Luke 5:12-16

“*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 Chron 26:21)
    3. What captain of the armies of Syria was a leper? *Naaman* (2 Kgs 5:1)
    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 1st 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.

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!


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
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.
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.

1 Awake My Heart; Baxter; Aug. 7; pg.236
2 “Hansen’s Disease”, after the Norwegian physician, Dr. Hansen, 33, discovers the leprosy bacillus(ba-sil-us).
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 18th century England one pick-pocket had his **hand cut off** when he was caught stealing. The 2nd time caught his **other hand**. The 3rd 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

5.1. 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 contacted 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!”

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?”


4 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.