

## Research: Healing of the Leper

### Mark 1:40-42

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

What does the patient do here? Study the healer's role.

“*Kneeling* in Greek is *gonupeteo* which means to fall on the knees, the act of one imploring aid, and one expressing reverence and honor” (Thayer 120).

“The man bowed down before him, to show him respect” (Barnes 37).

“Leprosy has always been, and is still, one of the most intractable diseases. Under the Mosaic Law lepers were regarded as unclean and excluded entirely from human society: see Lev. 13 and 14” (Dummelow 642).

“Whatever variety of skin disorder the man had, it caused him much suffering. This suffering was social as well as physical. The law required that ‘the person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp (Lev. 13:45-46). Instead of keeping his distance from Jesus, as the law demanded, the leper came directly to him and fell down on his knees to make his plea. He had no doubt that Jesus could heal him. He only wondered whether Jesus was willing” (EBC 8.630).

“He does not say he believed him able, but with a brevity expressive of a confidence that knew no doubt he says simply, ‘thou canst’. But of Christ’s willingness to heal him he was not so sure” (Jamieson 3.51).

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

“No one was allowed to touch or even to salute a leper. If he even put his head into a place it became unclean. No less a distance than 4 cubits (6 ft.) had to be kept from the leper, or if the wind came from that direction, 100 cubits were scarcely sufficient. By thus touching the leper, Christ also showed his superiority to the Law of Moses” (Dummelow 652).

“Jesus’ touching of the leper not only resulted in his being cured, but also revealed Jesus’ attitude toward the ceremonial law. He boldly placed love and compassion over ritual and regulation” (EBC 8.630).

“It was an offence to the Jews to *touch* a leprous person, and was regarded as making him who did it ceremonially impure. The act of putting forth his hand and *touching* him, therefore, expressed the intention of Jesus to cure him, and was a pledge that he was, in fact, already cured” (Barnes 57).

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

“And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed—as perfectly as instantaneously” (Jamieson 3.52).

“*Cleansed* in Greek is *katharizo* which means to make clean; from physical stains and dirt; in a moral sense; to free from the defilement of sin and from faults; to purify from wickedness; to free from the guilt of sin, to purify; to consecrate by cleansing or purifying” (Thayer 312).