

# A Day in the Life of Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

So Mark chapter 1, look with me in verse 29.! This is the Word of God. And immediately, he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.

And Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And Jesus came to her and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick and were oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons.

And he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. Verse 25. And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

[ 1 : 29 ] And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, Everyone is looking for you. And he said to them, Let us go to the next towns that I might preach there also, for that is why I came out.

And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. Verse 40. And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, If you will, you can make me clean.

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once and said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priests, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to them.

But Jesus went out and began to talk freely, but the man went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

[ 3 : 02 ] May God bless preaching and the hearing of his word. James Garfield is perhaps the most unlikely person to ever become president of the United States.

He was poor, raised in a log cabin in Ohio, but it wasn't his poverty that made him so unlikely. What made him unlikely is that he hated politics.

Nevertheless, he had a strong desire to serve his country, and after leaving the academic world and serving in the military throughout the Civil War, Mr. Garfield became a politician.

He still hated politics, but how far providence would take him into politics, he would soon find out. In the summer of 1880, he traveled to Chicago for the Republican National Convention.

After President Rutherford B. Hayes declined the nomination for a second term, it seemed that the decision lied between three candidates, John Sherman, General Sherman's younger brother, James Blaine, and Ulysses S. Grant, the president and the war hero.

[ 4 : 20 ] And so the convention, much like convention that we saw on television this year, it included a week of discussions and debate and speeches on who would be the best candidate. And then the next week, so they stayed in Chicago, in two weeks they began casting their ballots.

All a candidate had to do in that day, I don't know if it's the same now, is just win 50% of the votes. Just a simple majority. But it became clear very quickly that the convention was bitterly divided.

On the first ballot, Grant was in the lead. The war hero was in the lead, but didn't have enough to win. So they discussed and debated for a little while longer. Then they did another ballot. On the second ballot, Grant gained more votes, but so did the others.

And they continued ballot after ballot on the first day for 12 hours, but did not come out with a winner. The following day, they gathered again, and on the 29th ballot, they cast, but that too didn't bring a winner.

As the day went on and more ballots were cast, an unannounced person began receiving votes. Mr. Garfield. First, it was one vote, then it grew to 17.

[ 5 : 36 ] At this point, Garfield stood up and said, I challenge the correctness of that announcement. This announcement contains votes for me, and no man has a right to vote for me without my permission.

Mr. Garfield continues to vote for Sherman, but it's no use. More and more people begin voting for him. On ballot after ballot, Garfield is gaining without wanting to.

He's gaining without even trying, and finally on the 36th ballot, the convention unanimously voted for Garfield to be the Republican candidate in the 1880 election.

I love this. Everyone was celebrating afterwards, but Mr. Garfield was shocked and sorry. He doesn't know what to say. In fact, one of the senators comes up to him and says, General, we congratulate you.

And his response was, I'm very sorry this has become necessary. I just love that. I'm very sorry this has become necessary.

[ 6 : 41 ] You know, if we look at these verses this morning, Jesus seems a little bit shocked and sorry by all that's happening to him. He keeps performing wonderful miracles, which we've grown accustomed to reading about him, but he specifically tells people not to tell anybody.

So I'm going to heal you, but don't tell anybody. Why not? Didn't he want the word to get out? I mean, he's the savior of the world, right? And then while everyone's sleeping, he sneaks out, much like teenagers sneak out and the disciples have to go and find him.

And you're like, what's that all about, Jesus? I thought you were on a mission. Is this mission, is this too big for you to handle? It's a curious little passage that's actually perplexed a number of guys, but I don't think Jesus is shocked or sorry at all.

In fact, underneath these thrilling scenes is a careful emphasis on why Jesus really came. The crowds don't immediately get it. The disciples don't immediately get it.

We often don't get it, but again and again, Jesus tells them why he came. He said, do not be confused. Jesus did not come to be great, but to gain eternal salvation for all.

[ 7 : 53 ] Jesus did not come to be great, but to gain eternal salvation for all. We're going to break this out in three points. First one is Jesus did not come to impress. Jesus did not come to impress.

You know, after leaving the synagogue, if you remember that last week, we studied about him casting out the demon and the man and the unclean spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus immediately goes to Peter's house and continues to heal.

Look at verse 29. He begins by healing the mother-in-law. Immediately he left the synagogue and in the house of Simon and Andrew and James and John and Simon's mother-in-law lay ill.

So we know Peter had a wife. Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever and immediately they told him about her and he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up and the fever left her.

She began to serve them. There's a wonderful simplicity to this scene. Now, a fever in our day is a symptom of a disease or a virus and so we walk around town and you're shot with that little gun that tells you whether you have a fever because it might be symptomatic that you have COVID-19.

[ 9 : 03 ] But in those days, a fever was viewed as the disease or the illness because modern medicine didn't have the ability to detect the same things. And so if you lay ill with fever, the idea is what you're going to lay ill and wait for this disease to pass, this virus to pass.

And so when Jesus entered the house, that's what Peter's mother-in-law was doing. She was laying ill with a fever, but Peter comes to her, takes her by the hand and lifts her up all in one motion.

I love the details that Mark includes and the fever leaves. Literally, the fever doesn't just leave. The word there is the fever forsakes her.

The fever abandons her. That's the same word that was used for Simon and Andrew and James and John. So when they left their nets or when they left their father in the boat with the hired hand, they left it, they abandoned it in the same way.

And so the fever abandoned her at the sight and the touch of Jesus Christ. I think what Mark is saying is Jesus is doing something again that only God can do. In the same way the disciples followed her or followed him after God powerfully called them, so too Peter's mother-in-law only serves God, only serves them after God powerfully heals her and drives away the disease.

[10:27] But the scene just keeps going after that. Jesus keeps doing these things that only God can do. Look at verse 32. And that evening at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick and oppressed by demons.

The whole city gathered together at the door and he healed many. The idea is not that he chose out some. The idea he did many. He healed all of them that came out there who were sick with disease and cast out demons.

Now, if you're like me, you're wondering where did all these people come from? Well, the idea was the Sabbath. They were unable to work or unable to travel. And so sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, they did nothing but worship the Lord.

But when sundown, or when the sun went down, they came to Peter's house because they had heard about what Jesus did in the synagogue that day.

And so they had to get a look at this man. And indeed, they came sick. They came all the sick because they knew that he had cast out this unclean spirit. Then surely, or maybe, he could do something for me.

[11:34] And the whole city's there. I just love this scene. This is a party, a healing party, where Jesus is healing the sick and casting out the demon. What Mark wants us to see is that the kingdom of God is at hand.

That all the signs and all the wonders and all the miracles are not a propped up tent for a healing ministry, but they're the tent that God brings when God takes over and restores things to the way they're meant to be.

You know, it reminds me of the Chronicles of Narnia. If you're annoyed with me, mention that all the time. I'm sorry. It's just a wonderful book. But in the line, the witch, and the wardrobe, when the children are talking with the beaver and wrestling with the fear that the white witch has over them, who's made Narnia always winter and never Christmas.

That's a mean, mean lady. The beaver says to them, they say Aslan is on the move. Perhaps he's already landed.

Suddenly they know good things are going to start happening. It's not meant to always be winter and never Christmas in Narnia, and so too in God's world. Demons are not meant to oppress.

[12:51] Stress. Sickness is not meant to ravage. Disease is not meant to kill. And so God begins to put things right. And I just love it. Jesus is on the move.

That's what's going on here in Capernaum. But then Mark includes one surprising comment of all that was happening. Look in verse 43. Sorry. Look in verse 34 first.

Got me confused. The second half, so after he heals these people and he casts out the demons, he said he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. Look down at 43.

Jesus healed the leper. He said, See that you say nothing to anyone about me. Sternly charged him, sent him away at once.

Look at Mark 3 we have for you. Jesus says a similar thing to an unclean spirit. And whenever the unclean spirit saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God. And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

[14:00] So on three occasions in the book of Mark, Jesus tells demons to be silent. On four occasions, he tells folks who are healed to not tell anybody.

Why? Didn't he want people to know he was a savior? Didn't he want the word to get out? Now, numerous interpreters say, they refer to this as the messianic secret.

Jesus is a messiah, but he wants to keep that messiah as a secret. The idea is, or what they argue, is that Jesus never said these statements. Now, they're predominant in John.

I just told you seven times. The idea, they argue, Jesus never said these statements, but Mark included them later so that people would believe Jesus of Nazareth was the messiah.

At that point in the first century, everyone knew he was just a man. Just an ordinary man. He was a good man. Pretty good man. And so the story goes that Mark put those in. This is what Bart Ehrman and other people are saying right now in popular books you can buy at Walmart.

[15:09] That Mark put those in to dupe the early church into believing Jesus was the messiah. Now, I think this is so bogus, I don't have a ton of time to take it out.

But one reason it's bogus is why would Mark put it in and then it not succeed? That would undo his point. If his point was, it was, you know, that Jesus was trying to kill the beliefs that he was the messiah, well, then why did they immediately run out and tell?

And every one of those examples, the people immediately run out and tell. So they tell here and the whole city gathers. And so I think that's not what's going on here.

And I think Jesus tells them not to share so that he could continue to minister. So why does Jesus want to keep this secret?

I think in a word, Jesus did not come to impress. Now, you have to understand what I mean by that. Jesus did not come to make an impact. Jesus did not come.

[16:11] Now, of course he did. And so it's a low tongue and jeep. Jesus did not come to be popular. Jesus did not come to build a platform. Jesus did not come to gather constituents to give him prominence and to carry him into power in Jerusalem or in Rome.

So Jesus told them to be quiet so that he could continue to do what he came to do, which was to go out to the outcasts and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The assumption is we should not look for Jesus to gain popularity and receive worldly power.

I think the church has an uncanny tendency to hope for some really popular person to become saved and then we'll put them on a billboard because then that'll really make a difference.

The gospel will really begin to move forward if we can just get X saved or blank saved. Or the church hopes in some political leader to be elevated to power, to keep the cause alive.

That's what we really need. We just need a political leader to keep the cause alive. But Jesus avoided that. He did not run for political office. He said, my kingdom is not of this world. So we shouldn't look to the popular or the politically powerful to advance the cause of Christ.

[17:28] When they do, we should rejoice like Kanye got saved last year. Now I listened to an interview with him and it was interesting. We'll just say that. But, you know, I love it.

I want everybody to get saved. I'm not hoping in that. Jesus is not looking for his cause to advance through popularity or worldly political power. Jesus advances his kingdom through the word, the spirit, and ordinary people like Michael Kessler.

That's how he's planning to do it. Like you and me. We shouldn't. So we shouldn't look to him. We also shouldn't be anxious when the popular or politically power oppose the cause of Christ.

Are you anxious about the cause of Christ right now? Anxious about politics? Seems right now, we're either anxious about the virus or anxious about politics.

But the root problem is still the same. It's a refusal to trust God. John Flavel, one of my favorite old guys, he says, let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone.

[18:42] What he's saying is, leave it alone. It's none of our work to rule the world, but to submit to him who doth.

The motions of providence, that's God's governance of the world, and particularly his good governance for his people, are all judicious. They're all right. The wheels. Now that's what the Puritans talked about.

The wheels of providence. That's just the movings of providence are full of eyes. He's not missing anything. It is enough that the affairs of Zion, the affairs of the church, are in the good hand.

Now that's a zinger. If you hang out on it, let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone. I like the way Luther says it. Pray and let God worry. So if you're anxious about some things going on right now, pray and let God worthy.

And in so many ways, I actually love it. When the church is being pushed down on, or people are opposing the cause of Christ, we should actually be excited. Historically, we should be excited.

[19:43] The church's best moments are when they are out of power and opposed by the popular and politically powerful. That's the fact. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, as Tertullian said in the second century.

So Jesus did not come to impress. Point two, Jesus did not come to heal. Jesus did not come to heal. The following morning, Jesus slips away to pray.

And Mark deliberately emphasizes the way he slips away. In verse 35, Look there, rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

John Newton said, Every fact in our Lord's life ought to be deeply interesting to us. And this is a deeply interesting fact. The thing Jesus wants more than anything else after a full day of ministry is to be alone with the Lord.

He doesn't want to sleep. He doesn't want to eat. He doesn't want a day off. He doesn't want some me time. He wants to be alone with his Father. And peppered throughout the Gospels are these stunning moments where Jesus pulls away.

[ 20 : 53 ] Now, this is a wonderful takeaway for us. If he who is perfect needs the Lord, how much more us who are perfect? He who is clean, how much we who are unclean, he who is righteous, righteous, how much more we who are sinners do we need the Lord?

But I love this. There's another powerful takeaway here that communion with God doesn't begin in overwhelming emotion. Communion with God begins in deliberate, practical steps.

Jesus had an appointment before daybreak with his Father. And those words, look, rising. There's four verbs there.

Rising very early. While it was still dark. He departed, went out, and prayed. Rising, departed, went out, prayed.

I mean, I like it because it's inspiring. If you want to have a communion with the Lord, you want to know the Lord, draw near to him and he'll draw near to you is what James says.

[ 22 : 00 ] Deliberate, practical, prayerful steps and you will encounter the Lord in prayer. You know, one of the things we're going to start doing, I want to commend to you the plan next month for the guys we're going to gather all together just for a night of prayer, men's prayer night, once a month, brief exhortation, but an opportunity for us to cast ourselves before the throne of grace together.

So be looking for more of that. That's just a deliberate practice. You know, Jonathan Edwards said, lay yourself in the way of allurements. You know, so he's basically saying like, like spiritual disciplines doesn't need to be complex. You know, you don't have to work it up, you know, make sure you feel something or something like that.

You really, really, if you want to encounter God, you're going to encounter him in his word. If you don't encounter God, you're going to encounter him by asking for his Holy Spirit to come. And so just go open up that word in a deliberate, practical way. And he comes.

So lay yourself in the way to be allured to the Lord. That's what Jonathan Edwards said. And it's so wonderfully true. But like every good prayer time, Jesus is interrupted. Even that's encouraging to me.

It's often your mind drifts away and you're like, oh my gosh, I forgot about this. You got to go do something. But Jesus doesn't remember something. The disciples come looking for him. Look at verse 36.

[ 23 : 18 ] Simon and those who were with him searched for him. The Lord gave him a hide and seek. And they found him. And they said to him, everyone is looking for you. You know, it all seems a bit harmless.

Like they woke up and said, they woke up and couldn't find Jesus. Like they're coming to you, hey, Jesus, we woke up, we couldn't find you. Where have you been? What have you been up to? We need to talk to you. But you know, so it seems just kind of like a harmless morning.

Like you might wander around the house trying to find out where all the members of the family here, but the situation is very different. The word here for look or seek always has negative connotations in Mark.

When people are looking for Jesus in the gospel of Mark, they are seeking to corner him and control him. They are seeking not to submit to him and follow him, but to tell him what to do.

And if you remember, or what we'll see in a couple of weeks, when his family feels like he's lost his mind, and they go to try to set him straight, look at what it says, and his mother and father's came, and they're standing outside. They sent to him, they called him, and a crowd was sitting outside, and they said to him, your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you.

[ 24 : 26 ] And Jesus says, who are my mothers and brothers? You remember that? And we think that's a little harsh. Well, the reason is they're seeking you to control you. They're seeking you to put you in their place.

The same thing is going on here. All the newfound popularity to these disciples. Remember the night before was a throwdown. You know, they probably didn't sleep a wink. They're thinking, how many people will he heal today?

I mean, how many people will he help today? We got to get to it. Maybe they thought things are looking up for us when we left our dad and left the nets. It was a little bit risky, but now it looks like everything's going to be just fine.

The whole city knows who we are. We're with Jesus Christ. He's Nazareth. And so we don't know. Maybe they were thinking that. We don't know all that they were thinking, but one thing is clear. They had a plan for Jesus and they were looking for him to get it done for them.

So often we have a plan for Jesus. That's our biggest problem. And Jesus was nowhere to be found. And when they found him and proposed their plan, look at how Jesus responded.

[ 25 : 31 ] Verse 38. He says, Let us go to the next sounds that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out. Let us go to the next sound.

That's why I came out. Jesus is very blunt. He's declaring the core of his mission. He's saying, I'm not setting up a tent in Capernaum tonight. I'm not healing everybody who heard last night but didn't have time to get out of here.

I'm not building popularity like that. What Jesus is telling us, what Mark is telling us is Jesus did not come to heal. Jesus did not come to heal the sick.

Jesus did not come to feed the poor. Jesus did not come to make the world a better place. Now, of course, he did those things, right? But more than all those things, why he came out was to preach. Kevin DeYoung says it like this. We know this sounds heartless, but it's true. It simply was not Jesus' driving ambition to heal the sick and meet the needs of the poor as much as he cared for them.

[ 26 : 38 ] Don't miss this fact. There is not a single example of Jesus going into a town with the stated purpose of healing or casting out demons.

The assumption is, implication, we shouldn't look for Jesus to heal and change the world. Now, before you throw a tomato at me, let me explain. It's not the mission of Jesus Christ.

Culture changing is not the mission of Jesus Christ. It's not the mission. It shouldn't be the mission of the church to heal. Now, don't get me wrong. We should be people who do good to others, who love the poor, who love the sick and the needy, who love for folks to find meaning and purpose in their life.

We should not be just talk like 1 John says. We should love in word and deed, but healing and health and comfort, any of these things, are not the good news.

That's what Jesus is saying. That's not the good news. The good news of the gospel is not healing or riches or purpose. Our greatest problem is not sickness or disease or poverty or aimlessness.

[ 27 : 47 ] Our greatest problem is the wages of sin that await us at death or judgment. I saw this the other day, just wonderfully articulated.

We've told you several times about our partnership with the new church, Trinity Fellowship Church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. If you remember, Jordan and Lauren came here back in August and shared, or September, and shared about their leaving.

They're leaving in a couple weeks. Another family just moved. Josh and Sabrina Pennell moved to join the Grangers. They just had their, a couple weeks ago, they just had their first public meeting. In a testimony before he left, this is what Josh said, the people in Ethiopia have been told their greatest problem is their poverty and that Jesus came to make them rich. Instead, what they need to hear is that Jesus came and died and rose again to rescue them from judgment and the wrath of God.

The good news of the gospel is not healing. The good news of the gospel is not riches. The good news of the gospel is not purpose.

[ 28 : 56 ] The good news of the gospel is not comfort. The good news of the gospel is not any of the benefits of the gospel. The goodness of the gospel is having someone stand in your place and rescue you from the wrath of God.

That's the only gospel we must offer. And Jesus is very particular in this passage because he knows how easily the church can be shifted off the centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There's one message that can reconcile sinners to God. There's one message that makes the difference. It's the message that Christ, Jesus, is the one mediator between God and man.

The only way to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ. Christ. And so it's very important.

Right now, in our culture, in our prosperous Western culture and church, poverty is not, for most of us or most people, the main concern.

concern. But we may be tempted to think other concerns should be the main concern of the church. [ 30 : 06 ] Right now, if you scroll through social media in a little while, a lot of people have opinions on what should be the main burden of the church. Racial injustice, social justice.

I'm not saying those things shouldn't be concerns. They cannot be the main one. Jesus said, this is why I came out.

He did not come to impress. He didn't come to heal. Point three, Jesus came to personally and powerfully save. Jesus came to personally and powerfully save.

Next, Jesus goes through Galilee. Look at verse 39. He went throughout Galilee. That's an unfortunate chapter break, I mean, heading break.

And he went throughout Galilee preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. So Jesus goes, he leaves Capernaum and begins preaching again.

[ 31 : 14 ] So, yeah. It's so interesting. That is like the summary of Jesus' ministry in the book of Mark. Preaches the gospel, cast out demons. Because he's the one who's come to conquer the evil one, if you remember.

But then, in verse 40, Mark zeroes in on one miracle in which Jesus heals a leper. Look at verse 40. And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling, said to him, if you will, you can make me clean.

Before we feel the impact of these verses, we must understand leprosy from a biblical perspective. You know, we often think of leprosy as Hansen's disease. If you read about it, you know about it.

But leprosy, which is a disease that's treatable if you catch it early.

But leprosy in those days was used for a whole range of diseases, skin diseases. And if you read Leviticus, I doubt you're going to pull that out this afternoon, but I'm going through it.

And it ain't for the faint of heart, I'll be honest. Leviticus 13 is very specific. I mean, the priests were essentially kind of medical doctors. I was talking to Sam before this. They're kind of like doctors in the community.

[ 32 : 34 ] And so, or they're more like dermatologists. And so, they're the ones kind of checking. So, if anyone had signs of leprosy, of some sort of epidermal skin disease, they would come to the priest and he would examine them.

And if it looked like leprosy, the person was declared unclean and was forced to quarantine for seven days at home. Sounds a little bit familiar. After seven days, the person could get a rapid test to see whether they were able to be let out. Now, they would get checked again and if the leprosy was still found, they were forced to quarantine for another seven days. The idea is, with the priest, there was no cure for this.

No cure. And so, if it went away, then the person, presumably, could come out of quarantine. But if it was Hansen's disease, in those days, it never went away. And it slowly damaged nerve endings and often led to amputation, all sorts of things like that.

Throughout this quarantine, no one could touch them. That's why in India they're called the untouchables. Or else they would be contaminated. In fact, they had to announce their uncleanness.

[ 33 : 47 ] We have two verses from Leviticus 13. Look there. The leprous person who has a disease shall wear torn clothes. So, they're wearing, their clothes must match their condition. You know, we kind of, we kind of paint things up with what we wear.

Well, there's, they had to match their condition. Torn clothes and let the hair on his head hang loose and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, unclean, unclean, unclean, unclean.

He shall remain unclean as long as he has disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp. They are unclean. They live alone.

They shall live outside the camp. Now, until, until this year, I would say we can't understand the isolation lepers endured, but we are closer.

And we've endured, you know, some people have endured it brutally. But the loss and closeness, loss of closeness and touch that we've experienced the last year can't imagine to what a leper has experienced alone and outcast and untouchable.

[ 35 : 02 ] And so, so it's with that little preamble that we take in this scene. Jesus is going throughout Galilee and a leper comes to him. Somewhere along the way, a leper comes to him.

Notice immediately that the person has been reduced to their disease. Who he is no longer matters. We met Simon and Andrew.

We met James and John as Zebedee. That's who their father was. But this one, who he is doesn't matter anymore. He's reduced to, he's just known for what his disease is. Who is that? Oh, that's the leper.

He's no longer an image bearer of God, afflicted with leprosy. No, he's a leper. Our country likes to reduce people down to their afflictions and sins and struggles but the church of Jesus Christ must not.

But that just tells you the way that culture was. It maligned him. I mean, it pigeonholed him as just a leper. And so, when this leper sees Jesus, he does not come yelling, unclean.

[ 36 : 04 ] He doesn't say, unclean, unclean. Presumably, he doesn't cover his lip. No, this leper takes his mask off. He moves inside six feet.

He invades Jesus' safe space. This leper knows what he's doing is wrong but he's heard something that overrides the concern for wrong in his heart, the concern for the law.

This leper has heard something so wonderful about this man named Jesus and hopes that maybe, just maybe, he could make him clean again. He comes to him.

This seems just so vivid to me. He implores him. He strongly, passionately begs him. If you will, from his knees, you ever stood, have you ever gotten down on your knees for somebody, for something?

I doubt it. On his knee, if you will, you can make me clean. Jesus does not step back.

[ 37 : 01 ] Rather than moving away, Jesus is moved with pity. Look in verse 41. That little clause, moved with pity.

There's a world in those words. There's a world of love in those words. Rather than stepping back, rather than moving his feet away from the unclean person, Jesus' heart is moved with pity.

This leprosy is, this leper is disobeying the command of God. He's not shouting, unclean, unclean. He's not announcing his presence. He's breaking out on his own. But Jesus is not moved with frustration.

Jesus is not moved with annoyance. Jesus is not moved with anger. Jesus is moved with pity and compassion. You know, we have a negative intent to that word, but that's a wonderfully rich word in our Bible.

It's compassion. It's this idea of what wells up from the very bottom of who you are. It's the essence of who you are. It's the core of who you are. And at the very core of Jesus Christ is compassion.

[ 38 : 06 ] At the heart of Jesus Christ is compassion. What's in the heart of Jesus Christ for you when you're needy? You come to him needy again. What's in the heart when you, what's in his heart when you stumble again?

What's in his heart when the sorrows of this world are bearing down on you and leaving you exasperated? We have no doubt any longer in the heart of Jesus Christ is compassion. Welling up from within.

Then Jesus does the unthinkable. Look in verse 41, moved with pity. He stretches out his hand. Mark, I mean, remember, Peter, this is Peter's testimony. Mark's taking us into the scene.

He stretches out his hand and touches. No, Jesus. I mean, that's what the disciples would have said. No, don't touch him. He's unclean, Jesus. He's untouchable. He's dirty.

He's filthy. And he reaches out and he touches this leper. I mean, you've got to imagine the experience of this leper living alone, announcing his uncleanness everywhere he went and then somebody touches him.

[ 39 : 13 ] Somebody's unafraid and comes near him. Somebody risk everything. Martin Luther, you say poverty has a smell. Can you smell it? You have to get that close.

That's how close Jesus gets to this leper. He reaches out and touches him. This exhilarating scene, but Jesus does not just touch him. Jesus does not just comfort him.

Jesus does not just help him. Jesus does not just console him. Jesus does not just support him. Jesus does not just relieve him. Jesus does not just heal him. Jesus makes him clean when he reaches out his hand to touch the leper rather than becoming unclean.

Jesus makes the unclean clean again. He declares him, I will be clean. You doubt the heart of God. That's right there. I will be clean. The priest can only declare the person unclean or clean by what they saw, but Jesus touches him, makes him clean through his word.

[ 40 : 18 ] Jesus comes to personally and powerfully save. This little scene, this little leper awoke an outcast and went to bed that night, a citizen of heaven.

inside. That's unbelievable. Jesus did not come for worldly power to impress us or to come to heal. He came to personally and powerfully save. Dana Ortlund says it like this, when we take the gospels as a whole and consider the composite picture given to us of who Jesus is, what stands out most strongly? The dominant note left ringing in our ears after reading the gospel.

The most vivid and arresting element of the portrait of Jesus Christ is a way the Holy Son of God moves toward, touches, heals, embraces, and forgives those who least deserve it yet truly desire it. The scene closes with a striking hint at what it will cost Jesus Christ to save his people completely. [ 41 : 38 ] Do you remember where the leper lived? Outside the camp. Look at Leviticus 13 again. He shall remain unclean as long as he has disease. He's unclean.

He'll live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp. Look at verse 45. He went out.

The leper did. He began talking freely and spread the news so that Jesus could no longer talk openly but was in desolate places. And people were coming to him from every quarter. The scene begins with the leper outside the camp and Jesus Christ inside it.

But the scene ends with the leper inside the camp and Jesus Christ outside it. In his commitment to personally and powerfully save, Jesus will be unable to merely touch.

He'll be unable to merely heal. He'll be unable to announce your sins are forgiven. That won't be enough. He will be unable to merely tell the good news.

[ 42 : 43 ] Jesus must go outside the camp. Right after Leviticus 13 is Leviticus 16 where they talk about the scapegoat where all the sins are placed on this scapegoat.

And what is pointing to the substitution that's behind all these sacrifices? Jesus must go outside the camp. All of our uncleanness is so great that Jesus must take all of our uncleanness upon himself in order to save.

He cannot just heal. He cannot just declare it. Jesus must become the guilty, the vile, the cheat, the disobedient, the outcast, the sinner, and indeed the leper in order to rescue us from the wrath of God.

The curse of sin is death. And for Jesus to personally and powerfully save, he must step in and endure the curse for us. It's just hinted there very intentionally from Mark.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law above coming to curse for us. We have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus cleanses us, cleans us from all sin.

[ 43 : 52 ] Don't be confused. Jesus did not come to be great, but to gain eternal salvation for all. Praise God. Amen. Father in heaven, we praise you and worship you that you have done the unthinkable, that though you were rich, you became poor.

Though you were great, you became low. Though you were powerful and mighty and surrounded by angels and worship, you became a baby.

Though you were sinless, you became the sinner on the cross as you, all of our sin was placed on you as a scapegoat, that you might be pushed out so that we might be brought in so that we who are just strangers and aliens might become citizens, members of the household of God, built on Jesus Christ.

We praise you, God, that you did not spare your own son. You gave him up. For us all so that through him, we might know you and worship you and give to you our lives.

We praise you and thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

[ 45 : 31 ] For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](http://trinitygraceathens.com). Thank you.