

Title: Mercy Sought, Mercy Found  
Text: Matthew 8:1-2  
Date: July 24, 2011  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

**Matthew 8: 1: When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.** Our Lord had just preached a sermon. As he came down from the mountain great multitudes followed him. **2: And, behold...**these are shocking words. **And behold, there came a leper...**from this crowd comes one man who is a leper.

The disease of leprosy was such a horrible disease that lepers were quarantined, kept separate, without the camp, away from the people. If a leper came near people he had to declare himself a leper, crying "*Unclean, unclean.*" Can you picture this scene?

Here is this leper making his way through the clamor of people, probably crying, "*Unclean, unclean*"—the people, standing clear, for fear of touching this one with this awful disease. Finally he gets to the Lord Jesus Christ

**Mathew 8: 2:...and worshipped him.** It means he fell on his face at the feet of Christ. **saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.** I picture the crowd silent in suspense. This man is a leper. He is unclean. His disease is contagious. What will the Master do? **3: And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

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This leper, whom no one else would even as much as touch, much less show mercy, came begging mercy from at the hand of the great Physician. This leper obtained mercy. The Lord cleansed him of his leprosy.

Is there a man or woman here who is like this leper? A sinner? Are you hopeless, helpless, friendless, and alone? Do you see hope for you in this leper? The Lord made this one whole why would he not do the same for you? Christ Jesus cleanses sinners of all sin. Why then have you not come to him for forgiveness? If he did so for this leper, do you think he might do so for you?

You might ask, "But how do I come to Christ?"

**Proposition:** Mercy is obtained when mercy is sought. Let's see in this leper what it is to truly seek mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Divisions:** 1. To seek mercy from Christ is to come in desperate need; 2. To seek mercy is to come in true humility--the leper fell down at his feet; 3. To seek mercy is to come submitting in faith—*if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

Someone might say, "Well, I have already come to Christ so this does not apply to me." Believer's never stop coming to Christ. And we come the very same way this leper came. This man sought mercy, and this man found mercy.

## **I. TO SEEK MERCY FROM CHRIST IS TO COME IN DESPERATE NEED.**

This man was a leper. Leprosy is one of the best representations of the plague of sin.

- Like sin—it made everything it touched unclean
- Like sin—incurable disease

- Like sin—consuming disease; hair, nails, joints, teeth, nose, eyes, tongue
- Like sin—leprosy meant death

**Application:** You may not have leprosy but you have a disease worse than that, you have the disease of sin. Do you know you have it?

The leper knew his desperate need. If he looked in the mirror all he saw was leprosy. If he was doing, he made everything he touched unclean. If he was sitting still, he was an unclean leper. Left in this condition, he knew death would soon follow. This is a description of all flesh. What you see in the mirror is sin, whatever you touch, you defile with sin, when you don't do, all you are is sin, head to toe your this body of flesh is death, nothing but sin The leper realized his desperate case. Do you?

And I believe the leper knew he had something even worse than leprosy—sin. He was in the crowd who had just heard the Lord preach. The Lord just rebuked the self-righteous, declaring that sin is in the heart. And he heard the Lord declare where cleansing is found. (**Matthew 5: 20-26**). Notice, he did not say, “Cure me of my leprosy—he said, thou canst make me clean!” He came right away, “Agreeing with Christ his adversary quickly, while Christ was near—in the way with him.”

**Application:** Do you know your need of cleansing? Do you know that without Christ, you will surely perish forever? Before any sinner will seek mercy, we must first have a need—a desperate need—a need only mercy will cure. **Seeking mercy is to come to Christ with a need none but Christ can meet.**

## **II. TO SEEK MERCY IS TO COME TO CHRIST IN TRUE HUMILITY.**

**Matthew 8: 2: And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him,...**

Luke says of the leper, “Seeing Jesus, he fell on his face.”

This is how Christ is worshipped—prostrate—with a heart broken and contrite. Through the gospel, Christ comes (the Covenant, the Light) and breaks the stony heart. Then gives a heart of flesh. We see who and what we are in the Light of who Christ is. Our best deeds are filthy rags—Christ is Holy, Righteous. We are full of uncleanness—Christ is the Fountain open for cleansing. We are made poor in spirit because of our nothingness. We are made to mourn our sin, brought down in meekness, made to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to see our loathsome disease and Christ the only cure.

Job 42: 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

From the first hour, in all hours, in every hour, this is how mercy beggars come seeking mercy from Christ

- Down—from pride
- Down—from self-righteousness
- Down—from self-sufficiency
- All the way down to the feet of Christ.

The majority in this world never know there need—they may become religious or may make a moral change—but few ever truly seek mercy. We have in this leper an illustration of one who was brought down—he saw himself in that wide gate, the broad way that leadeth to destruction. He saw Christ the Narrow Way. Has your heart been broken and humbled at the feet of Christ? The Lord said,

Matthew 5: 3: Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4: Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5: Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6: Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

### **III. TO SEEK MERCY IS TO COME TO CHRIST SUBMITTING IN FAITH--2:...Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.**

As bad as his disease was, as bad as his sin was, as bad as his disease was, though he had been cast out of the camp, made an outcast from all the people, yet he heard Christ say,

Matthew 7: 7: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

He came making no demands but casting himself on the mercy of the Lord--**Lord, if thou wilt.** Are you looking to your will or to his will? Your “will” can’t stop you from catching a common cold much less cure you of it.

Salvation depends upon the will of the Lord, not your will. Mercy is his to give to whomsoever he will.

Romans 9: 15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

- His will elected a people unto salvation in Christ
- His will laid down his life perfecting forever those given him
- His will draws all who come as this leper came

This leper confessed that the whole issue was in the hands of Christ. He acknowledged Christ’s sovereign right to give or withhold grace according to his own sovereign pleasure as Lord. Those who are made willing in the day of his power—desire the Lord’s will to be done--*Lord, if thou wilt.*

But he came believing Christ was able to do what no one else could--**thou canst make me clean.**--Notice how personal faith is--**thou canst make ME clean.**

Do YOU believe Christ is who he says he is?—The Son of God in human flesh. Do YOU believe Christ has done what he claims to have done? IT IS FINISHED! Do YOU believe Christ has power to cleanse you of all sin?

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The way this leper came is what it is to “diligently seek God”. How did he come?

1. In desperate need—in my hands no price I bring
2. In true humility--down at Christ’s feet
3. Submitting, in faith, completely surrendering to the Lord’s will, casting all his salvation upon the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ—*if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

Now listen: The Lord Jesus Christ has never rejected a sinner who came the way this leper came. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. God says,

Malachi 3: 10:...prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Will you prove him?

*I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away I know,  
I must forever die.*

*But if I die with mercy sought,  
When I the king have tried;  
This were to die (delightful thought!)  
As sinner never died.*

This leper sought mercy! Did he find mercy!

**Matthew 8: 3: And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

Amen!