

He is King Over Disease: Steve Swartz
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Matthew 8:1-4

The Sermon on the Mount was complete. Jesus and the multitude came off the mountain. A leper comes to worship Jesus and ask for cleansing. Leviticus 13 & 14 outlines how Jewish society should handle those with skin conditions. Here in this passage Jesus touches and heals this man, who is an outcast in society.

Jesus shows life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus shows that He is King over disease. The Kingdom of God is not just spiritual but physical and includes healing and wholeness. The prophets tell of a physical kingdom. Ez. 47:12 speaks of a river, trees, and food. Is. 65:20 speaks of a child who is 100 years old. Matt. 9:35, Jesus is healing every sickness and disease among the people.

It is not a guarantee of physical healing now. We don't deny healing, we deny there are healers. The passage in 1 Cor. 12:9 mentions "gifts of healing", but this gift is not used other places in Scripture as a gift dispersed to believers.

- Continuationist Beliefs Concerning Gifts: a) Use of James 5:13-15 to justify elders laying hands on the sick to bring healing. b) Some people are able to heal cancer, colds, bone, lung, blood issues, etc. c) Some have greater levels of healing gifting. d) Some healings are gradual or happen initially and then progressively get better over time.
- Cessationist Beliefs Concerning Gifts: a) Miracles haven't ceased, but miraculous gifts of healing have. b) Gifts of healing diminished over time. Examples of Paul not speaking of trying to heal others but would pray for them vs. earlier miracles such as Peter's shadow healing the sick (Acts 5:15-16), Paul raising from the dead the young man who fell from the third floor during a sermon (Acts 20:9).
- Reasons for Cessationist Practice: a) "Gifts of healing" in 1 Cor. 12:9 not used in other passages concerning teaching and training the saints. b) No instructions are given to believers on how and when to administer the gift. c) James 5:13-15 is used in the context of church discipline and issues of sin. The one who is sick is to call for the elders and for the elders to receive a confession and pray for them. d) Jesus healed people completely, in public, and undeniable to all, even Jesus' enemies. Gifts of healing today are gradual, imperfect, based upon the faith of the recipient not the one laying hands and praying over them. Jesus had power to completely heal all types of sickness and disease, Christ never failed to heal.
- Continuationists take an experience and try to create a theology from select passages.
- Cessationists see Scripture shows a pattern and completion of the use of gifts of healings.
- Faith is necessary for salvation not healing. Faith is not a quality to get healing or provision.

Two Questions Answered by Jesus in this Passage:

1. **What did the leper believe?** 1) nothing of himself. The leper heard the sermon of Matt.5-7, about the poor in spirit, those that mourn, and about the lowly (5:3-5). Those who were poor would obtain the kingdom of heaven. Those that mourn would be comforted. The meek would inherit the earth. 2) V2, Christ is worthy of worship, the leper knelt at his feet. 3) V2, he calls Jesus, Lord and God, using "kurios," demonstrating a submissive heart. Asking Jesus, "Lord is you are willing to heal." Not demanding of God but accepting of His will. 4) The leper acknowledged his need to be cleansed in order to be allowed to worship. An example of King Uzziah is 2 Chron. 26 who God struck with leprosy because he offered incense in the temple and was not a priest, he could no longer worship with others.
 - a. The leper was separated, but if he were cleansed, he could fellowship and worship.

2) **What did Jesus do?** 1) V3, made the unclean leper clean. Jesus moved with pity (Mk.1:41), touched the leper. Jesus was pure and whatever He touched became pure. 2) V3, Jesus responded to the man's confession of sin. The leper told Christ, "You can make me clean," V2. 3) Jesus made him a part of the covenant community, V4. Jesus told him to tell no one and present himself to the priest at the temple and offer the gift required by Moses.

- After Matt. 7:24-27, the leper is the first recorded salvation from the Sermon Christ preached.

Further Discussion and Application

The Gospel message is front and center in this story of the leper. 1) You must believe nothing of yourself. You must be empty of self. 2) You must believe Christ is worthy of worship. 3) You must have a submissive heart. Christ is now Lord and Master. 4) You must be cleansed of sin because you are guilty of sin.

- How are these beliefs manifested by the one who has come to Christ? How are their actions and speech changed by the power of salvation? What other fruits manifest in the life of a believer found in Matthew chapter 5-7?

The leper reveals the power of God to change the outcasts in the world. Why does salvation offered by Christ breakdown barriers between peoples and require true humility to obey? Are there sinners who are "more good" than others? Who can be saved?

Romans 1:16-17 gives a definition of the Gospel. V17, gives a promise or a fruit of the believer. What is that fruit? How does the Gospel reveal the righteousness of God? What did God have to make right? What was broken and unable to be fixed? Why does the heart of man have to be humbled to receive this gift? Why is living by faith the life of a believer?

What evangelistic message can we share with unbelievers from this short passage of the salvation of the leper? How can we encourage believers with this passage?