



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #056
Jesus’ Great Galilean Ministry

Jesus’ First Tour of Galilee
Miracle 6: Jesus Compassionately Heals A Man of Leprosy
MK 1.40-45 (Parallel Texts: MT 8.2-4; LK 5.12-16)

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40 ^LWhile Jesus was in one of the towns, ^Ma man ^Lcovered ^Mwith leprosy came to him. ^LSeeing Jesus, the man fell on his face ^Mand begged him on his knees, ^L"Lord, ^Mif you are willing, you have the power to make me clean."

41 Jesus was filled with compassion and reached out his hand and touched the man. *"I am willing,"* he said, *"I command you to be made clean!"*

42 Immediately, the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. 43 Jesus sent him away at once with a stern warning, 44 *"I command you: see that you do not tell this to anyone. But you must go, show yourself to the priest, and you must offer the sacrifices (^{MT}gift) ^Mthat Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them."*

45 Instead, the man went out and began to proclaim what had happened to many people, and he continued to spread the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly, but he was forced to stay outside in lonely places. ^LThe reports about Jesus continued to go out into the surrounding regions, so that crowds of ^Mpeople came to him from everywhere ^Lto hear him and to be healed of all their sicknesses. And Jesus continued to go out regularly to desolate places so that he could pray.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus.*

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	A Town in Galilee
Time	During the 1 st Tour of Galilee; Sept. To February (Months 9 to 13)
Stage of Jesus’ Life	Stage IV: His Great Galilean Ministry
SAGA Chapter I	The First Tour of Galilee
Section #055	Miracle 6: Jesus Compassionately Heals A Man of Leprosy

The Synoptic writers only chose to include five events in their description of what occurred during the roughly six months (September to February) of the 1st tour of Galilee. Two of them are specific miracles. Jesus healed hundreds, if not thousands of people on this tour as he constantly ministered to the huge crowd that followed him. The two specific healings were of particular importance and significance, yet they also represented the outpouring of miraculous ministry that was at the heart of the 1st tour. Healings on this scale were an obvious Messianic sign.

Today's reading describes the sixth specific miracle of Jesus' ministry. When the gospel writers relate the details of specific healing scenes like this one, there is always a special lesson to be observed in it. The healing of this man's leprosy highlights Jesus' compassion in three major ways. As the text says: ***"Jesus was filled with compassion..."***

"Leprosy" was a unique disease. The term described any kind of severe skin condition, not just clinical leprosy. In addition to being such a terrible physical condition, these illnesses were handled in a special way under the Mosaic law. Leprosy was cause for ceremonial uncleanness. A person afflicted with it was forced to live separate from other people, and was therefore banned from the synagogue, Temple, and all interaction with family and friends. Lepers had to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" as a warning to other people when they saw them, and immediately draw back from all contact.

Since people like Miriam and King Uzziah were instantly stricken with leprosy when they rebelled against God in the Old Testament, the disease was considered to be an outward representation of what sin does on the inside of all of us. It's treatment under the Law as an unclean condition only reinforced this characterization. What leprosy did to the body, and it's consequences for participation in the social and religious life of the community was a living parable of what sin does to our souls, and our relationship with God.

Therefore, when a person acquired leprosy they were subjected to a living death that cut them off from God, friends, family, and the ability to support themselves. It was a horrible condition to endure. This background helps us to see Jesus' compassionate grace on glorious display in this healing miracle.

First, note that Jesus allowed the man with leprosy to approach him—even to come right up to him and fall down before him. According to the Law, this should have never happened. No doubt some of the people around Jesus fled when the leper approached him. But Jesus welcomed him into his presence, as he would anyone else. Sick people required the Great Physician, not healthy ones. Jesus compassionately received the man into his fellowship.

Beyond that, Jesus chose to heal this man by reaching out and touching him—perhaps on the open sores of the leprosy itself. It had probably been many years since this man had felt the warmth of human touch from anybody. Jesus made the point of touching him; of holding him with a physical expression of love and compassion. Jesus' touch may have meant as much as the healing itself to this man. How much compassion can you see in Jesus' choice to heal the leprosy with his loving hands?

Finally, Jesus extended his compassion to this man in spite of the fact that the healed man ended up disobeying his direct command to him. This created great inconvenience for Jesus for the rest of his ministry in Galilee. Jesus and his companions were forced to sleep outdoors in remote places, because news of this healing made Jesus such a sought-after celebrity. Jesus knew the man would do this before he healed him. But that did not keep our Lord from reaching out to touch and heal him anyway. It was pure grace. This is a picture of Jesus as he really is—what a Savior!

You would think that a man healed with such compassion by Jesus would express his appreciation through obedience to him. Not so. He went out and would not stop talking about his spectacular, instantaneous healing. He loved the attention and celebrity status that the healing gave him. The sad truth is that pure gratitude *should* motivate us all to passionately obey our Lord, but our sinfulness

interferes in rendering an appropriate response to him. This allows us all to see and experience Jesus' compassion in ministering to each of us in spite of our ongoing, inappropriate response to him.

Luke ends his narrative with the observation that Jesus continued to spend hours each day in private prayer as his consistent life-style. It was the constant re-energizing of his heart and mind in prayer that gave Jesus the strength and faith to pour out his compassion on undeserving people like this man, and each of us. Prayer makes a difference. It fueled and sustained Jesus' tireless travel and ministry throughout Galilee on this tour.

APPLICATION:

We can feel like spiritual lepers when the burden and guilt of our sin overwhelms our souls. Just as it was Jesus' will to heal this man, it is always his will to forgive us and set us free from all condemnation, guilt and shame. Jesus cleanses us, and thereby restores us to the loving fellowship of himself, the Father and the Holy Spirit. We are set free!

Thank God for totally cleansing you from all the effects of sin. Jesus completely heals the sin-sick soul!

Are you praising and thanking him appropriately for his compassion in cleansing you?