



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

In bringing about his kingdom, Jesus not only cast out demons and healed diseases, he also made people clean.

1. Sin Makes Us All Unclean

- Read Mark 1:40

Leprosy arose as a consequence of sin on a global scale. Sin is serious and many of us have a smaller view of sin than we should. We know God forgives our sins and so we don't think of it as a big deal and forget that scripture teaches us that there are consequences for our sin. Others of us feel that God is just mean and puts limits on our fun by calling it sin, while forgetting that sin is what destroys, taints and shames our lives. The scripture says that sin defiles us.

- ❖ Q: What is sin? (All independence from God, not just moral failure)
- ❖ Q: What are some areas where you see Christians (in general) being casual about sin?
- ❖ Q: Do you see why sin defiles us? Do you recognise where sin has destroyed, tainted or shamed your own life?
- ❖ Q: Why then is God so clear with his boundaries on sin?

2. Being Unclean Separates Us From God And From Other People

The leper was declared "unclean" under Jewish law and had to follow the regulations that made clear to everyone around him that he was unclean. It separated him from his community and from the temple (and therefore the presence of God). Our sin works similarly as it causes us to hide from others because we live in shame, and we also feel removed from God's presence because we know that he is holy.

- Read Leviticus 13:45-46
- ❖ Q: Why does our sin cause us to avoid authentic Christian community?
- ❖ Q: Has this ever been a cause for you to wear the religious mask while struggling deeply on the inside? Did the mask help?
- ❖ Q: Why does our sin cause us to feel as though we have to hide from God rather than coming to him in repentance and faith?

3. Jesus Is Tender And Compassionate Towards The Unclean

- Read Mark 1:41

The leper believed that Jesus was able to heal him but didn't know if he wanted to. Many of us feel the same way about coming to Jesus with our sin and baggage. But this story, along with many others, shows us that Jesus came for the unclean and not for the clean and perfect. Jesus is merciful with people. Though he is king over all creation, he is also loving and merciful and we as a church should respond to his kindness and mercy, and then follow his example in the way we deal with the defiled and broken in the world around us.

- ❖ Q: Why is it so easy for us to agree or even preach that Jesus came to restore the most broken and defiled but yet so difficult for us to do the same for those in our society?
- ❖ Q: Are we personally kind and merciful to the very broken, unclean, defiled people that God has placed along our paths?
- ❖ Q: Are you receiving God's healing touch, his forgiveness, mercy and restoration in your brokenness and sin? Is anything holding you back?

4. Jesus Substitutes Himself For The Unclean To Make Them Clean

- Read Mark 1:42-45, Leviticus 14:8-20, 1 John 1:7-10

By touching the leper, Jesus would have made himself unclean. But he was foreshadowing what he was going to do on the cross. The leper had to go through a process of cleansing in order to be accepted and restored in the community and before God. On the cross Jesus took on the whole process himself so that he could not only forgive us but also cleanse us from our sin. He has done this once and for all. Will we receive cleansing from him?

- ❖ Q: Are we willing to be cleansed by Jesus? Do we realize that he carried our shame so we no longer have to?
- ❖ Q: How are you going to respond to him this evening in response to all that he has done for you?