CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MAY22 2021

Scripture Story: Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-28.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages,* chapter 27.

willing and able



© 2009 Jupiterimages Corporation/digitally altered by Truman

keytext

"Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed."

(Mark 1:41, 42, NIV)

flashlight

"In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 266).

CCBSG B2 2021.indd 33 8/31/20 2:04 PM

what do you think?

Rank the following choices in order of what you think God wants the most, and be ready to explain your answer.

____ To serve others with a humble heart
____ To become a wise and proficient people
____ To have a clear sense of purpose about your career
____ To live in harmony with His commands
____ To receive with certainty the gift of salvation
____ To be generous with your time and talents

Explain your choice for what you think is most important to God. What is the relationship between your choice and the others on the list?

did you know?

The word "compassion" comes from the Greek word *splanknizomai* (say that three times fast). It is actually a medical word for the intestines or the deep insides of our being. In fact, the word can actually be translated "to feel something so deeply that your guts twist and cry out!" Kind of gross, but it captures how Christ felt for people sentenced to death by sin. It's not just feeling bad for others; it is being moved to do something about it.

INTO THE STORY

"When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'"

"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 'See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.' Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere."

"While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, 'Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.' Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

(Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.

What words and phrases do Mark and Luke use that Matthew leaves out?

_____

What words or phrases does Luke use that Mark and Matthew leave out?

_____

What words or phrases does Mark alone use?

_____

How is the disease of leprosy like sin?

_____

_____

The leper makes an interesting appeal by saying: "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Is there any question from the leper's perspective as to whether Jesus is able to heal him or not? What is the primary issue? Why do you think someone with leprosy would think this way? (Read John 9:1-3; 5:13, 14; Mark 2:3-5; Isaiah 59:1, 2.)

_____

_____

Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?

_____

_____

Explain the advice of Jesus to immediately "show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded." Why do you think Jesus asked the leper to do this?

_____

_____

What other story in the Bible does this event remind you of?

_____

punch lines

"And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day" **(John 6:39, 40, NLT).**

"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" **(1 John 1:8, 9, NASB).**

"God isn't late with his promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining himself on account of you, holding back the End because he doesn't want anyone lost. He's giving everyone space and time to change" **(2 Peter 3:9, *The Message*).**

"Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him" **(Matthew 20:34, NASB).**

"Look at it this way. If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine and go after the one? And if he finds it, doesn't he make far more over it than over the ninety-nine who stay put? Your Father in heaven feels the same way. He doesn't want to lose even one of these simple believers" **(Matthew 18:12-14, *The Message*).**

further insight

"Leprosy and palsy were not so terrible as bigotry and unbelief."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 271.

"God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. . . . He waits to make us free."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing,* p. 249.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Mark 1:40; Matthew 18:12-14.

Read and respond to the ranking exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. The list provided for you does not include anything bad or immoral, but the exercise of thinking about what God wants most is important to this week's lesson on the healing of the leper. The request of the man with leprosy is not a question but an appeal: "If you are willing, you can make me clean" (Mark 1:40, NIV). Compare his request with what Jesus said in today's reading from Matthew. The Savior is clear about His mission and about God's will, but the leper wonders—not as to whether Jesus can heal him, but whether Christ is willing. Why? How does this uncertainty affect our relationship to Christ today?

_____

_____

The faith exercised by the leper is the kind of faith in God still needed today. "This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin" (Fundamental Belief 10, The Experience of Salvation).

Sunday

Read Matthew 20:32.

Read the *Into the Story* portion and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. This week's lesson gives you three perspectives of the same event (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). As you read, you will notice slightly different details given by each writer. What insights did you gain as you paid attention to these details? How is the leper's encounter with Jesus like every believer's experience with sin and salvation? How does this story portray how we should come to Christ? How does this story portray how Christ responds to people who come to Him in need? What do you think is the most important verse in this story? Why?

_____

_____

Monday

Read Mark 1:41, 42.

The *Key Text* this week tells us that "Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed." Luke's Gospel says the man was "full of leprosy" (Luke 5:12, NKJV) while Christ is "full of compassion." Take some time today and imagine this event as you memorize the words Christ spoke and how He touched the diseased man.

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 7:25.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and reflect on the prayers you pray for help, healing, strength, and forgiveness. This truth screams out what God desires more than anything else: to save you. As you examine this powerful message about God's response to our prayer for "deliverance from sin," think of someone you know who desperately needs to hear how God's answer to the prayer of forgiveness is always an immediate "Yes." Perhaps you could write them a letter and tell them about how the joy of salvation is one prayer away. Include the words of truth and comfort from today's Bible reading.

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson speak of God's desire and eagerness to save us. Think about how these verses are portrayed vividly in the story of the leper. As you read through these verses carefully, think about how you would organize these verses if you were giving a Bible study to someone else. Which verse would you put first, second, third, and why?

_____

Thursday

Read Hebrews 4:16.

While leprosy is not as prominent a problem today as it was in Jesus' day, the meaning of the story applies perfectly in any age. Have you ever felt as if you couldn't pray, or because you made such a mistake you found it hard to ask God for forgiveness? Sin causes us to want to hide from God or hesitate to get help, but God does not want us to hesitate. He wants us to "come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (Hebrews 4:16, NLT). So today—right now—pray to God with confidence in His mercy for the gift of salvation. The leper left and told everyone about what Jesus had done for him. Share with someone your thanksgiving to Jesus for being willing and able to deliver you.

Friday

Read Psalm 37:4.

Think of a time your life turned dramatically, for good or for bad. Reflect on how quickly life can change course as it did that day for the man who was healed of leprosy. What is your deepest desire? What does God want to do with our desires that are in keeping with His will for our lives? Pray today, telling God that desire, and in faith, thank Him for granting it.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 27.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.