



# **STORIES OF LIFE!**

**The Gospel of Luke**

## **A Touching Story**

**Luke 5:12-16**

**Message #15 of 50 – S790**

**Sermon given on May 6, 2018**



**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# A Touching Story

*Luke 5:12-16*

## Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 5**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- I will be the first to tell you that I am not much of a sentimental
- I don't naturally attach emotions to things or events
- Now, I can't say with any certainty if this is a function of nature or nurture – I'm not at all convinced that this is how God made me – I see it as a character flaw
- It's so bad that my mom has asked me if I will cry at her funeral
- Not planning that soon – God still has time to work on me
- And He has been
- Today we have a touching story of when Jesus touched a desperate and hopelessly lonely man
- **Pray**

## Teaching

- **A Touching Story**
- According to Matthew's gospel, these two miracles take place right after the Sermon on the Mount – chapters 5-7
- As Jesus is coming down the mountain, great multitudes followed – thousands of people are crowding around Jesus
- Over the noise of the thousands a voice is heard, 'Unclean! Unclean!'
- The multitude parts like Moses at the Red Sea – people attempting to put distance between themselves and the sadly strange looking person who is approaching
- **Luke 5:12**
- Leprosy (or Hansen's disease) was a terrible thing in the ancient world – believed to be incurable
- It was usually disfiguring - 'painless hell' – no sensation of pain – no pain to warn them of danger, like fire – no sensation of pain from

infections from wounds – often resulting in the loss of appendages, nose, ears

- Turn to **Leviticus 13**
- Many forms of the disease were contagious
- Doctor Luke says that this man was full of leprosy
- It was an advanced stage – probably hard to look at
- God told the Israelites how to identify and deal with leprosy in Leviticus 13 and 14
- **Leviticus 13:14**
- To be unclean means you are separated from the community of God
- An unclean person makes everything they touch unclean
- **Leviticus 13:45-46**
- This poor man had probably spent many years alone in his misery
- But then, in his isolation, he hears about a great Healer
- Turn back to **Luke 5**
- In his desperation, he breaks all the rules, hoping for a miracle
- He believes Jesus can heal him – ‘You can make me clean.’
- What he is uncertain of is if Jesus is willing to heal him
- The language implies that the man was making this statement over and over again
- Remember our scene, it is not just Jesus and this poor man
- Thousands of people are crowded around – some might be thinking, ‘what will Jesus do?’ others are disgusted at the man’s appearance or angry that he has approached some closely to ‘clean’ people
- I can only imagine the gasps of surprise when Jesus responds
- **Luke 5:13**
- In Mark’s account of this miracle, Jesus was moved with compassion
- Jesus looked upon this pathetic, rotting, stinking corpse of a man, and felt something stir deep within His heart
- And then He did the unthinkable – put out His hand and touched him
- This leper was a graphic example of how broken a human can become
- Leprosy is a symbol of sin throughout the Bible
- Sin brings corruption, defilement, and death to everything it touches
- Lepers were untouchables, to touch one was to be unclean
- This man had probably not felt the touch of another human for years

- He came in desperation, probably expecting to be rejected, just like he had been by everyone else for years
- Instead Jesus touches Him and then heals him
- Jesus, God the Son, wrapped in perfect human flesh, touched one of the lowest humans on earth
- Brothers and sisters, we were just like that leper, we had a disease that was bringing isolation, misery, suffering – the disease is sin - and we all have it **Romans 3:23**

...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

- And because of that, everything we touch is unclean **Isaiah 64:6**  
**But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...**

- God looked down from heaven and saw us just like Jesus saw this leper, and He had compassion on us – He sent Jesus
- And if we will go to Jesus just like this leper did, humbling ourselves before Him and believing that He can make us whole, He is willing **1 John 1:9**

**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

- There are two opposing lies that keep people in bondage to sin
- First is – I am not a sinner – I am not the leper that needs to be cleansed
- Second lie – My sin is so bad that Jesus won't forgive me – He won't touch me and heal me
- Both of those are lies, and if you believe either one, Satan is holding you in bondage – reject the lie, believe the truth **Matthew 11:28-30**

**Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.**

- Jesus had compassion on this leper, and he loves you just as much as He did him - Go to Jesus – let Him heal you
- After Jesus heals the leper, He gives him instructions
- **Luke 5:14-15**
- Told the leper not to tell anyone that he was healed
- Instead, go to the priests and make an offering
- And then told the healed leper why, ‘as a testimony to them’

- It was a common belief that leprosy was a judgment from God, and therefore, was believed to be terminal – only God could heal leprosy
  - I can just imagine him going to the priest and telling them he had been healed of leprosy – skeptical
  - But once they confirmed that he had leprosy and was healed – I imagine them scrambling around trying to figure what the ritual was for this situation – Leviticus 14 was probably not a popular class in priest school
  - Leviticus 14:1-32 describes an 8-day ritual involving several sacrifices and ends in an anointing that symbolizes new life – dedicated to God
  - All of it very powerfully points to Jesus and His work on the cross for us, and the new life we have in Him
  - Even though Jesus told the man not to tell anyone He did, and great multitudes came – some to hear – some to be healed
  - Jesus didn't come to build a healing ministry – all of Jesus' healings were temporary – He was more concerned with eternal things
  - It was not that He didn't care that people needed to be healed – He had compassion on everyone He met – He was here on a mission
  - And next we read that He had His own needs to attend to
  - **Luke 5:16**
  - It can be said that Jesus was unlike any human who has ever lived. It can also be said that Jesus was like every human who has ever lived.
  - Once people started to figure out what He could do, they came continuously **Mark 6:31**
- And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.**
- Hurting, broken, and hungry people came continuously
  - It is no different today, the needs of people are always greater than the resources of the ministers
  - And then ministers themselves are sometimes hurting, broken, or hungry
  - Jesus was surrounded by people who wanted a touch from Him
  - Each of the gospels describes a time when Jesus separated Himself from the demands of the ministry
  - And it says that what He did in the wilderness was pray

- Why? Why did Jesus have to get away to pray?
- As I thought about that, I am not convinced it was about a need that He had, but a desire **John 10:30**  
**I and My Father are one.**
- From eternity past Jesus, God the Son has shared a divine intimacy with God the Father that has no true human equivalent
- But God has provided us an example that gives us a shadow of what is going on here
- Kelly and I have been married since 1981
- I love her more than any other human on earth
- I also love my family, love being with my kids and grandchildren
- I also love this church, meaning I love the people of this church
- I love hanging out with you, and I love when God uses me to minister to you and uses you to minister to me
- When my family needs me, I will go
- When people need to be ministered to, I will go
- The Bible teaches that when God put Kelly and I together in marriage, he made us ‘one flesh’ – in some mysterious manner similar to Jesus and the Father are ‘one’
- When I am separated from her, my desire is to be with her
- To withdraw from the demands of life and ministry to be with her
- When Jesus withdrew, the text says He prayed – He talked to God
- He didn’t use old King James English and He didn’t use great spiritual words and phrases – He talked with His Father
- How I would love to see a transcript of some of those wilderness prayers
- When Kelly and I withdraw and talk – the conversations are very personal and intimate
- They reflect the relationship we share
- Jesus withdrew into the wilderness so that He could interact with His Father without the distractions of life and ministry
- The Bible teaches that Jesus is always praying for us
- That didn’t start once He got to heaven **Luke 22:31-32**  
**And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”**

- When Jesus was alone with God, he was praying for people and the needs of the ministry God had called Him to
- Just as my desire to be with Kelly is a reflection of my love for her, my desire to be alone with God is a reflection of my love for Him, and it is a reflection of the love I have for those He has called me to minister to.
- I can imagine Jesus talking to His Father about the leper He touched and healed
- Asking for God's grace to help him get back with his family – to find work to provide for his family – for the faith to walk in accordance with God's will and Word – to be thankful for the miraculous gift that was given to Him
- The account of the leper who was healed is a touching story
- Especially when we acknowledge that, spiritually speaking, we are the leper in that story
- Jesus reached down from heaven, from the shadow of the cross, to touch each of us in our uncleanness, and his blood has made us clean
- Jesus told the healed leper to go to the priests and tell His story
- Jesus has healed you from the sin that made you unclean – He wants you to tell the story of when and how He touched you
- Go tell your touching story
- **Pray!**