

Jesus Cleanses A Leper (2)

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[0 : 00] Well, an interesting turn of events happens here in the next few verses, which is where we pick up our place today. The first heading last week was the man was cleansed.

Here we see the man was charged. Not charged as in, now that I have healed you, give me a hundred bucks. That's not what I mean by that. That's what some people would mean by that today, right?

But that's not Jesus. It just means a command. He charged and he commanded and gave him an instruction at this point. Verses 43 to 45. Let's read it again and then we'll make some notes. And he straightly charged him and forthwith sent him away.

Which is always interesting when Jesus does that, right? And not just the command. We expect that. He's the Lord. We expect that he would have some instruction for us. But he sent him away.

We would think, well, surely the Lord would just want all of these people with him now.

Everybody that was healed and everybody that was cleansed. He would just want them in this great ginormous pack or a jumbus as Harper would say it. Jumbus pack that would just follow him through. But that's not what he did, right?

[1 : 02] You remember the demonic? And as Jesus and the disciples cross the Sea of Galilee and they get off and they're met with the two men that were possessed with the legion of demons. You remember that? And the people of the city come out and they find the man.

He's clothed and in his right mind. And he begs Jesus, I just want to go with you. I want to be with you. And Jesus says, no, stay here. Stay here and tell everybody what Jesus, what the Lord has done for you.

It's interesting how the Lord goes about that sometimes. But back to verse 43, he straightly charged him and he forthwith sent him away. And then Jesus gives him an instruction that's perplexing. See that you say nothing to any man.

What? What? Say nothing? But go thy way, show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

But the man went out and he began to publish it much and to blaze abroad the matter in so much that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places.

[2 : 05] And they came to him from every quarter. This is an interesting turn of events. It's a perplexing instruction on the surface, at least, as to why Jesus would instruct the man to do these things.

It's especially confusing as to why he didn't want the man to say anything. And we're going to get into that. But before we do that, there's a couple of things that I want to note that I think is significant here for our understanding.

Number one, the man was cleansed as a leper, but he was charged as a whole man. Did you notice that? When he came to Jesus as a leper, there was no instruction given to the man.

There was no command. He didn't say, if you will, you will make me clean. Jesus didn't say, well, if you do these things, if you go and show yourself to the priest and if you follow Leviticus 13 and 14 and the laws that are there, if you will go maybe take a bath and kind of just back up a little bit, then I will.

No, there's none of that. There's no instruction by Jesus in the man's cleansing. The instruction comes after his cleansing, which brings an important point for us.

[3 : 21] His cleansing wasn't contingent on his obedience to the law. He was totally healed, totally cleansed, irrespective of any obedience to any laws.

There was nothing he had to do to receive this cleansing. There was nothing, no processes that he had to go through. There was no baptism of cleansing that he had to go through.

There was no community elements that he had to go. There was nothing the man had to do to be cleansed. At the moment that he gets this charge, he is a whole man, not only in the physical sense, but we believe also in the spiritual sense.

There's nothing here that is hanging his cleansing on. He's already been cleansed. That's done. It's fully complete, right? That's important for us to understand here. The second thing here is while his cleansing wasn't contingent upon his obedience to the law, Jesus made it clear that the law was not irrelevant to his restored life.

His salvation was not contingent upon his obedience, but the Lord was very much concerned about his obedience following his cleansing.

[4 : 39] He doesn't desire for us to be indifferent to his law, even though we've been made free from its judgment. There's a trend among some professing believers.

It's not a new trend. It's been around as long as the gospel has been around. But the trend believes that the grace of God gives us a license to sin freely without consequence.

And the notion is if I've come to Christ and I have received salvation from him, he's not only forgiven the sins that I've lived, that I've committed up to this point, but he's forgiven all my sins. And that's true.

He has forgiven all of your sin. But it's a mistake to look at God's forgiveness and assume that you are now free to sin however you would like to sin simply because they have been forgiven.

Paul confronts this in Romans chapter 6. In fact, I'd love for you to see it. Just flip with me over just quickly to Romans chapter 6. We may do a few flippings in our Bibles today.

[5 : 44] So just keep them open and be prepared for that this morning. Romans chapter 6. Paul confronts this very question.

He's just talked about the grace of God, how it's greater than our sin. And then he anticipates the question from the Romans, no doubt that he had heard in most places at this point as he went about preaching and discipling new Christians.

Look at verse 1. Paul writes, Romans 6, verse 1. And here's the emphatic answer in verse 2.

God forbid. Let it not be so. And then he says, How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

There's this notion that just because God has forgiven my sin means that I shouldn't care about sin any longer. But Jesus is very much concerned about your sin. He doesn't want you to live that way. He wants you to consider obedience to his law.

[6 : 51] It's important. Not for your salvation, but because of your salvation. Think about the fruit of the Spirit. Paul writes about that.

Maybe you've memorized them. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Sometimes we understand those things as the fruit of the person who has the Holy Spirit.

But that's not what it is. It's not the fruit of the person that has the Holy Spirit. It's the fruit of the Spirit that lives within the person. It's not that we contrive all of these things in our lives.

It's not that we make ourselves better and that we all of a sudden can follow a formula. And then all of a sudden we have love and joy and peace and all those things. No. Those are things that the Holy Spirit gives to us after we come to Christ.

In other words, the work of God after salvation is that he changes our life in order to conform us to the image of his son who was perfectly sinless. It's not that we become perfectly sinless.

[7 : 50] But someone who has truly come to know Christ will not desire to intentionally live a life of sin. And so those are the prerequisites before we jump into these three notes now.

Number one, let's see that his command was earnest. His command was earnest. Look at verse 43. And he straightly charged him.

He straightly charged him. Now if you're using a King James with me this morning that isn't incredibly emphatic. Some of you, if you're using those scripture journals, it probably says sternly. And he sternly charged him.

The word literally means to snort. Not snort like a drug. Snort like a horse. It's the flaring of the nostrils. It's serious intent.

It reminds me a little bit of how sometimes I'm addressed to girls. Come here for just a second, Ashley. Yeah, come here. I'm not going to embarrass you. Come here. Harper, do you want to help me? Sissy's being disobedient.

[8 : 47] She's going to get... Do you want to help me, Clementine? Okay. Clementine's... She's going to be obedient to me. All right. We're going to pretend that Clementine's my daughter. She's not my daughter. We're going to pretend.

All right. Now, if she's anything like Ashlyn, Andy and Amy can attest to this. I can be walking through the house, Ashlyn and Harper. And if I want them to do something, I'm just kind of walking through the house and they're watching TV, they're playing a game or doing something down in the living room.

I can kind of walk by them and say, hey, I want you to go clean your room when you get a chance and they may hear that and they may not hear that. It's an instruction. I mean it.

That's what I want them to do. But if I'm just casually approaching that and walking by, I know there's a pretty good chance that's going in one ear and going out the other, right? Depending on how involved they are with whatever they're doing in that moment.

But if there's something that I really care, like I'm intent, stern, what do we do, Andy? We stop. Clementine, I want you to look at me. Listen.

[9 : 45] I want you to clean your room, okay? You see the difference? I can walk by her and just say, Clementine, go clean your room. And she may do it, she may not do it, right?

I could even do it sternly and she may do it or may not do it. But at least there's no mistaking in this moment. Clementine, don't say anything. It's serious. It's stern.

I want her to understand that I care about this instruction. I want to be clear in what I'm instructing her. I'm going to say it one more time. I'm going to say it slowly. Don't say anything.

Just go do the work in your room, okay? Thanks, Clementine. You can go sit. This is what Jesus is doing with this man. He says, I will be clean.

And immediately, he's clean. And then he stops, snort, flaring in the nostrils. This is the picture of Jesus now. And it's almost like he's getting done with a child.

[10 : 44] And he's looking at the man and he's saying, listen. Don't say anything. Go to the priest. It was clear. It was stern.

It was serious. Hey, can I tell you what Jesus does with us? Through his word. After our salvation. You know what he does? His word speaks to us in that way. He says, listen, listen.

There's some things I want you to do. And there's some things I don't want you to do. And it matters to me. That's exactly what Jesus is trying to communicate to this man. So we see that the command was earnest.

Number two, the command was explicit. It was explicit. Look at verse 44. He very clearly tells him what he wants him to do. Say nothing to any man. Go thy way.

Show thyself to the priest. Offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded. For a testimony unto them. He was absolutely clear. Not only stern.

[11 : 42] Clear. There's nothing confusing here. None of us can confuse what Jesus wants this man to do. And what he doesn't want this man to do. In fact, there's two dimensions to this command. One is negative and one is positive.

Let's first look at the negative. The very first thing Jesus tells him. See thou say nothing to any man. Say nothing to any man.

This is incredible. This was in one ear and out the other as we're going to see in just a moment. But can you really blame him? This man for however long we don't really know.

It could have been for a long time. This disease didn't kill you quickly. This was slow, long, painful. He could have been on the outside of the city for years. With no companionship.

No hope. And now everything about that has changed. And the first thing Jesus says to him is don't tell anybody. What? Let me first explain what Jesus is not saying here.

[12 : 45] Jesus is not contradicting what would later become an explicit command to evangelize. That's not what Jesus is getting at. We're confused by that.

If we have read the Bible very much and if we've been around church very long, we've heard share the gospel, share the gospel, share the gospel. Enough that when we come to a command like this, it confuses us.

Why would Jesus not want him to say anything about this? Jesus isn't telling him not to evangelize.

That's not what he's saying. The whole concept of Christian evangelism wasn't even in place yet.

Jesus had not yet died on the cross. Jesus had not yet risen from the dead. Jesus had not yet ascended into heaven. People are still trying to figure all this out. Jesus' own disciples didn't even

understand all of that.

These commands for evangelism, it wasn't even in place yet. So he's not saying that you shouldn't evangelize. He's not saying that you shouldn't tell people about me. That's not what he's saying. Neither was Jesus preventing the man from bringing others to hear his message.

[13:46] Look with me up at verse 38. Remember in Capernaum, what did Jesus tell his disciples? Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also. What's the next phrase?

Jesus, that is why I came. Therefore came I forth. Jesus would have been perfectly fine for this man to bring others to hear the message.

That's why he was there. So Jesus isn't saying don't evangelize. He's not telling the man don't bring people to hear my message. That's not what this is about. On the most basic level, Jesus was reminding the man that there was a law in place that dictated how he was to be reintroduced to the community of God's people.

It was a law that had been there for a very, very long time. A law that as we understand the Bible, Jesus himself wrote. On the most basic level, that's what Jesus wants this man to first do.

Obey the law. Think of it kind of like the protocols that are set in place for us now with COVID-19. For some of us, based on our place of work or maybe other things that you're involved with in your life, if you get the virus, you have the mandatory 10 or 14 days, whatever it is, of quarantine, and then you have to have at least one negative test before you can be reintroduced back into your work community.

[15:12] Most likely, your bosses have that set in place if you're actually going to a place of work. Lots of places do at this point. You have to have a negative test first. What's that all about? It's to make sure that you're not going to spread the infection still.

It's to make sure that the people you work with are comfortable enough that you're not going to share the infection with them. It's for the benefit of everyone. It's for your benefit. It's for the benefit of the people you work with.

It's for the benefit of the people you go to church with. It's for the benefit of the people you go to the gym with. It's for everybody's benefit. Right? Now, I want you to consider what this would have been like for lepers. This was a big deal.

COVID-19, everybody's got a different opinion. Everybody's got a different opinion on how it should be treated and what we should go about it. There's probably division. There's no division with leprosy. Everybody wants the lepers on the outside of the city.

Nobody wants them inside because nobody wants that death sentence. Everybody wants the lepers to go through the process that God had set forth because that was their way of knowing that the man was truly clean and that it was truly safe for them to welcome him in.

[16:19] And on top of that, in their viewpoint, it was the only way that they knew that God had removed the curse from the man. It gave assurance to he and his community.

Do you see the connection there? Obedience provides assurance. His obedience to the law wouldn't have made him clean.

And his disobedience didn't make him unclean. He's already been healed. But it did provide assurance. As he would have gone through this process, he would have known because God had set up a process for him to recognize what this was.

Others would have known as well. But I do think that there's a deeper level of instruction that Jesus is giving the man. Like the other recipients of Jesus' miracles, the tendency would be for the man to make his story about Jesus solely about the physical need that Jesus met.

And there would be a tendency to perhaps neglect the greater spiritual need. Jesus is constantly trying to fight against that.

[17:38] He's constantly trying to fight against the crowds that were coming to him just for a sign as the Pharisees were coming to him. The crowds that were coming to him merely for his miracles. He's trying to fight against that.

There's a lot of practical reasons he was fighting against that. He's being mobbed by people everywhere that he went because of the word that was getting out and the way that his message was being told.

His desire is the same for us in our evangelism. God's not interested in us only proclaiming the physical and material needs that he's met for us.

But his greatest desire is that we tell others about the great spiritual need he has met for us. Our witness is deceiving.

Deceiving is as careful of a word as I could come up with here. When all we talk about is temporal and material gain. When every post of praise on Facebook is always related to some type of physical blessing or it's always related to some type of material gain or it's always when something good has happened in a physical sense and in a temporal sense, our witness for Christ is deceiving.

[18 : 56] Here's what we're telling people. Come to Jesus because he will fix your problems. Come to Jesus because he will heal your sickness. Come to Jesus because he will heal your sickness. Come to Jesus because he will give you a better job.

Come to Jesus because he will give you all these things. And nobody's coming to Jesus because he will save their soul. They're coming to Jesus because they think their life is just gonna be made better magically, just like that. Jesus came to forgive our sins, not make us rich and wealthy and healthy and successful.

Our witness should reflect that. That's not to say, please don't misunderstand me. That's not to say we shouldn't praise the Lord when those things happen. Of course, praise the Lord when those things happen.

But let's point people to the gospel. Let's make sure the gospel we're proclaiming is the gospel of salvation, not the gospel of health and wealth and prosperity.

And so I think when Jesus is telling this man, say nothing to any man, it's first and foremost, it's just do what the law has said. This is gonna be good for you and it's gonna be good for the community as well.

[20 : 05] But then I think it goes just a little bit deeper. Jesus wasn't interested in this man's story to be merely about his physical healing. There was something greater that he wanted the man to share.

And then there's a second dimension. Look at the verse 44 again. Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded.

The second dimension of this command was that the man simply be obedient to the process that the law had set forth. It was just to be obedient to Leviticus 13 and 14, which said that there was a really stringent process for this.

They would present themselves in front of the priest. The priest would examine them. There were sacrifices that were involved. They would be put away for a number of days and then they would be brought back to the priest to re-examine them again.

And in the re-examination, there were other offerings and gifts that were given. And finally, when all of that was done and the priest could officially determine when this person is genuinely healed and clean, they would give them a literal certificate of cleanliness.

[21 : 16] It was a certificate that proved that, yes, I was a leper, but I'm a leper no more. That was the process that God had set up. And it was the process that Jesus wanted this man to go through.

His presentation to the priest was not what made him clean, but it was still a matter of obedience for him to follow. Why? Because God said to do it. Jesus said to do it.

There's lots of things that we can point to that this applies to. What about baptism and church membership? Your baptism isn't what makes you clean.

Your baptism isn't what makes you saved. It's just a matter of obedience. What did Jesus and the apostles say? Believe and be baptized.

What about church membership? Covenanting with a specific group is not what makes you saved. The church has no power to determine whether or not you're a Christian or at least give you salvation or take away salvation.

[22 : 17] That's not what the church is. It's a matter of commitment and covenant that Jesus has said he desires for us to do. It's just a matter of Christian obedience. What about other things? What about purity? 2 Thessalonians 4.

This is the will of God. Your sanctification. That you abstain from fornication. Your ability to remain pure as a single adult or as a married adult is not what makes you saved.

But it is a matter of obedience. A matter of obedience that Jesus cares deeply about in your life. About our speech and our spirit toward others.

Flip with me to Ephesians 4. This is a good place for us to turn. Ephesians 4. And look what Paul wrote here. Ephesians 4.

Look with me at verse 29. This is very practical. Holy Spirit is writing this through Paul. And he says, Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.

[23 : 30] Watch your words. But that which is good to the use of edifying. That it may minister grace unto the hearers. Now that's hard to do.

My speech is always to minister grace. Yeah. Jesus cares about that. And grieve not the Holy Spirit, Paul goes on to say. Whereby you are sealed into the day of redemption.

And then he goes further. And he says, Kind of as a, As a, In partnership with our speech is our spirit. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

And be kind one to another. Tender hearted, Forgiving one another. Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Well, what's that all about?

Paul's writing to believers. Their obedience to this command of speech. Their obedience to this command of having a right spirit. Is not what their salvation was based on.

[24 : 29] But it matters to God. It's a matter of obedience. How about love? 1 John 3.11. John writes, This is, This is the commandment you've heard from the beginning.

That we love one another. And we could go on and on and on. God's given us a whole book full of these things. A whole book that says, This is, This is what I want from your life.

And this is what I don't want for your life. And none of those things are continuing on your salvation. But if you're going to be obedient to me, Go to your word. Go to the word. Go to the Bible. See what I want for your life. And sternly, Jesus is looking at all of us through the window of his word.

And he's saying, Look at me. Listen to me. Do this. Don't do this. It's a matter of obedience. That he cares deeply about. And then he says in the last part of this verse, Verse 44.

That all of this is for a testimony unto them. Unto who? Probably the priest. Probably also the community. Probably also the other lepers.

[25 : 32] Testimony to everyone. The healing of a leper was unheard of. This just didn't happen. If it was going to happen, It had to be something that God did.

There was no other way for this man to be healed. There was no other way for this man to be clean. When he presented himself to the priest, Who would have already known who Jesus was. We're in year two of Jesus' ministry at this point in Mark.

Year one, Jesus has already gone to the temple at a feast, And he's already cleansed the temple. He's turned over the tables, And he's chased people out that were disobeying the Lord's use of the temple. They know who he is.

Word has gotten around well enough that they know who Jesus is. When this man goes and presents himself, And they begin to interrogate him. You mean you were a leper? Okay, I see I've got you here. This is on my list. You were a leper.

How in the world did you get clean? And they said, Well, there is this man, Jesus of Nazareth, That came by and it was unbelievable. It was unbelievable what he did. That's a testimony unto those men. They can't deny the fact that he's clean.

[26 : 31] They can't deny the fact that it was Jesus that did it. Either they're going to accept him now as Lord and Savior, Or they're going to deny him now as Lord and Savior. And most of them denied him. This was important for this man to do.

If he would have just done what Christ said, All the things that he wanted to do, And telling everybody about it would have happened In just the way that it should have happened. It was important.

Jesus made this instruction clear. There was no way for him to mistake it. But that brings us to the final point. Number three, the command was ignored.

It was ignored. Verse 45. He went out and he published it much And he blazed it abroad. Notice the language that Mark is using here.

This is not that the man left the place And just somebody ran up to him And was like, whoa, what happened? And he's like, you know what? I'd love to tell you, but I can't. Well, let me just tell you.

[27 : 32] That's not what's happening here. That's not the picture, at least, that I get from this. He walks away from Jesus And finds everybody he can find. And says, you're not going to believe what happened to me. Can we really blame him?

Before we come down too hard on the guy, What would you do? I can't say that I would have been the most obedient person. I would have been pretty excited about Sharing this miracle with others. If I had made any friends in the leper community, I would have wanted them to know. Hey, there's this guy. He can change your life. I would have wanted to find Julie And Ashlyn and Harper And say, you can, you can, You can be with me now. I would have wanted to go to my old boss and say, I'd love to have my old job back. Let's not be too hard on him yet. Because the truth is, We disobey the Lord all the time. But it was still disobedience. The net result of this man's disobedience too, Was that Jesus' ministry was hindered. Again at the verse, verse 45.

[28 : 50] In so much, That Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, But was without in desert places. It wasn't the man, At least that we're told, It wasn't that the man's life was impacted by this disobedience.

Who was impacted? Christ was. His healer. His savior. The ministry of the Lord. Jesus was no longer able to go in the cities without being mobbed. And this was important. The Romans hated these mobs. As these crowds gathered around Jesus, It made them nervous. The thing that they hated the most was insurrection. Just a few years prior to Jesus, There was an insurrection in the Galilee region. And it was dealt with severely. The Romans lined up crosses from, On the road from one side of Galilee, To the other side of Galilee. Some 2,000 people were crucified. This is real history just before Jesus' time. They didn't like that very much. Jesus is just thinking with prudence here. If this crowd grows so big, If this crowd takes on the wrong motivation for following me, It's going to be problematic for everybody.

[30 : 01] It wasn't just the Romans. It was the misunderstanding of Jesus' messianic mission. Even the disciples misunderstood it at this point. If this crowd continues to grow merely because of the miracles and the signs, What were they expecting?

They weren't expecting a Messiah that would die. They were expecting a Messiah that would rule. That would deliver them from Rome. There was a danger in this crowd, Forcing, trying at least, To force Jesus into a place of ruling in Jerusalem, And creating this insurrection against Rome. There's a lot of really practical reasons for this. There was a lot of reasons that this could have hindered the Lord's work. And it was just disobedience. We're immediately reminded that zeal is never an excuse for disobedience.

Our actions, no matter how noble they are, Always have consequences. And you say, I don't know how to apply this. And there's a couple ways we can apply this as the church. Remember, the ends don't always justify the means. How many churches with a good zeal for growth, Maybe starts in a really healthy place, Because growth typically means that the Lord is working.

[31 : 18] It typically means that people are coming to know Christ. It typically means that people are being baptized, And added to the church, And they're growing, And they're discipling, And they're being matured. When we think of growth, It's not always a bad thing.

It's something that is representative of God's work. We want that, right? We want to see the evidence of God's work. How many churches, out of a zeal for that, Have ultimately led themselves to compromise?

Compromise on doctrine? Compromise on healthy church practice? It started zealous. It started as a good thing, something that we'd want.

But ultimately, it became a disobedient hindrance. We're going to talk about this next week. Do you know how many mainstream, Evangelical preachers and teachers, Do not believe in the essential truth of the virgin birth?

What is that all about? When you get pinned on things that are hard to explain, Sometimes, our zeal leads to compromise. How about in our lives?

[32 : 23] Involvement in parachurch organizations? Charitable organizations? We spend all of our life, all of our time, all of our energy, Doing things that are good.

Sometimes, the cost is our commitment to the church, Which is where our priorities should be. There's a lot of ways we can apply this. The bottom line is the man disobeyed, And it had a consequence.

But we need to conclude. But we can't leave off With just talking about this man's disobedience. That would be terrible. It's not the way Mark leaves it off.

The greatest takeaway here is the grace of the Lord. Look with me at the last phrase. And they came to him from every quarter. That didn't seem like much.

I think it's important. Mark's giving us a hope here. That just because the men disobeyed, And Christ's ministry was in, a sense, hindered, His purpose wasn't stopped.

[33 : 29] Continue. That's what's so amazing about his grace. Think about this for a moment. This man comes to Jesus. Jesus knows exactly what he's going to do. He knows he's going to disobey.

And he knows his disobedience is going to hinder the work That Jesus is trying to accomplish. He knows it. But what does he do? He reaches out. And he touches him.

And he says, I will be clean anyway. What amazing grace is that? What kind of savior is that? We're trained to think different than that.

If we're going to help somebody, We have to think through all the process. Well, is this just going to become a habit? If I help this person now, Is this going to be something that they're just going to count on that helpfulness? And they're going to go off and they're going to do the same thing. They're going to do a whole mess again. They're going to come back to me. They're going to expect it again. We've trained ourselves to not actually be gracious, merciful people. We've trained ourselves to have grace and mercy conditionally.

[34 : 26] Jesus' was unconditional. He knew exactly what this man would do. And he healed him anyways. He cleansed him anyways. What a savior. Knowing that he was going to be the one That was going to end up having to be in desert places now.

While the man was living his life like normal in the city. Knowing that that would happen. Jesus still showed his grace. And what's amazing about the ministry dynamic.

Yeah. In a sense it was hindered. But there is no hindrance on this planet. That could possibly stop Jesus from doing what Jesus is determined to do.

He is the greatest power. The gates of hell cannot prevail against him and his church.

So what does Mark leave us with at the end of this phrase? He says that people just came to him in the desert. He couldn't go in the city. But there wasn't one person that he had determined to save.

[35 : 28] There wasn't one person that he had determined to heal that didn't receive it. Why?

Because Jesus' grace is greater than this man's disobedience.

And his grace today is greater than your disobedience. You say I'm guilty of doing a lot of that. I'm a believer. I know I'm cleansed. But man I don't know how I've hindered the ministry.

I don't know how I've hindered the Lord's work. You can't stop Jesus. But you should want to obey him. And how much better it is to obey him.

Many have noted that in this analogy of the gospel with this leper. That it's brought to completion in the fact that Jesus and the leper traded places.

Let me read to you what MacArthur wrote about this. This is wonderful. On the one hand the leper was an outcast who was forced to stay in isolated places. But he ventured into the city, met Jesus, and was miraculously healed.

[36 : 29] On the other hand, Jesus who was initially in the city, after healing the leper, relocated to isolated places. In order to heal this man of his leprosy, the Lord had to trade places with him.

The Savior was willing to become an outsider so that an untouchable leper, the ultimate outsider, could be rescued and restored.

Therein is pictured the reality of the gospel. Jesus traded places with sinners in order to deliver them from sin.

That's amazing. That's amazing. When we talk about the atonement, it was substitutionary. That means he took our place.

He traded places with us. And it wasn't just about a cross. It was about the wrath of the Father. We can escape that wrath because he has taken our place.

[37 : 38] And I'm reminded of that hymn. Bearing shame and scoffing rude. In my place, condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon with his blood.

Hallelujah. What a Savior.