

*"And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying "I will; be clean." (Matthew 8:3)*

**I. Practice What You Preach**

- a. The sequence of events moves from Sermon on the Mount to practical ministry. *When He came down from the mountain.* The Lord stooped to the infirmity and helplessness of the people.
- b. Jesus has deep concern for all those who live on the margins of society. Jesus loves all and He expends great energy, patience, and mercy on those who live on the lowest rungs of society.
- c. The church must be both *up on the mountain* with the Lord receiving His Word and *down in the valley* doing the practical work of ministry.
- d. The church that takes Jesus seriously will not only teach the Gospel but they will also pray and care for the sick, hungry, troubled in spirit and the hopeless.
- e. The 21<sup>st</sup> century church, must teach doctrine, because some of what ails us comes from sin.
- f. Today's church will remain relevant in our culture and communities as long as we continue to hold the Bible in one hand and extend help with the other hand.

**II. The Touching Messiah**

- a. Leprosy was a disfiguring skin condition which was believed to be contagious. The diseased person was excluded from normal life and worship. (Lev 13:1-3;45-46)
- b. If the condition was cured, a careful examination by a priest and a cleansing ritual was performed which allowed the person to be allowed back into society and worship.
- c. Notice the man's confident approach to Jesus in spite of his self-isolation prescribed by the Law.
- d. It is interesting that the leper recognized Jesus' status as he bowed down and called Him, "Lord". He also believed that Jesus "can" make him clean. ("If it be Your will, I will be healed")
- e. All good faith has respect in it. "Name it, claim it" does not revere God.
- f. Jesus response to the man was without conversation or diagnosis, He simply stated, "I am willing."
- g. It was taboo for anyone to touch what is unclean. Lepers were believed to be under a curse.
  1. Lepers were considered to be the living dead. Rabbis remained six feet away from lepers.
- h. If Jesus had stepped back and spoke healing, this would be a different miracle. No, Jesus grasped him!
- i. *Say nothing to anyone, but go.* This is a surprising conclusion.

**III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action**

- a. Matthew put this "untouchable person" at the forefront of Jesus' ministry. What no man can touch, God will touch. What no man can heal, God will heal. What no man can do, God can do!
- b. Lesson learned from watching the Master's Touch:
  1. God still has his eyes on those society has deemed invisible.
  2. No matter how close you get to Jesus or how high you climb with Him, you will still be required to touch those people others will not touch.
  3. God's power is greater than man's sickness.
  4. Faith is not a general belief in God, it is particular trust in God's Son and His ability to help us with our deepest problems.
  5. There are times when a word will do and there are other times when only a touch will do.
  6. Religion would not touch, but relationship will touch.