

Introduction:

- Mt 8:1-ff
 - On the mountain was the Word...revelation of who He is (sermon on the mount) . ie. Moses did the same. He went up onto the mountain and received revelation of God and the ways of God.
 - The effect of the revelation was that great crowds followed Jesus. Revelation of Jesus has a drawing power to Jesus. *"If I be lifted up I will draw peoples to me."* Jn 12:32 ie. A magnet over small metal pieces. We just have to lift up Jesus!
 - Jesus comes down from the place of revelation to begin demonstration of who He is. Mt. 8, and 9 are basically accounts of miracles and healings.
 - IE. The Word tells me He loves me
 - but the cross shows me (picture that he loves me) Ro 5:8 God demonstrates His love while we are yet sinners Christ died for us.
 - The Word and the accounts of healings/miracles reveal to me who He is and His ways so that I can know Him. Why is it important for me to know His ways? Because we will always reflect the nature of the world we are most familiar with.
- It was Moses who said, *"Let me know your ways that I may know You.* Ex 33:13. When He reveals His ways it is 'school time.' Training time. What you taste in that time will change your perception of God. Ps. 34 *"Taste and see"* On the mountain Jesus shared words to change the peoples perception of who God is and now He starts to demonstrate to them who He is.
- We talk about what He has done to renew faith, renew life.
 - The story is the picture where by we remember the nature of God. ie. When we look at photos of someone we see a picture but we remember the person, the nature of that person.
 - ieBible stories are pictures that have been take of God. As we look at the picture we remember His nature...we remember who He is. ie. When I look at picture of my moms flower garden I remember her. I remember her creativity. Her creativity was for other people good, their enjoyment.
 - I remember one Halloween as a boy. She dressed me up as a hobo. She put Kryo syrup all over my face and sprinkled coffee grounds on it.
- What we see in the picture is a testimony! The testimony tells of the mercy of God. ie. The ark of testimony...on top of it is mercy!

I. Learning From Lepers**A. Lepers are considered 'unclean'.**

1. When the Bible speaks of something being unclean it generally meant that it was unfit to use in worship to God.
2. Lepers were forbidden to come into public gatherings. They had to shout, "Unclean!" if they came into public places so that people would stand clear of them.
3. Lepers were not allowed to touch other people nor to be touched by other people. This put him in a place of being emotionally starved. The spirit of rejection stands 'as king' in a lepers life. With rejection is loneliness, self pity, broken heart, and hopelessness.
4. This man's disease separated him from people and the corporate worship of God.

5. Can you imagine the isolation! His life reflects the nature of the world that he himself lives in. I.e. the drug addict, the divorced wife, the homeless person, etc.
 6. In the midst of great crowds following Jesus this man takes a risk to come to Jesus, or Jesus was away from the crowds following him; enough to make room for him. Coming to Jesus always involves risk because it will cost you something.
- B. The Leper comes to Jesus and kneels before Jesus.
1. Coming to Jesus is an act of faith. God loves our faith, no matter what size...even if it is only mustard seed size. I pleases Him!
 - a) *“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”* (Hebrews 11:6, ESV)
 - b) If you are going to receive from Jesus you must first come to Jesus. Heb 3:19 tells us that unbelief kept them from entering the promised land.
 - (1) The leper had faith to come and in coming the door of possibilities were opened to him.
 - (2) The promises are all yours but you have to get up and take it. Numbers 13:1
“the Lord said to Moses spy out the land I am giving you. It was Gods idea to give them the land but they had to go get it. The leper comes in faith.
 2. Kneeling before Jesus is an act of submission.
 - a) The apostle James ‘nails it’ here: *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7, ESV)
 - b) Sickness is of the devil. He is behind it all. Because sickness is a limited form of death. James says, submit yourself to God.
 - c) Submission is an act of placing yourself under someone else’s authority. If you need healing you need to be under Jesus authority. Why? Because He is good! He is Truth and the Truth is what sets us free.
 3. He cries out, “Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean!”
 - a) He was convinced that Jesus could. But doubting if he would!
 - b) Many in the body of Christ struggle at this point. We know that God can but the question is will He? Remember: stories give us a picture with which to remember God by. His nature, who He is comes out in the picture! So we are looking for God in the picture!

II. The Truth that changed a leper!

- A. What does the picture tell us? *“And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”* (Matthew 8:3, ESV)
- B. The picture tells us that Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him!!!
 1. Jesus does the unthinkable: that which the law says don’t do love commanded him to do!
 2. He stretches out his hand to the man. It is like Esther 5:2 where the king stretches out the golden scepter to receive Queen Esther! FAVOR! Jesus stretches out his hand to receive the man unlike the pharisees who rejected and isolated the man!

3. The picture tells us that Jesus touched him! Eeewwww! He is touching a man with obvious rotting sores, stinking decaying flesh, and puss filled garments and bandages! That stuff does not scare God because He has authority over it!
- C. The picture tells us of the truth that God is willing to heal! He is good! And because He is good, He is willing. Most believers know He is able but do not know that He is willing. May all of you today realize how willing He is. He took 39 stripes upon His back for your healing. Is 53:4-6 He is willing!
- D. The picture also has a recording with it! Jesus is heard to say, "I AM WILLING, be clean!"
 1. As soon as he says be clean, immediately his leprosy was cleansed!
 2. Now go and let your healing be a testimony to the religious leaders. Do what the law commands.
- E. The power of God to heal this leper revealed:
 1. God's love and acceptance of broken and rejected people. It reveals that God loves you without you having to measure up. Your faith makes many things possible!
 2. God's willingness to heal. He replaces limited death with unlimited life!
 3. God's authority over sickness and uncleanness.
 4. God's desire to bring him back into a place of intimate fellowship with God.
 5. God's desire to see broken relationships restored and corporate worship made possible.

Conclusion:

- Believe in God's power, yes! But more so believe in God's goodness and His heart towards you!
- Know that God can and more so that He is willing.
- Don't come for prayer, come to be healed. There is big difference.

Songs:

In Jesus Name
I Speak Jesus
Break Every Chain
Worthy
To Worship You I live