

CHANGING A LEPROUS SPOTS - THE DAY A PARALYTIC WALKED HOME

1. **CHANGING A LEPROUS SPOTS:** Mark 1:40-45

A. **LEPROSY:** AMONG FIRST-CENTURY JEWS, **NO WORD** WAS MORE **FEARED** THAN THE WORD **"UNCLEAN."**

B. THE **LAW** OF **MOSES** **REQUIRED** ALL THOSE **AFFLICTED** WITH **LEPROSY** TO **ANNOUNCE THEMSELVES** BY **SHOUTING**, **"UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!"** ... SO OTHERS COULD **PROTECT** THEMSELVES FROM **INFECTION**.

1. THEY WERE TO **LIVE ALONE** OUTSIDE AND KEEP THEMSELVES **SEPARATED** FROM THE **HEALTHY POPULATION** TO **PREVENT** THE **SPREAD OF DISEASE**.

2. AS A SIGN OF **PERPETUAL MOURNING**, THEY WERE TO LEAVE THEIR **HEADS UNCOVERED** AND **TEAR** THEIR **CLOTHING** (LEV. 13:45-46).

C. THROUGHOUT **SCRIPTURE**, **LEPROSY** IS **NEVER** **"HEALED"** OR **"CURED."**

1. THE PERSON IS **ALWAYS** SAID TO HAVE BEEN **"CLEANSED."**

2. IT SHOULD COME AS NO **SURPRISE**, THEN, THAT ANCIENT CULTURES REGARDED **LEPROSY** AS **GOD'S AFFLICTION** FOR **SIN** (WHICH COULD NOT BE **HEALED**, ONLY **CLEANSED**.)

a. MOST **BELIEVED** THAT **LEPROUS** **DESERVED** THEIR DREADED **DISEASE** **BECAUSE** THEIR **SIN** HAD **EARNED** **GOD'S DISDAIN**.

D. MANY **HISTORIANS** SINGLE OUT **LEPROSY** AS THE **MOST HOPELESS** OF **ALL DISEASES** BOTH **PHYSICALLY** AND **SOCIALLY**:

1. **PHYSICALLY:** **LEPROSY** SEEMS **INCURABLE** BECAUSE IT **REVERSES** THE **PAIN PROCESS**.

a. MOST **DISEASES** HAVE **PAIN** AS AN **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM** WHICH **HELPS** IN **HEALING**.

b. **HOWEVER...** **LEPROSY** IS JUST THE **OPPOSITE**... IT **DESTROYS** THE **SIGNAL SYSTEM** FOR **PAIN**, LEAVING THE **BODY WITHOUT** ITS **NATURAL PROTECTION AGAINST SELF-DESTRUCTION**.

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1) A **LEPER** CAN BE **BURNED, CUT, AND BROKEN** **WITHOUT** THE **WARNING OF PAIN.**

- i. **SKIN FALLS OFF, FINGERS, ARMS, TOES, AND LEGS DIE AND DROP AWAY IN DEFIANCE OF THE NORMAL PROCESS OF THE BODY TO HEAL ITSELF.**
- ii. **AND... IN THE ABSENCE OF PAIN, THE LEPER LOSES ALL HOPE OF HEALING.**

2. **SOCIALLY: LEPROSY IS ALSO A HOPELESS SOCIAL DISEASE.**

- a. **LEPERS ARE SO GROTESQUE THAT SOCIETY LABELS THEM CONTAGIOUS AND SENDS THEM INTO EXILE... TO BE ALONE.**

1) IT IS **ONE THING** TO BE **CONDEMNED TO DIE**, **BUT** IT IS **QUITE ANOTHER THING** TO **DIE IN TOTAL ISOLATION.**

E. **LEPERS** WERE PEOPLE WHO WERE **ALREADY DEAD... THOUGH STILL ALIVE... DEAD MEN WALKING!**

2. **Mark 1:40-45 (NASB)** And a **leper** came to **Jesus**, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Moved with **compassion**, Jesus stretched out His hand and **touched him**, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately (9) the leprosy left him and he was **cleansed**. And He sternly warned him and immediately (10) sent him away, and He said to him, "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." **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."

A. **NOTE: THE MAN DIDN'T BLAME GOD OR HAVE A SPIRIT OF ENTITLEMENT... "IF YOU ARE WILLING" ACKNOWLEDGES THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS TO DO AS HIS CHARACTER DICTATES.**

1. THE **GRACE OF HEALING IS GOD'S TO GIVE... NOT OURS TO DEMAND.**

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- B. **BACKGROUND:** *BECAUSE* THE “**leper**” came to Jesus, **beseeking** Him and **falling** on his knees before Him, and saying, “**If You are willing, You can make me clean.**” ... JESUS **HAS A CHOICE TO MAKE**:
1. **WILL HE RESPOND TO THE LEPER’S REQUEST AT THE RISK OF LIMITING HIS TEACHING MINISTRY AND PREMATURELY PROVOKING THE OPPOSITION OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS?**
 2. **OR... WILL HE REJECT THE LEPER AT THE RISK OF LOSING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE HAS COME WHICH IS, “NOT... TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY” (10:45)?**
 3. **JESUS CHOOSES THE LEPER, BUT NOT WITHOUT A PRICE.**
 - a. THE MAN DID **NOT DO** AS JESUS HAD “**STERNLY WARNED**” (1:43)... HE **ANNOUNCED THE NEWS TO EVERYONE**, WITH THE **EXPECTED RESULTS**.
 - b. **BECAUSE OF THE MAN’S DISOBEDIENCE**, JESUS COULD **NO LONGER CONDUCT MINISTRY INSIDE THE CITY**.
 - 1) HE HAD TO **REMAIN ON THE OUTSKIRTS**, WHERE HE COULD **ACCOMMODATE THE CROWDS AND PREACH EFFECTIVELY**.
- C. **FACT:** **LEGALISTIC RELIGION** IS BEGINNING TO **STALK JESUS** AS HE **TEACHES AND HEALS** IN THE **SYNAGOGUES** OF THE CITIES OF **GALILEE**... AND A **COLLISION IS INEVITABLE**.
1. **WHY?... BECAUSE... HIS “GOOD NEWS” CHALLENGED THE BORING REQUIREMENTS OF THE JEWISH LAW... AND THEREFORE THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.**
 - a. **REMEMBER: THE LEGALISTIC RELIGIOUS LEADERS DISTORTED GOD’S 10 COMMANDMENTS INTO 248 COMMANDMENTS AND 365 PROHIBITIONS!!**
 2. **HIS AUTHORITY THREATENED THE LEGITIMACY OF THE SCRIBES;**
 3. **AND... HIS COMPASSION FOR HUMAN NEED CHALLENGED THE TRADITIONS OF THE ESTABLISHED RELIGIOUS LEADERS.**

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4. WHEN JESUS SHOWED COMPASSION FOR A LEPER AND TOUCHED HIM, HE WAS PROPELLED INTO A CONFLICT BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH AGAINST A DEAD RELIGION AS WELL AS DEADLY OPPONENTS.
- D. INTERESTING: JESUS DIDN'T ASK FOR A LOVE OFFERING AFTER HEALING!!
- E. NOTE: JESUS HAD COMPASSION FOR THE MAN AND HE HEALED HIM.
 1. HE HEALED HIM WITH HIS "TOUCH" AND WITH HIS "WORD".
 - a. AS WITH PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW'S FEVER, SO WITH THE LEPROSY... IT WAS GONE INSTANTLY!
 - b. CONSIDER: THIS MUST HAVE BEEN THE FIRST C LOVING TOUCH THE LEPER HAD FELT IN A LONG TIME!
- F. FACT: IF YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST THIS MORNING IT'S BECAUSE HE "TOUCHED" YOU, TOO!!
 1. SONG: "HE TOUCHED ME"
- G. THREE SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM MARK 1:
 1. FIRST: SINCE THE SON OF GOD CAME AS A SERVANT, THEN BEING A SERVANT IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL CALLINGS.
 - a. WE ARE NEVER MORE LIKE THE LORD JESUS THAN WHEN WE ARE SERVING OTHERS.
 2. SECOND: GOD SHARES HIS AUTHORITY WITH HIS SERVANTS.
 - a. ONLY THOSE WHO ARE UNDER AUTHORITY HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY.
 3. THIRD: IF WE ARE GOING TO BE SERVANTS, WE WILL NEED TO HAVE COMPASSION...
 - a. WHY?... BECAUSE PEOPLE WILL COME TO US FOR HELP AND RARELY ASK IF IT IS CONVENIENT.

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1) HOWEVER... WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO FOLLOW IN THE STEPS OF
JESUS CHRIST AND MEET THE NEEDS OF OTHERS BY BEING ONE
OF GOD'S COMPASSIONATE SERVANTS.

3. THE DAY A PARALYTIC WALKED HOME: Mark 2:1-12

A. MIRACLES ARE DRAMATIC DISPLAYS OF DIVINE POWER THAT BREAK THE
LAWS OF NATURE AND PHYSICS IN ORDER TO VALIDATE SOMETHING OR
SOMEONE THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE DOUBTED.

B. LUKE WRITES THAT "there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law
sitting *there*, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and
from Jerusalem..."

1. MARK WROTE "And many were gathered together,

2. THEREFORE... IT MUST HAVE BEEN A RATHER LARGE HOME BECAUSE IT
WAS FULL OF PEOPLE FROM "EVERY VILAGE IN GALILEE, JUDEA, AND
FROM JERUSALEM".

3. FOR THOSE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES WHO CAME TO CAPERNAUM
FROM JERUSALEM BY THE MOST POPULAR ROUTE IT WAS ABOUT 100
MILES WHICH WAS A FOUR TO FIVE DAY WALK.

a. THEY WERE NOT THERE FOR FUN... THEY WERE THERE TO EXAMINE
THIS ILLNESS-HEALING, DEMON-EXORCISING, LEPER-CLEANSING
RABBI FROM NAZARETH!

1) AND THEY HAVE A FRONT ROW SEAT!!

C. REMEMBER: JESUS NEVER WANTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW HIM BECAUSE OF
HIS ABILITY TO HEAL.

1. HE HEALED SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD REALIZE HE WAS GOD'S SON THE
LONG EXPECTED MESSIAH.

2. THE HEALINGS WERE DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE JESUS' AUTHORITY.

4. HISTORIC BACKGROUND:

A. JEWISH PEOPLE IN JESUS' TIME:

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1. THE AVERAGE MAN WAS ABOUT 5'5" TALL AND WEIGHED ABOUT 110 POUNDS.
 2. THE AVERAGE WOMAN WAS ABOUT 5'1" TALL AND WEIGHED ABOUT 95 POUNDS.
 3. NOTE: STRENUOUS DAILY LABOR AND LIMITED FOOD CREATED THE SHORT AND SLENDER BODY TYPE.
- B. THE TYPICAL GALILEAN HOME: (YOUTUBE.COM "WHAT DID HOMES REALLY LOOK LIKE IN THE TIME OF JESUS" OR YOUTUBE.COM "WHAT WERE HOUSES LIKE IN THE TIME OF JESUS" OR nazarethvillage.com)
1. FLOOR: PACKED EARTH MIXED WITH LIME AND STRAW.
 2. CEILING: 6 TO 6.5 FEET TALL.
 3. WALLS: 1.5' TO 2' THICK STONES BOUND TOGETHER WITH MUD AND LIME MORTAR.
 4. ANIMALS: MAYBE A GOAT AND A FEW SHEEP.
 5. FOUR ESSENTIAL ITEMS:
 - a. STRAW MATS.
 - b. CERAMIC STORAGE JARS.
 - c. OIL LAMPS.
 - d. BRAZIER... A METAL BOWL IN WHICH FIRE WAS KEPT FOR COOKING, WARMTH, AND LIGHT.
- C. THE TYPICAL GALILEAN ROOF:
1. THE ROOF WAS NOT MERELY A COVERING... IT WAS AN EXTENSION OF THE HOME:
 - a. PEOPLE SLEPT UP THERE IN THE HOT MONTHS.
 - b. AND WORKED UP THERE DURING THE DAY.
 2. IT WAS ACCESSED BY A LADDER.

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3. ROOFS WERE ABOUT 12" THICK, AND WERE BASICALLY FLAT WITH A SLIGHT SLOPE TO ALLOW RAIN TO RUN OFF.
 4. THE ROOF WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH RAFTERS OF TIMBERS OF SYCAMORE OR CYPRESS LAID PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER 2 TO 3 FEET APART.
 5. DENSE MATS OF WOVEN REEDS AND NATURAL CANE WERE PLACED ON TOP OF THE BASIC ROOF.
 6. THE WHOLE THING WAS OVERLAID WITH 3" TO 6" OF WET CLAY WHICH WAS THEN PACKED DOWN AND HARDENED IN THE SUN TO RESIST WATER.
 7. WHEN THE ROOF CRACKED AND LEAKED, IT WAS EASILY REPAIRED WITH MOIST CLAY WHICH HARDENED IN THE SUN.
- D. DISCUSS: WHY OUR VISION OF HOMES IN JESUS' TIME IS MISLEADING.
1. BECAUSE WE THINK THAT THEY RESEMBLE SIMPLIFIED VERSIONS OF OUR OWN HOMES WITH SMALLER ROOMS, BASIC FURNITURE, AND FAMILIAR LAYOUTS.
 2. HOWEVER... THAT IMAGE IS DEEPLY MISLEADING!
5. Mark 2:3-4 (NASB) And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.
- A. IMAGINE THE SCENE: AS JESUS WAS TEACHING, DEBRIS AND DIRT BEGAN TO TRICKLE DOWN.
1. THEN LARGER CHUNKS OF DIRT FELL AS A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT POURED THROUGH THE WIDENING HOLE.
 2. BY NOW, JESUS ABANDONED HIS LESSON AND EVERYONE WAS CRANING THEIR NECKS AND MURMURING.
 3. FINALLY, A HANDMADE STRETCHER DESCENDED ON FOUR ROPES BEARING A PARALYTIC. (GEORGE)

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- a. HE MAY HAVE RETURNED JESUS' LAUGHTER WITH A SHEEPISH GRIN.
- B. "... And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
 1. NOTE: WHOSE FAITH?... IT WAS NOT THE FAITH OF THESE FOUR MEN THAT RESULTED IN JESUS FORGIVING THE PARALYTIC'S SINS.
 2. HOWEVER... IT WAS THE FAITH OF THESE MEN THAT BROUGHT HIM TO THE PLACE WHERE HE COULD HEAR THE LORD JESUS DEAL WITH HIM SPIRITUALLY, INDIVIDUALLY, AND PHYSICALLY.
 3. "WHEN JESUS SAW THEIR FAITH" MEANS THEIR FAITH TO BRING THE PARALYTIC MAN TO JESUS.
 - a. WHEN HE SAW THIS, THEN HE DEALT PERSONALLY WITH THE MAN (HE "TOUCHED HIM") AND SAID, "SON, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN."
 4. "WHAT WE NEED IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS STRETCHER-BEARERS... MEN AND WOMEN WITH THE KIND OF FAITH TO GOES OUT AND BRINGS IN THE UNSAVED SO THEY CAN HEAR THE GOSPEL. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE TODAY WHO ARE PARALYZED WITH A PALSY OF SIN, A PALSY OF INDIFFERENCE, OR A PALSY OF UNBELIEF." – J. V. McGEE
 - a. FACT: A GREAT MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO COME INTO CHURCH AND HEAR THE GOSPEL PREACHED UNLESS WE TAKE A CORNER OF THE STRETCHER AND BRING THEM IN.
 - 1) THAT'S WHAT THESE MEN DID!
6. Mark 2:6-9... But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately (11) Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?

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- A. THE SCRIBES/PHARISEES ARE WRONG ON THE FIRST QUESTION ("Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming)... BUT RIGHT ON THEIR SECOND QUESTION (who can forgive sins but God alone?).
1. JESUS ASKS A RHETORICAL QUESTION... IT IS INFINITELY EASIER TO HEAL THE BODY THAN IT IS TO FORGIVE SINS.
- B. THE SCRIBES/PHARISEES ARE CONFOUNDED... AND THEY HAVE NO ANSWER.
- C. BY EXERCISING HIS POWER TO FORGIVE SINS AND THEREFORE DECLARING HIMSELF TO BE THE SON OF MAN (A TITLE MEANING FULLY MAN AND FULLY GOD), JESUS HAS WON A MULTITUDE OF GRATEFUL FRIENDS AND ALIENATED A HANDFUL OF DEADLY ENEMIES.
7. Mark 2:10-12 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." And he got up and immediately (12) picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
- A. REMEMBER: MARK IS A GOSPEL OF ACTION... THE FORMER PARALYTIC "IMMEDIATELY" ... GOT UP... PICKED UP THE PALLET... AND WENT HOME.
- B. TRUTH: GENUINE MIRACLES ARE INSTANTANEOUS, UNDENIABLE, AND COMPLETE... THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC WAS A GENUINE MIRACLE.
- C. THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE: "... they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
1. JESUS FORGAVE SINS, CONFOUNDED SCHOLARS, AND HEALED SICKNESS... AND THE PEOPLE "were glorifying God".
2. THAT IS THE FIRST STEP IN REALIZING THAT JESUS IS GOD'S SON.