

**Luke 5:12-16****2-12-06****“The Messiah’s Midas Touch!”****1. Intro:**

- 1.1. **How much do you know about the Lepers in the bible? (Q&A)**
- 1.2.
  1. What leper of Bethany entertained Jesus in his home? **Simon** (Mrk 14:3)
  2. What king of Judah was a leper until the day of his death? **Uzziah** (2 Chrn 26:21)
  3. What captain of the armies of Syria was a leper? **Naaman** (2 Kgs 5:1)
  4. What prophetess became a snow-white leper for a short time? **Miriam** (Numb 12:10)
  5. Who put his hand into his bosom and, drawing it out, found it leprous? **Moses** (Ex 4:6)
  6. Who became a leper after he lied to the prophet Elisha? **Gehazi** (2 Kgs 5:27)
  7. Who told Moses to send lepers away from the Israelite camp? **The Lord** (Numb 5:1-4)
  8. What is the greatest number of lepers Jesus healed at any one time? **Ten** (Lk 17:12)

**2. THE MESSIAH’S MIDAS TOUCH! (12-16)**

- 2.1. Among the old **Greek legends** there is a story of a king who did some act of kindness to one of the gods, & was told that as a reward he could **ask for any favor** he would.

The foolish king begged that **everything he touched might become gold**. At 1<sup>st</sup> everything went splendidly. He touched a **stone** it became a solid block of gold. He touched a **twig** it immediately became a stick of gold. **But it also worked in other ways**. As he picked up his **food** to eat, it became lumps of gold before it reached his mouth. **Water** became gold as it touched his mouth. He **kissed his daughter** & in an instant she became a statue of gold. He fled to the god & implored that he might be delivered from his curse.<sup>1</sup>

- 2.1.1. Such is the **fable** of an **earthly king** with a golden touch! But there is another king who, in all the lovelier moral & spiritual senses, is in the very truth, *“the King with the Golden Touch!”*

- 2.1.2. **Whatever** His **nail-scarred hand touches**, it blesses & transfigures. It brings forgiveness, restoration, healing. It transforms atrophy, paralysis & moral leprosy into health, vitality, & wholeness. It awakens *hope, faith, love, joy, goodwill*. It dissolves fetters, & frees prisoners, & communicates power to live victoriously.

- 2.1.3. This King w/a **Golden Touch** is none other than...Jesus Christ!

- 2.2. **Outline:** [1] **Look, a Leper!** [2] **Seeing Spots...My Spots**  
[3] **Hate the Leprosy, Love the Leper** [4] **Learning to Love a Leper!**

### 3. **[1] LOOK, A LEPER!**

- 3.1. **Leprosy** – The Hebrews had **no cure** for leprosy other than Divine intervention. In modern times, there are very effective medicines available, & leprosy patients are usually not isolated. Now called **Hansen's Disease**<sup>2</sup>
- 3.1.1. Though, in spite of modern medical advances, an estimated 10 million people around the world have leprosy!
- 3.2. **(12) Full of leprosy** – Far advanced.
- 3.2.1. Their disease was a slow lingering death. [They died **"inch by inch!"**]
- 3.2.2. Ken Gire writes [Incredible Moments w/the Savior], **"There he lives. W/o love. W/o hope. W/o the simple joys & dignities of life: being smiled at...being greeted on the street...buying fresh fruit in the market... talking politics by the public fountain...laughing...getting to go to work...operating a business...haggling over prices w/a shopkeeper...getting a wedding invitation...singing hymns in the synagogue, celebrating Passover w/family. All these barred to him. Forever!**
- 3.3. **AIDS seems to carry the same stigma & fear that these Lepers faced.**
- 3.3.1. Often times those who have contracted AIDS have been treated w/ **disgust**, as **outcasts**, & w/outright **violence!**
- 3.4. **Fell on his face & implored him** – Lepers were not allowed to approach people; but the man came to Jesus in desperation.
- 3.4.1. He falls at his feet like a **pale wilted flower** bowing before the Savior.
- 3.4.2. This unclean person had **broken through** the regulations of the ceremonial law, & came close; **but Jesus** far from rebuking him **broke through** the law himself in order to **meet him!**
- 3.5. **If you are willing, You can make me clean** – This man not only **needed to be changed**, but he **wanted to be changed**.
- 3.5.1. He knew that Jesus had the **power** to heal him. His doubt was about his **willingness** (**His care for Him, His Love, His compassion!**)
- 3.5.2. Men more easily believe in miraculous power than in miraculous love.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.6. **(14) Tell no one** – **"Strictly charged"** (Mrk 1:43)
- 3.6.1. It is a strong word for **the snorting of a horse** and expresses powerful emotion. (A.T.Roberson)
- 3.6.1.1. The prohibition against talking about it was to **allay excitement** and to avoid **needless opposition** to Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Awake My Heart; Baxter; Aug. 7; pg.236

<sup>2</sup> "Hansen's Disease", after the Norwegian physician, Dr. Hansen, 33, discovers the leprosy bacillus(ba-sil-us).

<sup>3</sup> Robertson, A.. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

- 3.7. **Show yourself** – to receive a **certificate** showing his cleansing.  
 3.7.1. Without the formal testimony of the priests the people would not receive the leper as officially clean.
- 3.8. **The Effect of Disobedience!** (15,16)
- 3.9. Look at the effect of the Lepers disobedience - **Read Mark 1:45**.  
 3.9.1. Now **the Leper** can go into the city...& **Jesus** is outside!
- 3.10. The more the crowds came the more He withdrew & prayed w/the Father.  
 3.10.1. Maybe the **wild enthusiasm** of the crowds was running ahead of their **comprehension** of Christ, & **His mission & message?**

#### 4. **[2] SEEING SPOTS...MY SPOTS!**

- 4.1. **This Leprosy is More Than Skin Deep!**  
 4.1.1. The **disease** was **not** only on the surface...like **sin**, it was “**deeper than the skin**”. (this phrase was used 10 X’S in Lev.13, see vs.3)  
 4.1.1.1. It delves into our uttermost core...**the heart!**
- 4.1.2. Adam himself became a carrier of this disease! (you are a carrier too!)
- 4.1.3. In 18<sup>th</sup> century England one pick-pocket had his **hand cut off** when he was caught stealing. The 2<sup>nd</sup> time caught his **other hand**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> time he was caught “*pick pocketing with his teeth!*”  
 4.1.3.1. Even if they pulled out all his teeth, it wouldn’t have solved the problem because **sin is deeper than the skin!**
- 4.1.4. **Leprosy starts insignificant & painless** at the start; **slowly grows**, with **serious results** to the person; **repulsiveness** to others; it was **incurable** by human means; ending only in **death**.
- 4.2. **Incurable!**  
 4.2.1. The leper could **do nothing** for his own cleansing & cure.  
 4.2.2. Jeremiah the prophet preached a message to Judah “**Your affliction is incurable, Your wound is severe. There is no one to plead your cause, That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines.**” (Jer.30:12,13)  
 4.2.2.1. **But then Jeremiah went onto say in vs.17 (NIV), “But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,’ declares the LORD, ‘because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.”**  
 4.2.2.2. **WHY?** “**because...**”God will not have it said, “**no one cares** for them!”
- 4.3. **Leprosy & Sin Symptoms!**  
 4.3.1. [It **spreads**, causes **uncleanness**, & **isolates** you]  
 4.3.2. **[a] Leprosy spreads** in the system.  
 4.3.2.1. **Sin also**, it is never content, but when we give into it, it just covets more & more, & **starts spreading like wildfire**.  
 4.3.2.2. Jesus said, “**whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.**” Jn.8:24

4.3.3. **[b] Leprosy** makes the person **unclean**,

4.3.3.1. Sin makes us very "**unclean**" The angel to Joshua in "Take away the **filthy garments** from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your **iniquity** from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." Zech 3:4

4.3.4. **[c] Leprosy** must be **isolated**.

4.3.4.1. "**he shall dwell alone!**" (see Lev.13:46)

4.3.4.2. Sin isolates us from God. "**But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face** from you, So that He will not hear." Is.59:2

4.3.5. **[d] Leprosy** must dwell **Outside the camp**.

4.3.5.1. Jesus went outside the camp to meet us & to die for us.

4.3.5.2. **Heb.13:12-14** "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered **outside the gate.**"

4.3.5.3. Jesus identified himself w/the **outcasts**.

4.4. **What we must do w/our spiritual leprosy?**

4.5. (1) We must recognize we are **full of leprosy**. See Is.1:5,6.

4.6. (2) We must **seek Jesus**, enquire after him, acquaint ourselves with him.

4.7. (3) We must **humble ourselves before him** (fall on our face). We must be **ashamed** of our pollution & blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus.

4.8. (4) We must **earnestly desire to be cleansed** from the defilement, & cured of the disease, of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God.

4.9. (5) We must **firmly believe Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us:** *Lord, you can make me clean, though I be full of leprosy!*

4.10. (6) We must refer ourselves to the **good-will of Christ:** *Lord, if you will, you can*

## 5. **[3] HATE THE LEPROSY, LOVE THE LEPER!**

5.1. **Story** – Father Damien of Molokai. - In 1873 a Belgian Catholic Priest was sent to minister to lepers on the Hawaiian Island of Molokai. When he arrived he immediately began to meet each one of the lepers in the colony in hopes of building friendships. But, wherever he turned people shunned him. It seemed as though every door was closed. He poured his life into his work, erecting a chapel, beginning worship services, & pouring out his heart to the lepers. But it was to no avail! No one responded to his ministry. After 12 years Father Damien made the decision to leave.

Dejectedly, he made his way to the docks to board a ship to take him back to Belgium. As he stood on the dock he wrung his hands nervously as he recounted his futile ministry among lepers. As he did he looked down at his hands & noticed some mysterious white spots & felt some numbness. Almost immediately he knew what was happening to his body. He had contracted **leprosy!** It was then that he knew what he had to do. He returned to the colony & to his work. Quickly the word about his disease spread through the colony. Within a matter of hours everyone knew. Hundreds of them gathered outside his hut; they understood his pain, fear, & uncertainty about the future. **But the biggest surprise was the following Sunday.**

As Father Damien arrived at the chapel, he found 100's of worshipers there. By the time the service began, the chapel was crowded, & many were gathered outside. His ministry became enormously successful. **The reason? He was one of them. He understood & empathized w/them.**

## 5.2. The Lord's Love for Lepers!

5.2.1. In the Middle Ages Lepers were seen as "*cursed by humans, loved by God.*"

5.2.2. God had **concern** for the leper & made certain he or she was treated w/**dignity** in the OT.

5.2.2.1. **Yet**, God was also concerned for "the rest of his people" who **didn't** have it, **thus isolation** was important so it wouldn't spread.

5.2.3. They were not to be "banned" but to be "quarantined" until better.

5.2.3.1. **Yet**, this cut them off from the rest of **society**, including their **families**.

5.2.4. God gave the priest all the information needed to **detect** the disease & make sure it **did not spread**.

5.2.4.1. "It would have been devastating to isolate someone who was really not infected, **or** declare someone clean who was unclean!"<sup>4</sup>

## 5.3. What we may expect from Christ, if we thus apply ourselves to him.

5.4. (1) **He showed how low he could stoop**. His touching the leper was wonderful condescension.

5.4.1. Like father Damien to the leper colony, so Christ became one of us!

5.5. (2) **We shall find him very compassionate**, and ready to relieve us.

5.5.1. He is so willing to cleanse leprous souls.

5.5.2. **Jesus was always accessible**, even to the vilest!

5.6. (3) **We shall find him all-sufficient**, and able to heal and cleanse us, though we be ever so full of this loathsome leprosy.

5.7. (4) **One word, one touch**, from Christ, did the business: *Immediately the leprosy departed from him.*

5.7.1. If Christ says, "**I will, be justified, be sanctified,**" it is done; for he has power on earth to **forgive sin**, and power to **give the Holy Spirit**.

5.7.2. **Which felt better? The Word, or the touch?**

5.7.2.1. [Ken Gire] "I wonder. How long has it been since someone has shaken his hand...patted him on the back...put an arm around his waist...rubbed his shoulders...hugged him...stroked his hair ...touched his cheek...wiped a tear from his eye...or kissed him?"

5.7.3. Jesus healed by **touching** 4 x's that we know of: [1] **This Leper** w/a **Cleansing touch**; [2] **Peter's Mother-in-law** w/a **Healing touch**; [3] **Two Blind men** w/a **Enlightening touch**; [4] **Raising the widows son** w/a **Life-Giving touch**.

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe

6. **[4] LEARNING TO LOVE A LEPER!**
- 6.1. It is of the very essence of Christianity to “*touch the untouchable, to love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable.*” [Jesus did & so must we]
- 6.2. If we define Lepers as those who are **isolated, unwanted**, the **discards** of society...  
 Q: Who are the Lepers in our society today? Q: Who are the Lepers in your sphere of influence? Q: Who are the Lepers in your church?  
 Q: Who are the Lepers in the Murrieta/Temecula Valley?
- 6.2.1. Q: Who is the 1 person on your **child's sports team** that no one likes?  
 6.2.2. Q: Who is the 1 **parent** that's so obnoxious?  
 6.2.3. Q: Who is the biggest complaining **neighbor** on the block?  
 6.2.4. Q: The 1 **relative** that everyone runs from when they come into the room?  
 6.2.5. Q: The 1 **youth** you see that dresses the scariest?
- 6.3. Q: What do **you** need Jesus to touch today?
- 6.3.1. Touch your heart that you might **Learn to Love a Leper** this week?
- 6.3.2. Or to touch your spiritual Leprosy? - **Hear** from **Jesus this morning**, “**I am willing, be cleansed!**” [He touched this leper; He yearns to touch **you** today!]
- 6.3.3. **End:** Mother Theresa Quote.