

Seeing Jesus: Willing and Able to Cleanse
Luke 4:38-41, 5:12-16
Sermon Outline

Introduction: We often find ourselves saying, “If God really cared for our world, he would fix it.”

I) God does care

v. 13: I will. Be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him.

A) Power to cleanse

1) One more in a series of astonishing miracles: *Full of leprosy*

2) Catch-all disease

- Physical brokenness
- Social brokenness
- Spiritual brokenness: *v. 12: You can make me clean.*

B) Willing to cleanse

“I will. Be clean.

- The heart of God, the mission of Jesus

C) Whatever the reason for continuing brokenness, not divine reluctance

II) Why then is God’s care not more obvious?

- God’s care was not always obvious even to Jesus.

A) We don’t ask enough

v. 12: He fell on his face and begged Jesus

- Do we really believe our lives and world are in ruins, or do we secretly think we can fix things?
- Do we really want Jesus to act or have we grown cynical and complacent?

B) We don’t choose to care

- Could it be that God allows our reluctant care to constrain his?

C) Immediate healing can seduce us away from what we need the most

v. 15: But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray

- Why did Jesus keep withdrawing?
- We tend not to, so God brings desolate places
- Not sadistic

Conclusion: God’s full work is not yet complete. But his greatest work is. Cleansing, what we need the most, is ours for the asking

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Respond to the following: “If God really cared for our world, he would fix it.”
- 2) How is the power of Christ underscored in the story of the cleansing of the leper?
- 3) Leprosy was a “catch-all” disease, including physical, social, and spiritual brokenness. How are all three found in this disease?
- 4) Reflect on Jesus’ “I will” in vs. 13. This is the first time we hear this sort of statement in Luke. What is significant about it?
- 5) What does Jesus do just before he says, “I will. Be clean.” What is significant about this? What does it reveal about the heart of Jesus? How is this healing a “micro picture” of the entire mission of Jesus (incarnation and crucifixion)?
- 6) Reflect on the following statement: “Jesus said, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father.’ The healing of the leper assures us that, whatever God’s reasons are for the lack of present healing in our world, none is divine reluctance.
- 7) Imagine asking Jesus at the end of history, “Why didn’t you do more about all the pain and suffering in the world?” and hearing from him two answers: “Why didn’t you?” and “You did not seriously ask me to do much about it?” How do you react to the prospect of hearing these responses?
- 8) Reflect on the following: “Jesus frequently left his thriving and successful ministry to pray in desolate places because he needed repeatedly to remind himself that to have all the good things in life restored (health, friendship, and liberty) without being reconciled to God is, in the end, to have nothing—it is to be seduced by lesser goods away from the deepest Good—it is to forget the present and future desolation of any soul that seeks to draw its life and hope from anything and anyone other than God. Though Jesus made this choice habitually, we do not. And so God may have to make the choice for us—bringing forms of desolation into our lives so that we will not make the soul-destroying choice to love the good things of life too much and to forget the Person who gave those things, the One who alone is eternal and reliable.”
- 9) Spend some time in prayer, thanking God that his greatest work—the cleansing of sin—is done and is ours right now simply for the asking.