when Peter said Master we've worked hard all night and caught nothing. Implied in that statement is the fact that Peter expected nothing to happen.

In other words Peter said this is going to be a colossal waste of time. We have already tried all night long. It's not going to work.

You want us to go out into the deep? You're a carpenter. You're a teacher. You don't know how to fish.

But nevertheless out of respect for the Lord in spite of his doubts just to do what he said. He said I'm going to do it but you'll see. We're not going to catch him but I'm still going to obey you.

I'm going to honor you and at your word we're going to let out the net. And so to prove the futility of further efforts he goes and he casts out the net and then we read of course verse 6 and 7 and when they had done this they enclosed a great quantity of fish. Their nets began to break.

They signaled to their partners in the other boat. They came and helped and filled the boat so that they began to sing. The Lord Jesus in his marvelous way in this parable of action was instructing his disciples.

He was saying Peter you don't know how to catch men. And you don't know how to catch fish either. I'm going to teach you Peter.

This is what was so humbling because he was teaching the fishermen how to fish. I'm the one that's filled your nets today and Peter don't you know I'm the one that fills your nets every day. You know why you've been successful as a businessman? Because behind the scenes I've been filling your nets.

You don't know how to do anything Peter. You don't know how to fish for fish and you don't know how to fish for people. And the reason your business has prospered is because I made it prosper and for no other reason.

Verse 8 When Simon Peter saw that he fell down at Jesus' feet and said depart from me I'm a sinful man oh Lord. You see Peter was so afraid of soul winning he didn't know how to witness. Jesus scared him when he said I'll make you a fisherman because he didn't hear him right.

It's the same thing when they said go over to the other side and somehow they heard go to the bottom. They thought they were going to sink. And sometimes you don't hear what he really said.

Peter thought he said you have a new duty now a new responsibility you've got to witness to your friends and neighbors. You've got to become an evangelist. Jesus didn't say that.

He said Peter I will make you that's different than you start doing. It's not a new duty. It's something that God is going to work in him.

And God is going to make him a fisher of man. How did those fish end up in Peter's net? And the answer is by a miracle of God Jesus drew them into his net. It wasn't Peter's fishing.

It was the God it was the Lord's drawing power. And he drew those fish into the net. I'll tie this in to evangelism and soul winning.

How am I ever going to bring my family to the Lord? God better draw them into the net because there's nothing else I can do. And there's nothing you can do. And it's scary as it was for Peter.

From now on he said I'm going to make you stop fearing because your responsibility is not to win the laws. Your responsibility is just to obey me. Look what Peter did.

There are two things he did. In verse 5 even though he had his doubts he set his heart to please the Lord. I'm going to do this.

I don't think it's going to work. I don't think it's a good idea. I don't think it's good advice.

But out of love and honor and respect for you I'm going to do this. Sisters in the Lord this is a tremendous principle of God. Don't worry about soul winning.

Worry or don't even worry. That's the bad word. Be concerned about just pleasing Jesus.

The best thing in the world I can ever do for my family who is resisting the Lord is obey Jesus. And as Peter just obeyed the Lord then God drew the fish into the net. Soul winning is a supernatural thing.

He'll take care of the fish. He'll take care of the fruit. He'll take care of the harvest.

He'll draw the fish into the net. All we have to do is whatever we have light on the light we have just obey God. And as we obey God then He'll do the soul winning.

Soul winning is not a duty to be performed. It's a mighty miracle of God that happens when we just set our hearts to please Him. Did you notice in verse 11 when it was all over Peter took a forward step in surrender.

When they brought their boats to land they left everything and followed Him. Now here's an amazing thing. Two months before this when Jesus first dropped the bomb and scared Him to death telling Him He's going to have to be a soul winner.

When He did that the Bible says in Mark 17 chapter 117 after Jesus said follow me and I'll make you fishers of men it says and they immediately left their nets and boats and followed Him. Well here's the question. If they left their nets and boats two months ago to follow the Lord how come they still have their nets and boats now two months later? I thought they left those in order to follow the Lord.

And then after this we read in verse 11 He left everything and followed the Lord. So now He leaves His nets and boats again. Two years later hello two years later we're in Luke chapter 5 two years later after the resurrection our Lord Jesus does another miracle and they're out in their boats and fishing again.

Well now here's the question. At the beginning of the ministry they left their boats and nets. In the middle of the ministry they left their boats and nets.

After the resurrection they left their boats and nets. How come they still have boats and nets if they already left their boats and nets? And I think the answer is the spiritual principle. There's a way to leave something and still have it.

They didn't leave it in the sense that they dumped their treasure. They didn't leave it that way. They left it in terms of their heart's attachment.

They were attached to their boats and nets. And every time they saw the Lord they took a forward step in their surrender and were less attached to the physical thing. I have an idea that Peter's surrender to the Lord constantly was measured by his attachment to his boat.

You go through the record it's exciting how Peter loved his boat. How Peter loved fishing. In the life of Peter we always see him returning to his boat.

Even when he was walking on the stormy sea the Lord Jesus was supernaturally trying to separate him from his boat. And then when he saw the wind and the waves and so on he ran right back to the boat again. And he's constantly going back and every time he sees the Lord there's this new surrender of the nets and the boat.

But that doesn't mean that he gives them up forever. What it means is he sits loose to them. His heart is not attached unto them.

So over and over again he goes forward in this surrender. Peter felt so unworthy to have this part in soul winning fishing for men. He felt so disqualified and he said depart from me.

I'm a sinful man. Oh Lord. When he said depart from me that was the prayer on his lips.

He didn't mean that prayer. That's not the prayer of his heart. When he said depart from me he wasn't saying I wish the Lord would go away.

See later on we'll look at another miracle when Jesus cast the demon out of that man at Gennesaret I mean the Gerasene and they said depart out of our homes. Well they meant it. They didn't want the Lord.

And so he left. But when Peter said depart from me he really meant never depart from me. Don't ever leave me.

But as a soul winner at the beginning all you have to do is obey me. And as you live to please me I will bring fish into your net. That's the secret of soul winning.

And it was so humbling for him. He felt so disqualified. He felt like he didn't deserve that.

Let me review these first two miracles and we'll look at the third. The first miracle is the fever where we learn the secret of service. We move from natural strength to supernatural strength in order to serve others.

In the second miracle we learn the secret of soul winning and evangelism. The secret of soul winning is we set our hearts to obey the Lord. Period.

And God will do the rest. For years I thought God called me to ramrod the gospel down the throats of all my loved ones. And I think I told you some of the stories on how I used to do that.

And oh I'm so glad that God began to open these eyes of mine. All you have to do is live and please the Lord. And as you live and delight yourself in the Lord He'll give you the desires of your heart.

Best thing you can ever do for your unsaved friends and family is delight yourself in the Lord. And the more you delight yourself in the Lord the more redemptive your life becomes and my life becomes. God's the one that puts the fish into the net.

And He doesn't do it because we know how to fish or because we're skillful. He does it because He's a good God and He wants to use us. Glance at chapter 5 verse 12 please.

Let me just do this one other miracle. It came about while he was in one of the cities. Behold there was a man full of leprosy.

And when he saw Jesus he fell on his face and implored him saying, Lord if you're willing you can make me clean. And he stretched out his hand and he touched him saying, I am willing be cleansed. And immediately the leprosy left him.

And he ordered him to tell no one but to go and show yourself to the priest. Make an offering for your cleansing. Just as Moses commanded for a testimony to them.

To get the full impact of the spiritual message of the cleansing of this leper, we must understand how God explains leprosy in the Bible. We say leprosy, what a disease. This is different than all other diseases mentioned in the Bible.

You see God healed other diseases. God never healed leprosy. It always says he cleansed leprosy.

And the reason he said cleansed is because God develops leprosy as a picture. In fact there are two chapters dedicated to leprosy. Leviticus chapter 13 and Leviticus chapter 14.

116 inspired verses just on leprosy as a picture. Leprosy is God's picture in the Bible of sin. That's why it was such a dreaded disease.

Because of its insidious beginnings and because of the slow process of leprosy and because of its destructive power and because of its ultimate ruin leprosy became God's picture of sin. The same laws that applied to contact with a corpse in the Old Testament applied to contact with a leper. In other words leprosy was a living death.

The same process of decay that takes place after a person dies on the body already began to take place on the leper while he lived. One illustration of this is when Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron got leprosy. Aaron prayed for his sister.

Numbers chapter 12 and verse 12. And Aaron prayed this prayer. Do not let her be dead whose flesh is half eaten.

That's what leprosy was. It was a living death. The leper was completely ostracized from Hebrew society.

You can read in Leviticus how they had to rend their garments shave their heads bald put their hand over their mouth and keep a certain distance and cry unclean unclean. Just a tremendous picture of sin. I don't want to be too gruesome but I think the more you enter into the plight of the leper, the more you're going to appreciate the miracle that our Lord Jesus did when he cleansed the leper.

Remember in the Old Testament when King Uzziah died of leprosy in the same year Isaiah saw the Lord. Isaiah chapter 6. And the Lord was high and lifted up. And when he saw the Lord he saw himself and he said I saw myself as a leper.

Unclean my lips were unclean and he saw himself as a leper a moral leper living in a leper colony. Every time we really see the Lord we're also going to see a corresponding revelation of ourself. And this picture of leprosy all through the scriptures is a picture of sin.

Now with that as background what is the great revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in this wonderful miracle of cleansing the leper. Remember now all through these 9 chapters he's presenting himself as the friend of the sinner. He's the friend of the sinner.

And now he's showing himself in a special way as the friend of sinners who is willing and able to cleanse leprosy in its most aggravated form. I love this truth that Jesus was willing and able. As the leper comes up he says if you're willing you can.

Willing and able. You have to have both though. You have to have the power to do it and the will to do it.

The power to do it isn't enough if you don't have the will to do it. And the will to do it isn't enough if you don't have the power to do it. On the level of earth the Lord just called home my best friend just before Christmas.

How do you measure a best friend? But he was one of my dear friends. Since 1975 this man had MS and multiple sclerosis. And in 1978 I was dubbed his physical therapist.

And so I would go over 3 times a week and just do passive exercises on him for 20 years. Stretch his arms and stretch his legs and just sort of keep him loose. Now I love Rainier.

I love this man. If I could I speak as a fool I would have walked in there because of my love for him and raised him up. I would have healed him.

If I could. I couldn't. But if I could I would have.

Because I had the will but I didn't have the power. You got to be willing and able. I wasn't able.

But I was willing. The reality is Jesus loved him more than I did. And more than his family.

And he had the power to do it. But for some reason he wasn't willing to do it. We don't know why.

There's a lot of mystery in why he doesn't raise some people up. I call attention to that because of this particular reference. When he said if you're willing you can.

And Jesus said I am willing be cleansed. And he was. I call attention to that because with disease God always has the power.

But sometimes he doesn't have the will to do it. I don't know why. He just doesn't always do it.

He has the power but he doesn't always do it. With sin he is always willing. And always able.

That's the message of this healing of the leper. When he said in verse 13 I'm willing be cleansed. He's not revealing a one time pleasure as if arbitrarily he'll heal this leper.

He's not revealing a one time pleasure. He's revealing an everlasting attitude. He is always willing.

And willing without reluctance. Infinitely willing to cleanse the leper. To cleanse sin.

There are some sins that people call disease. You're probably familiar with that. They take this perversion or that perversion and say well it's not a sin.

It's a sickness. Well I don't know about all of that but I'll tell you this. You'd be better off calling it a sin.

I'll tell you why. Because God hasn't promised to heal every disease. But he has promised to forgive every sin.

And there's a lot more hope in approaching those things as a sin and coming before the Lord as a moral leper and saying if you're willing you can and God will always say I am willing. Be cleansed. For sin there's never an exception to that.

If people would just come before the Lord how they could be delivered from their bondages. And so Jesus shows himself in this miracle as the friend of sinners. The one who is always willing and able to forgive sin.

One thing that makes this so remarkable is the fact that Luke wrote it. And Luke on the level of earth was a doctor. He was a physician.

Luke 5.12 Luke the doctor the physician says there was a man full of leprosy. Now that's the doctor's description of this man. Perhaps you've heard stories or seen pictures about the advanced stages of leprosy.

I have a friend who's been a missionary in India for many many years. And he works in a leper colony over in India. And all he does is make shoes for lepers.

That's what he does. Day after day, year after year. Just makes shoes for lepers.

And the reason is because many times leprosy, you lose your limbs. You lose your toes. You lose your fingers and so on.

Even your nose off your face. It's very common that lepers don't even have a nose and so on. I don't know what stage this was.

All I know is he was full of leprosy. And we read in verse 13 immediately, the leprosy left him. When I read the Bible, I always try to enter in and put myself in the shoes of the people.

And I can just picture this. Again, I can't prove it. And I'm not trying to say that it's this way.

But I think his toes grew back. And I think his fingers grew back. And I think his nose grew back.

Kings in chapter 5, I think it is, when Naaman the leper was healed. The Bible says that his skin became like the skin of a little child. So he was better off after his healing than he was before his healing.

And God did such a work on him. And I just picture immediately this change taking place on this leper. The Lord is the friend of sinners, willing and able to cleanse the leper.

And I like to say it this way, even if it's full-blown leprosy. It's an immediate cleansing. Nothing is more pitiful, and I've met them, than to meet some sinner under the weight and the burden of his sin who somehow thinks his case is too advanced.

Or he's too far gone. Or his leprosy is too full-blown to receive forgiveness from the Lord. Sometime we pray, and God makes us wait.

Delay. I think all of us who walk with the Lord know what delay is. And we just wonder.

We always pray with David. The colloquial, of course, is hurry up God. But that doesn't sound spiritual.

So we say make haste, oh God, to deliver. It's the same thing. Hurry up God.

Sometime God delays. But according to 1 John 1, 5 through 9, the one prayer that God has promised, He would never delay. You don't have to wait one second for this.

And that's the prayer to be forgiven. He said He would never delay that prayer. And if anyone confesses their sin, He is faithful and just to forgive that sin on the spot.

And so though we have to wait for many things, we'll never have to wait for forgiveness. Yes. No, verses 5 to 9. The second thing that makes this story so powerful, verse 13, He stretched out His hand and He touched the leper.

Talk about infinite willingness. The friend of sinners is not only willing to cleanse the leper. You know, sometimes He did miracles at a distance.

Like the centurion servant, over the miles, He just said the word. And it was done. This is one of those miracles I would have done at a distance.

I'd say, oh, leper, you're healed. But Jesus didn't do this miracle at a distance. He reached out.

This touches my heart because I wonder how many years it had been since anybody touched that leper. Anybody hugged him or kissed him. Every time God forgives sin, He touches the leper.

Incarnate purity touching incarnate corruption. Amazing friend of sinners. And that miracle here is just beautifully illustrated.

Now let me make one final point and then we'll sort of wrap this up. In verse 14, He ordered him to tell no one but to go and show himself to the priest to make an offering for cleansing. Fifteen hundred years before this, God told Moses to write Leviticus 13 and 14.

Do you realize that scripture was never used? Not one time had any leper been cleansed. You say, well, what about Naaman? Well, he wasn't Jewish. You say, well, what about Miriam? Well, that was before the law was given.

There was never an occasion as far as the record goes. Now this guy comes knocking at the priest's door and he said, I've come to fulfill what was written about the leper. I'll bet that priest had to scratch his head.

He said, I've never heard that. Let me look it up and call his fellow priest. Hey, where do I look? Scripture was never used.

Now, if you read chapter 13 and 14 of Leviticus, here's what you're going to find. The priest had no power to cleanse a leper. They only had a test to see if you were really cleansed and were qualified to go back into society.

And that cleansing, you read it, it's amazing. It was. They scrutinized this poor leper.

He would go in, they'd shave all the hair off his body. Then he'd have to come back about a week later and so on. They went through between his toes.

They shaved every hair off of him. They went through every part of his body, looking for a spot. The point is someone says, well, why did Jesus say, don't tell anybody? If you're cleansed of leprosy, man, you want to tell everybody.

Jesus didn't say, don't tell anybody. He said, don't tell anybody but go to the priest. In other words, here's what he's saying.

The proof that I am cleansed, the proof that you're cleansed, is not your mouth. Not telling everybody, I'm cleansed. Anybody can talk.

The proof is to go show yourself to the priest. I assume we're all cleansed lepers. That the Lord has done a work in our heart.

The world out there, and I don't have to tell you this, you'll know it. They're going through your hair. They're trying to find something.

The evidence of your cleansing is your life. Not your mouth. And that's what Jesus was saying.

He's saying, now that you're cleansed, go prove it by your life. Go show yourself. Submit to the test.

And let them examine you. Let them look over you. Let them watch.

And that will be the testimony of your life. And so every one of these miracles is redemptive. Jesus promised that there was a spiritual reality behind every miracle.

The three we've looked at, the fever teaches us how to minister to the Lord. By power, not your own. You move from natural weakness to supernatural strength, and you can rise and serve.

The miracle of the fish teaches us how to win souls. Not by winning souls. Not by fishing.

But by obeying the Lord and setting your heart to please Him. Then God will fill your net and supernaturally engineer the opportunities to bring in the fish. This presents, this miracle of the leper, presents our Lord Jesus as the friend of all mankind.

And in a special way, those who are full of leprosy. And He's always willing and always able. Always infinitely willing and infinitely able.

It's such a precious thing to realize that when I come to God to be forgiven, I don't have to overcome His instead. I have to lay hold of His infinite willingness. I am willing.

Next time we'll look at the paralytic being dropped down through the roof in Capernaum. Comments or questions? That means that you, Nori, are to be Nori. Nobody else.

There's no rules. No formulas. God wants to be God.

He wants you to be you. And as you are, and with the light you have, you just say, Lord, I just want to honor you. I want to please you.

And it'll never become more difficult than that. As you receive Christ, so walk in Him. It'll never be harder than just be yourself and set your heart to please the Lord.

And all of these things will be added on you. It's all byproduct. If you go after the byproduct, you'll lose the byproduct and the goal.

If you go after the Lord, you get it all. Other comments? Yes. Well, you have many questions.

Let me just say this. The I in Romans 7, and I think 27 times, is not ego. What he's saying is, if I tried to do it on my own, the best I would ever do is hate sin and love God and not perform.

So he said, I'm not going to do it on my own. Thanks be to God. Who can deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

And so the way to get out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8 is by saying thank you. That's how he got out. He's not saying that's how I live.

He's saying if I tried on my best, I would hate sin, love God, and not perform. Forget it. I'm not going through that struggle.

Now there's a new the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free. So as you look to Christ, don't focus on your sin. Don't focus on your guilt.

Focus on the Lord and you'll be transformed. Every time you see the Lord, yeah. No, I'm saying that holiness is not an issue.

If you run after holiness, the only goal is to run after the Lord. Go after Him, not holiness. Holiness will follow in its wake.

Go after the Lord. Go after the Lord. He is made unto you sanctification.

He will not give you Jesus and something called holiness. He'll only give you Jesus. And if you have Jesus, you have holiness.

It's such a hard to know Him and all those other things. If you go after holiness, you're going to... Well surrender, did you notice here, it was after. Surrender is a byproduct.

I surrender as a response to all He's done. Surrender is not a condition. Surrender is a response.

Surrender can get in the way of the Lord. I know for years I surrendered myself to death because I thought the way to know the Lord is to surrender. You know the Lord and you will surrender.

His yoke is easy. You know, we hear so much about the struggle. When you set your heart on the Lord.

You know, I'm being honest here. It's like spiritual honey. It's sweet but it's a little sticky.

There is no struggle when your heart is on the Lord. There's no struggle. All growth is... He's always able for physical healing.

He's not always willing. Ever. Always showing himself.

That's why even this leper, he didn't have... I mean he always... Everything he does is right. But we don't always know why.

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