



The unfolding of your words gives light.

## To Seek and to Save

### An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

<sup>12</sup>While He was in one of the cities, behold, *there was* a man covered with leprosy<sup>a</sup>; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean<sup>b</sup>.” <sup>13</sup>And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed<sup>c</sup>.” And immediately the leprosy left him<sup>d</sup>. <sup>14</sup>And He ordered him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded<sup>e</sup>, as a testimony to them<sup>f</sup>.” <sup>15</sup>But the news about Him was spreading even farther<sup>g</sup>,

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<sup>a</sup> 5:12 **While He was in one of the cities, behold, *there was* a man covered with leprosy.** This could have been any number of skin conditions, though a condition we now call “Hansen’s Disease” may be the one commonly described in Scripture. This man was “covered” with lesions and may have lost sensation in his extremities or even suffered partial blindness as a result of his disease. Two entire chapters of Leviticus (13-14) regulate infectious skin diseases in the congregation of Israel.

This disease was a “walking death” and demonstrated clearly to all observers the effects of the sin of Adam. There are some noteworthy parallels between leprosy and sin that remind us that Jesus came for more than physical healing:

- It starts small and seems insignificant.
- As it grows you become insensitive to it (hence the talk of burns turning into leprosy).
- It is contagious.
- It separates you from God and the people of God (the joy of being on the inside, church discipline, etc.).
- It brings a “hideous outcome.”
- It is a living death, a reminder of what sin brought to our race.
- It will find you out.
- Its discovery brings dread, fear and disgust.
- You need a priest.

<sup>b</sup> 5:12 **when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”** Notice that this man’s request was undergirded with the threefold confession that Jesus was worthy of bowing the knee, that Jesus was powerful and that Jesus had the sovereign right to decide the outcome of this request.

<sup>c</sup> 5:13 **He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.”** Mark adds that Jesus was, at this point, filled with compassion. What is worthy of note here is that Jesus touched the man. This would have rendered Him ceremonially unclean (not sinful).

<sup>d</sup> 5:13 **immediately the leprosy left him.** Not every healing is instantaneous, but this one was. This shows again the power of Jesus to overrule nature.

<sup>e</sup> 5:14 **He ordered him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded.** The priests in Jerusalem were the ones to make the call as to whether this man could rejoin the community of Israel. Jesus encouraged the man to obey the law, but there was likely another reason.

<sup>f</sup> 5:14 **as a testimony to them.** This healing was a mercy to the leper in Galilee and a message to the priests in Jerusalem. This was like the message David sent to the Jebusites in Jerusalem when he deposited the head of Goliath at the gates of the city (1 Samuel 17:54). It was as if he said, “I defeated this enemy and I am coming to rule where you are.” Was not Jesus doing the same thing?

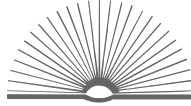
<sup>g</sup> 5:15 **But the news about Him was spreading even farther.** The miraculous is hard to hide.

The Gospel of Luke  
Steven Svendsen, Sr.

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and large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses<sup>a</sup>. <sup>16</sup>But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray<sup>b c</sup>.

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<sup>a</sup> 5:15 **large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses.** Note the twofold ministry: preaching and healing.

<sup>b</sup> 5:16 **But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray.** Jesus was in the habit of “slipping away.” Luke uses this phrase in another place (9:10) of Jesus’ finding refuge in Bethsaida after hearing the news of the death of John the Baptist. This retirement was for prayer. Prayer was His most important private ministry.

<sup>c</sup> 5:12-16 It is hard to imagine people praying a lot while still remaining ungodly, but that is the kind of people Jesus encountered in Israel (Matthew 6:5; Luke 20:47). Why it goes against our nature to pray:

1. We like to find human solutions. Leprosy is an out-of-control condition like cancer.
2. We prefer that God submit to our will. Prayer makes us subject to the will of another.
3. We like to get some of the credit. Christians like to be called “prayer warriors.” When we pray with the right hearts the glory goes to God alone.

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