

Theme: What Does this Text REVEAL About Jesus? – Jesus the Healer

Mark 1:40-45 (EVH)

⁴⁰ A leper came to Jesus. He knelt down and begged him, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. “I am willing,” he told him. “Be clean.” ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was healed. ⁴³ Then Jesus gave him a stern warning and immediately sent him away. ⁴⁴ He told him, “See that you do not say anything to anyone. Instead go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the sacrifices for your cleansing that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” ⁴⁵ But after the man left, he began to proclaim it widely. He spread the word so much that Jesus was no longer able to enter a town openly but stayed outside in deserted places. Yet people kept coming to him from all directions.

“What does this text reveal about Jesus?” We’ve asked that question each week during the season of Epiphany as we’ve looked at various accounts from the Gospels. One of the challenges of doing a sermon series like this has been to narrow it down each week to just two or three things that each text **reveals** about Jesus. The fact is for each one of our sermon texts during this season of Epiphany we could easily have looked at 5 or 6 or more things that each text revealed about Jesus. I wanted to try and boil it down to just two or three things each week to give us just a couple of important, thought-provoking, and hopefully faith-strengthening points from these accounts from Jesus’ life and ministry. Today’s text is no exception.

We could focus on the fact that this text once again reveals Jesus’ power, or the fact that He is true God. After all, when you read the account of this miracle, is there any doubt? Who, other than God Himself, can heal with just a word? No doctor or researcher has ever—or will ever—be able to cure any sickness or disease, much less one that’s as life-threatening as leprosy was simply by saying, “**Be clean**” (v. 41).

Those are both very important—extremely important—things that our text **reveals** about Jesus. But one of the things I want to focus on today is what is **revealed** about Jesus in the first few verses of our text:

1) It REVEALS that Jesus is compassionate.

Let’s stop for a moment and think about how incredible this truth that our text reveals about Jesus really is: “**Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him**” (which, according to the Law of Moses would have made Jesus ceremonially unclean). “**I am willing,**” he told him. “**Be clean.**” ⁴² **Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was healed.**” (v. 41-42).

Jesus was “**Moved with compassion**” and “**stretched out his hand**” to this man (v. 41)! The Greek word used there indicates a deep sympathy coming from your “guts,” which the Greeks saw as the “seat of emotion” (we would say “from the heart” in our culture and language). Why would Jesus, the all-powerful, holy God, take the time to reach out and heal lowly, undeserving sinners? He certainly doesn’t have to! No one is forcing Him to do it, obviously, because no one can “force” God to do anything! It is because of His love; His great “**compassion!**”

What an incredible word. If you break down the construction of that word in English it literally means “to suffer with.” Isn’t that a perfect description of what Jesus did for us? He came down into this world filled with sickness, diseases, sin and death and “suffered with us.” More than that, He suffered for us!

Jesus has that same “**compassion**” for us. He is always willing to “**stretch out His hand**” to help us—in the way that He knows is best. We have His sure promise that He will work all things out for our good (**see Romans 8:28**), no matter what we are faced with in this life. We have the assurance that if God was willing to give up His Son, Jesus to save us, He will certainly give us everything else we truly need as well (**see Romans 8:32**).

That brings us to the second thing this text reveals about Jesus that we'll consider today:

2) It REVEALS that Jesus will only do what is absolutely best for us spiritually!

This text clearly **reveals** that Jesus is the healer. Yes, Jesus healed many, but He was more than that and did not want to be known as just a healer. He came to heal more than just leprosy, sickness, and disease; He came to heal souls from sin! That was one of the reasons Jesus **“strictly warned [the leper]...’See that you say nothing to anyone”** (v. 43-44a NKJV). Jesus would’ve rather not had anyone else even know about this healing than hinder the preaching of His soul-saving Gospel. The end of our text tells us that the mobs of people who flocked to Jesus because they heard the news of this *physical* healing actually interfered with His ministry of preaching the Gospel. **“But after the man [the leper] left, he began to proclaim it widely. He spread the word so much that Jesus was no longer able to enter a town openly but stayed outside in deserted places. Yet people kept coming to him from all directions.”** (v. 45 EHV).

Jesus miracles of healing sicknesses and disease were important to His ministry because they were part of the proof that He was the all-powerful true God that He said He was. The healing miracles, however, were never the focus or the purpose of His ministry. In his next chapter, Mark gives us a great example of this in the account of Jesus’ healing of a paralytic.

If you recall in this account the paralytic’s friends had to lower him down through the roof of the house Jesus was teaching in because it was so crowded with people. We are told in Mark chapter 2, **When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” (Mark 2:5)** Jesus’ main concern was his spiritual healing—that this man knew his sins were forgiven. He then proved His power and love, and His ability and authority to forgive sins by healing him physically. **“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” -- He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” (Mark 2:10-12).**

Do we remember that this is the type of Healer Jesus came to be? Or are we misguided at times? We know and believe He is the Son of God, true God, and so there are times when we get upset or impatient with Him if He does not use His almighty power to immediately get us out of our difficult situations; to heal us from our sicknesses or illnesses; or give us the things that we ask for. We forget that Jesus is also all-knowing and all-loving, and will only do what is *absolutely* the best for us spiritually. That is His main concern!

There are many people who confess to be Christian and yet hold to the mentality that if you simply believe enough Jesus will heal you of any sickness or disease, and give you whatever blessings you ask for—if you believe enough. After all, they reason, Jesus is all-powerful and He wants to bless you, so just “Name it and claim it!”

That is not the example of faith that we see in our text. Faith and trust in Jesus is not just “believing enough” in His almighty power as true God, but also trusting and believing that Jesus will always answer our prayers in the way that He knows is best. Even Jesus while He was on this earth prayed to His Heavenly Father, **“Thy will be done” (Luke 22:42)**. Faith and trust in Jesus means that while we are praying continually and persistently, we are also content and satisfied to live with whatever Jesus’ answer is.

Look at the example of the man in our text, **A leper came to Jesus. He knelt down and begged him, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” (v. 40)**. Notice the humble faith of this man: He acknowledges Christ’s power to heal Him, but he did not demand this gift from Him. Instead, He cast himself entirely on Christ’s mercy and His gracious will.

Are you hurting? Struggling? Dealing with an illness or disease? Suffering from emotional pain or guilt? Reach out to the one who **“stretched out His hands”** in **compassion** for you and took the nails of the cross and shed His blood to cleanse and heal you and me from our eternally terminal illness—the “leprosy” of sin. Come to Him like the leper in our text: with confident faith in Christ’s power to heal and relieve, and with humility trust in His love, and His perfect will that He will do what is best for us. Yes, Jesus is our healer, but He is more than that; He is our Savior!

Always remember that He came to take away our greatest sickness of sin so that one day He will heal us from every sickness, disease, virus, and illness in heaven. There **"God will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."** (Revelation 21:4). Amen.