



**Introduction**

Most of you can see yourself in the Bible. It is like a mirror. In the beginning of your Christian life:

- Jesus** suffering for righteousness sake in a cruel world
- The **disciples** seeking to follow Jesus
- Peter** struggling with cowardice denying his Lord
- David** loves God, but sometimes really blows it.

But later in your Christian life

- Esau** selling his birthright for a moment of pleasure
- Saul** overly proud, relying on his own strength
- Judas** betraying Jesus

**1. Passage Luke 5:12-16**

Jesus heals the leper. Leprosy is a figure/symbol of sin

**2. Observations**

(It is recorded in three gospels: Matt.8, Mark 1, Luke 5)

1. His sickness: covered with leprosy
2. His attitude: humility and faith (he fell on his face to the ground and begged him)
3. He didn't ask for riches, intelligence, social status, a job, a house, or a wife
4. He didn't ask to be healed, but to be "made clean."
5. Jesus healed him by touching him
6. He gave him a command
7. The man in his enthusiasm didn't obey Jesus
8. This disobedience of the man had the result that others missed out on blessing
9. But Jesus just prayed, and didn't seek to punish the man

**3. Leprosy in the Bible**

It is the oldest recorded disease and one of the most feared. Leviticus chapters 13,14

**4. The implications of having leprosy at the time of Jesus**

- 1. Physical**
  - there was no cure
  - it was a gradual death, without much pain, but with great loss
- 2. Emotionally**
  - terrible for your self esteem
  - you would assume that God didn't love you
  - humiliating
- 3. Socially**
  - it was worse than AIDS or cancer, because everyone thought it was highly contagious through any contact.
  - you had to dress like you were in mourning at a funeral (you are the corpse!)
  - you had to stay at least 6 ft away from everyone else
  - loneliness, live by yourself or with other lepers, outside the camp or city
  - had to call out "Unclean!" to warn people not to get near you, if you didn't they could stone you!
- 4. Spiritually**
  - rejected by God, accursed
  - Were not allowed to attend worship in the temple, or to offer sacrifices

**5. Other Lepers in the Bible**

1. **Moses**, as a sign for pharaoh (Ex.4:6)
2. **Miriam**, as a punishment (Numbers 12)
3. **Naaman**, commander of the king's army of Syria, healed by Elisha (2 Kings 5)
4. **Gehazi**, as a punishment for lying and greed (2 Kings 5)
5. Four lepers and the siege of Samaria. (2 Kings 7)
6. King **Uzziah**, as a punishment (2 Chronicles 26)
7. Healing of the **ten lepers** (Luke 17)

**6. What was the nature of leprosy?**

It's common name now is Hansen's disease, and was discovered by G.A. Hansen in 1873. It was the first bacterium to be identified as causing disease in man. Although Leprosy is contagious, it is not widespread because 95% of the population have immune systems able to cope with the bacteria. Leprosy usually starts as a slightly light colored patch desensitized to pain, touch or temperature. The patch can be found anywhere in the body. Nerves near to these patches and at the joints are swollen when affected.

Where is God When it Hurts? By Philip Yancey (Zondervan, 1990)

Dr. Henry Brand worked with leprosy patients in a leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana and at first "assumed the disease worked like a fungus, destroying tissue indiscriminately." But he eventually learned that "leprosy was chiefly anesthetic, and only indirectly a destroyer." (p.38)

**7. How does it illustrate sin in our lives?**

Leprosy	Sin
Sickness, not well	Something is not right. It's not a problem of definitions. Something is really wrong.
Anesthetic	Loss of sensitivity to what is wrong in your life, and this leads to destructive decisions and behavior.
Degenerative	Gets worse and worse if unchecked. Loss of valuable parts of your life. Disfiguring.
Eventually fatal	A gradual death. A sense of hopelessness.
Isolating	Loneliness, superficiality
Affects the whole life of a person	Affects the whole life of a person as well as eternity

**Close**

1. We are all spiritual lepers and need cleansing. Jer. 17:9
2. You're a Christian, but you feel under a burden of guilt for the sin you are struggling with. Rom 6: 14
3. You have had some huge defeat in your life
4. Some can't relate to anything I've said. Could it be that you have such a severe case of spiritual leprosy that you have seared your conscience?

But Lord, you can make me clean!