



LESSON 5 // COMMITMENTS THAT CURE

One of the hardest times to believe that something new or different can happen in our lives is when we are facing debilitating circumstances. These are moments when we wonder what the future may hold and if we can ever hope again. Mark 1:40-44 tells the story of one man with a debilitating disease who encountered Jesus. Even though this man's condition was grave and his hope dim, he was radically changed through his experience with Christ.

Mark 1:40-44 (NLT) *A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said. ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" ⁴² Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. ⁴³ Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning: ⁴⁴ "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."*

From these verses, we learn that Jesus can certainly cure us from debilitating circumstances. We also see the role we play in this healing process. To be cured by Christ from our debilitating condition, we must:

1. Bring our condition to Jesus.

Leprosy was one of the most terrorizing diseases someone could contract in Jesus' day. It extracted life slowly and painfully. It isolated the afflicted person socially. It was also incurable.

A diagnosis of leprosy would inevitably impact a person's life in significant ways. It would bring devastation and deterioration physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. This would lead to desperation in trying to cope with a painful existence and end.

The first good news in this story is that the man with leprosy found courage and hope to bring his condition to Jesus. This is the starting point for healing for all of us who face debilitating conditions—we must bring them to One who alone can heal us!

2. Declare our commitment to Jesus.

There is another word that describes the condition of this man—*determination*! While he was certainly devastated by his condition and desperate for help, he showed a determination that is admirable and instructional for us.

This man heard that someone named Jesus had the power to heal people like him—and that Jesus was passing by. Because of this the man with leprosy made four commitments that we need to make as well to finding healing: he *came* to Jesus, *begged* Him for help, *bowed* before Him *and believed* that Christ could cure his disease.

3. Receive our cure from Jesus.

The commitments this leper made separated him from those who remained in their misery. He experienced what Jesus could do. Something new came to his life that day! Notice how Jesus did this and how He will do it for us as we commit ourselves and our condition to Him. Jesus:

- *Identified with the leper's need.* Mark 1:41 says that Jesus was “moved with compassion.” How wonderful it is to know that the Lord identifies with us when we approach Him with our needs. The author of Hebrews states this so well:

Hebrews 4:14-16 (NIV) *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

- *Reached out to the man.* We don't know the last time someone had reached out to this man. Perhaps it had been years since anyone had moved in his direction. Most people would go in the opposite direction when a leper approached. Jesus didn't. When others ran away and deserted him, Jesus came near and reached out to him. How precious!
- *Touched the “unclean” person.* The Lord is never soiled or contaminated by our uncleanness. He touches our unclean areas and makes them clean.
- *Strengthened his faith.* When this man first came to Jesus, he had some questions about the Lord's willingness to help him with his problem. Jesus put the questions of his faith to rest when He declared, “I am willing” (Mark 1:41). The leper's faith now moved from general belief to personal belief. The Lord helps us make our faith personal. He can and will strengthen your faith through His Word, as He did for this man.
- *Cured his condition.* With two simple words from Jesus this leprous man's life was changed: “Be healed!” (Mark 1:41). This statement was an imperative. The man was the recipient of Christ's definitive and curative action and Mark 1:42 tells us the result: “Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.”
- *Instructed him in a new way of life.* As a cured man, he now needed to live in obedience to the Lord—a disciple who followed Jesus and His instructions (Mark 1:43, 44).

Jesus invites us to bring every debilitating condition to Him, believing that He is willing to make us clean as we commit to following Him in a new life of grateful obedience.

Discussion questions

1. What does it mean to “bring your debilitating condition to Jesus”? Why is this important in the healing process?
2. Read Mark 1:40-44. What do you learn from the determination and commitments of the leper in this story that encourages and challenges you?
3. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What do these verses tell you about Jesus' heart for you and His ability to help in your “time of need”? What difference should this make in your relationship with Him?