

**BLESSED HOPE**

**BHBC**



**BIBLE CHURCH**

# Blessed Hope Bible Church

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*Learning ...*

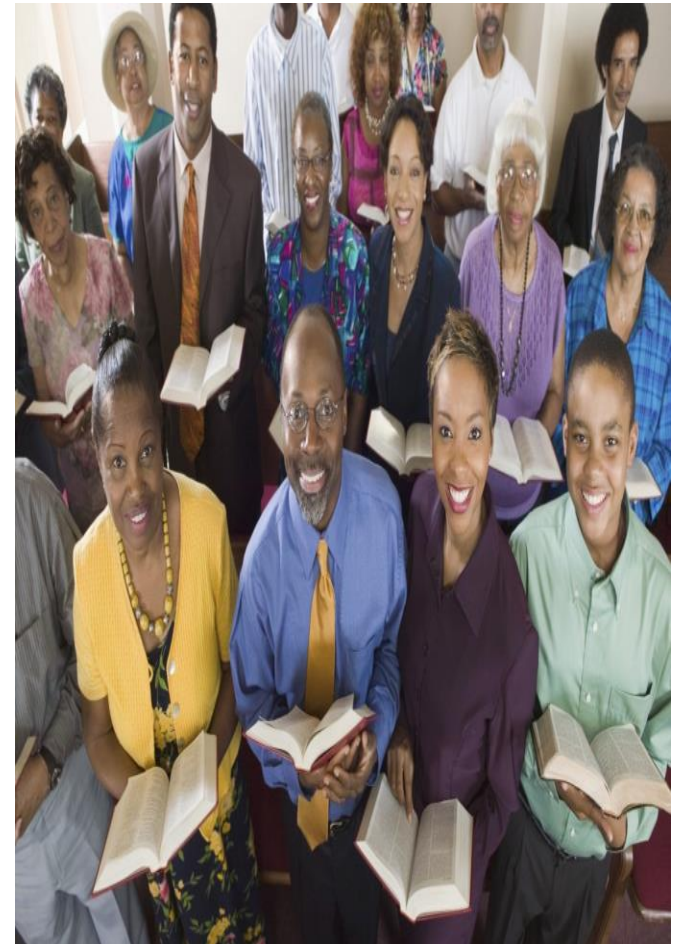
*Loving ...*

*Leaning ...*

*Living ...*

*Leading ...*

*By the Word  
of God*





THE  
MIRACLES  
OF JESUS



# THE LEPROSY OF SIN



**The Healing of the Man with Leprosy  
Mark 1:40-45 cf., Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-16**

# INTRODUCTION

- **The Context:** In one of the cities of Galilee, during the Lord's first preaching tour of that area, a leper came to Him, imploring Him for healing.
  - Leprosy is a terrible disease and one of the oldest diseases known to man (e.g., the Egyptians recognized it before 1500 B.C.).
  - Leprosy appears in all parts of the world and no climate, race, culture, occupation, or social status has no bearing on its occurrence.

- A person may harbor the disease for years before it shows any physical signs, but when it does appear, it causes appalling mutilations in the face, legs, hands and feet (e.g., the swelling of the extremities; the skin becomes wrinkled, dry or scaly; ear lobes, lips, and nose become thickened; fingers and toes may drop off; and blindness may result).
- In the O.T. when leprosy was discovered, the afflicted persons were rigidly cut off from the community.
  - They were compelled to put on the signs of mourning as if they were dead.
  - Their clothes were rent, their heads uncovered, their lips covered, and wherever they went they had to shout "unclean," in order to warn others away.
- Today modern drugs can arrest the disease, but while the bacilli can be eliminated from the body from these drugs, nothing can undo the toll the disease takes on the body before it is arrested.

- **The Consideration:** The disease of leprosy serves as an illustration of sin.
  - The Hebrew word for leprosy comes from a root that means “to strike,” implying that leprosy was a “strike” from God.
  - Although the leper was always described as ceremonially unclean rather than sinful, the stigma and taboo attached to the disease suggest that it served as an illustration of sin.
- **LESSON:** Like leprosy in the Bible, sin is a destructive and deadly spiritual disease.
- Jesus' healing of the leper in Mark 1:40-45 shows us two reasons why sin is so destructive and deadly

# SIN IS DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE IT RESULTS IN DISFELLOWSHIP

- **The Context:** The leper was in a state of ceremonial uncleanness (e.g., he could not come before God)
  - He could not enter the Temple to worship God
  - He could not make any sacrifices for sin
  - He could not participate in any religious or social activity because contact with him would make others ceremonially unclean (e.g., anyone who touched him would be ceremonially unclean for seven days).
  - **Point:** A leper was in a state of banishment, from God and men.



- **The Consideration:** The only way his leprosy could be cleansed was by the mercy of God.
  - The leper came to Jesus and imploring Him, kneeling down to Him.
    - The leper **knew** he was sick (e.g., he did not waste time trying to argue that there was nothing wrong with him).
    - The leper **knew** that Jesus could heal his leprosy (e.g., he did not waste time trying to figure out whether or not Jesus was able to heal or not).
    - The leper **knew** that Jesus commanded respect (e.g., he came reverently to Jesus and did not waste time trying to figure out whether Jesus needed respect or not)

- The leper said to Jesus, “If You are willing, You can make me clean
  - The leper **knew** that he had no rights to demand anything from Jesus (e.g., he did not have an entitlement mentality whereby he felt that God owed him something).
  - The leper **knew** that Jesus is the authority--He chooses to heal or not to heal on His terms (e.g., Jesus can do as He chooses: He can do what He wants, when He wants, to whom He wants, where He wants, how He wants, why He wants, for how long He wants, using whomever He wants).
  - **Remember:** You don't come to Jesus with an attitude; you come with respect and you ask nicely!!

- **The Compassion:** Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing, be cleansed.”
  - **Note His motive:** His compassion for sinners (e.g., His response to a respectful, contrite and sincere spirit)
  - **Note His method:** His touch
    - Normally, such as action as touching a leper would defile the one who touch him.
    - The Lord, who is holy, just, righteous, good, and true, is not defiled by our sin! He is able to cleanse us from our sin!
  - **Note His manner:** He was willing to cleanse (e.g., when we come to Him with the right attitude, He will not turn us away)

- **The Challenge:** Sin, like leprosy, makes one unclean before a holy God.
  - The only way sin can be cleansed is by the mercy and grace of God--not by works or anything that you can do in and of yourself.
  - The only way one will receive the mercy of God is by coming to Jesus, with respect, contriteness, and a repentant attitude, to be cleansed from sin (e.g., you can argue about Jesus, be hostile about Jesus, and resist coming to Jesus all you want, but you cannot receive mercy until you come to Jesus)
  - Jesus is able and willing to cleanse from sin.
    - You must **recognized** that you need cleansing
    - You must **realize (i.e., believe)** that Jesus has the power to cleanse
    - You must **respond** by willfully coming to Jesus for cleansing (i.e., placing your trust in Him)

# SIN IS SO DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE IT CAUSES DIFFICULTIES

- **The Context:** Jesus strictly warned the cleansed leper and told him to say nothing to anyone (i.e., about how he was healed from leprosy)
  - The reasons why Jesus told him not to say anything to anybody is **unimportant** (i.e., Jesus did not give any reasons, just a strong command).
  - The cleansed leper trusted Jesus for his healing, but he did not trust Jesus to keep his mouth shut! (e.g., he trusted the healing power of Jesus, but he did not trust the wisdom and purpose of Jesus)



- **An Observation:** Jesus publicly exposed the woman who touched the hem of His garment, yet He told the two blind men that He healed (Matt.9:27-31) and this leper not to tell anyone (i.e., to keep the healing secret).
- **Question:** Does the Lord have to give us a reason for the commands He gives us or the actions He undertakes?

- We live in a world that has to have a reason for every command that God gives--God is God, He does not have to give His creatures a reason for His commands or His actions!!
- In our sorrows and frustrations, we often ask God “why?”
  - Note: Even the psalmist, the prophets, and men of God often asked God “why?”
  - Note: Even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, while He was on the cross, asked “why” when He said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
- However, we are in no position to demand of God a reason for anything!!

– **Note carefully:** Obedience is faith in action— that faith grows by learning to trust Christ in all major and minor decisions of life--that is obeying Him, **without** question, **without** objection, and **without** challenge, even if we do not know the full reasons for His commands and exhortations.

- **The Consideration:** Jesus instructed the cleansed leper to show himself to the priest.
  - The cleansed leper was to offer for his cleansing those things which Moses commanded as a testimony to them (i.e., to the priest)
  - The ritual that the leper had to perform is written in Leviticus 14:2-32
    - **Note:** The procedure of the ritual for the cleansing of a healed leper was very specific and detailed.
    - **Note:** This procedure would have been **rare** because there was seldom a cleansing performed for a healed leper in the lifetime of a priest (e.g., if a healed leper ever did come for ritual cleansing, the priest would probably have to study up on the procedure).

- This cleansing procedure would have been a testimony to the priest who would have had to verify this man's cleansing!!
  - They would have had to investigate how he got cleansed
  - They would have had to investigate the man Jesus who cleansed him.
  - They would have been forced to deal with Jesus' power to heal (e.g., the healing would imply that Jesus' ability to cleanse leper is evidence that He is the Messiah who has the power to forgive sins)



- **Note very carefully:** Jesus instructed the cleansed leper to follow the dictates of the Mosaic Laws so that the Law could point others to the authority of Christ!!
- All that the Mosaic Law could do was confirm that the leper was cleansed, but it could not cleanse the leper!! It could pronounce him cleansed, but it could not cleanse!!
  - The Law can show that a man stands guilty before God, but the Law cannot take that guilt away, no matter how much a man may try to keep its requirements.
  - The purpose of the Law is to show man his sinfulness before God and to point us to Christ--whose sacrificial death provides justification to those who believe in Him by faith.
  - The Law forces you to deal with Jesus!! (e.g., the Law says that you stand **guilty** before God. How are you going to get “**unguilty?**” Not by the Law, but by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ!)

- **The Complication:** The cleansed leper chose to disobey Jesus and publicize his healing.
  - No doubt the cleansed leper had good motives, being so overcome with gratitude for his deliverance, that he thought he was doing something good.
  - **Question:** Did the cleansed leper show himself to the priest as Jesus instructed him?
  - Unfortunately, his news made it so that Jesus could no longer enter the city and Jesus withdrew to deserted places.
    - Nevertheless, people came to Jesus from everywhere
    - However, the people did not come to Jesus for salvation, but for physical healing (e.g., they came for relief, not redemption)

- **The Challenge:** No matter how noble or good our motives may be, disobedience causes difficulties.
  - The cleansed leper misunderstood who Jesus was (e.g., he sees Him as a healer of disease, not as Messiah and Lord)
  - The priest in the temple in Jerusalem did not receive the testimony that the cleansed leper's healing implied.
  - The people who heard the cleansed leper's testimony received a misguided message about Jesus.
  - The ministry of Jesus was hindered in that area because of the cleansed leper's disobedience.

# A CHALLENGE FOR YOU

HAVE YOU COME TO JESUS FOR CLEANSING  
FROM YOUR SIN?



RECEIVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR  
SAVIOUR TODAY!!





- 1. Acknowledge** that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, **died** on the cross for your sin, and that He **arose** again from the dead on the third day.
- 2. Admit** that you are a sinner, **guilty** of sin and **responsible** and **accountable** to a holy God for your sin, and that you are under His just condemnation and eternal punishment for your sin.
- 3. Accept** the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour by **receiving** His provision of salvation through your faith in Him alone.