

INCURABLE DISEASES, IMPROBABLE CURE (Luke 17:11-19)

I. The symptoms.

- A. There are several signs, or symptoms, of leprosy that pointed to the fact that one had contracted this dreadful disease.
- B. The Mosaic Law contained instructions as to how the priest could diagnose a case of leprosy and what to do if it was diagnosed.
 - 1. There is great detail given about this in Leviticus 13.
 - 2. Leviticus 14 contains what was to be done if a leper was ever pronounced clean.
- C. One of the symptoms of leprosy various types of skin lesions.
 - 1. These lesions would look bleached around scabs or scrapes.
 - 2. What would show the contraction of leprosy was that it would have minimal to no sensation to touch, heat or pain.
 - 3. Also, these lesions would not heal.
- D. Another symptom would be muscle weakness.
- E. Also, a person would have the symptom of a loss of feeling in the extremities.
- F. When you think about sin, and apply this spiritually, there are several similarities.
- G. The sinner loses feeling about sin.
 - 1. The conscience is not bothered by it as much.
 - a. Paul talked about those whose conscience had been seared (1 Timothy 4:1-2).
 - b. When a person's conscience is weak, it can easily become defiled (1 Corinthians 8:7).
 - c. When we allow sin to go unchecked we will become defiled in conscience (Titus 1:15).
 - 2. We need to protect our consciences to the best of our abilities.
 - a. We must because love comes from a good conscience (1 Timothy 1:5).
 - b. Also, we are able to be good soldiers because of pure conscience (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
- H. The one with sin is weak and open to other sins.
 - 1. To hide what we've done, we must sin again.
 - 2. When we sin once, it is easier to do again and again.
- I. Like leprosy, sin starts out with one little spot.
 - 1. One little drink with friends leads to more and more until one becomes drunk.
 - 2. One little seemingly innocent look at another woman leads to a seemingly innocent talk which leads to not so innocent actions.
 - 3. One little innocent kiss leads to fornication between two teens who never expected to end up with a baby.

J. One little white spot leads to death.

II. The complications.

- A. As with most diseases, there are complications that arise from it.
1. These complications would not normally come about if one was disease free.
 2. Oftentimes, it is the complications that end up bringing about death and not the original disease.
- B. Leprosy had several complications, such as disfigurement.
1. The disease would often attack the cartilage in fingers and toes causing them to shrivel and be useless.
 2. The white spots would begin to multiply and eventually start bleeding and whole sections of flesh would rot off.
- C. Sensory loss was another complication of leprosy.
1. One afflicted with this dreaded disease got to the point where affected parts of the body could not feel pain.
 - a. If a person was being burned by fire, often they would not realize it until there was greater damage.
 - b. Bones could break and they would not be aware of it.
 2. Taste and smell were both ruined by this disease.
- D. Many times lepers would lose the ability to speak.
1. This is why many commentators point out that the one leper who returned to Jesus in Luke 17 is said to have yelled with a loud voice.
 2. The flesh of the throat would be damaged by the bacteria that caused leprosy.
- E. Not only were there physical complications, there were social complications as well.
1. It brought them into relationships with other lepers from other groups of people.
 - a. In this group, at least one was a Samaritan.
 - b. They never would have had these type relationships without leprosy.
 2. They were ceremonially unclean.
 - a. There was no way for them to worship God at the temple or go to synagogue.
 - b. They could not be around other people that were healthy.
 3. They believed there was no hope of recovery.
 - a. There was no known treatment for leprosy at that time.
 - b. It was a death sentence.
 - c. History tells us that the average length of life of a leper upon contraction of it was 9 years.
 - (1) Those years were spent apart from all they loved.
 - (2) They were spent in pain and misery.
- F. Sin produces many of the same complications spiritually speaking.

- G. Spiritually, we become marred or disfigured.
 - 1. Sin is a killer and destroyer of life.
 - 2. It hurts lives, souls and relationships.
 - 3. It is extremely destructive.
 - 4. The Bible talks numerous times about the fact that sins hardens a person's heart spiritually.
- H. There is a loss of sense when in sin.
 - 1. The Prodigal Son had to come to himself in order to confront his sin.
 - 2. When we go into sin, we lose our senses.
 - 3. We don't hear properly, we don't see properly and we don't think properly.
- I. Sin kills our ability to speak good things.
 - 1. We have difficulty speaking the truth when in sin (Ephesians 4:25).
 - 2. We can't speak sound doctrine when we are not sound (Titus 2:1).
 - 3. We sure can't speak as God would have us to while in sin (1 Peter 4:11).
- J. Sin causes social complications as well.
 - 1. We will be with people we never thought we would associate.
 - 2. We are definitely spiritually unclean while in sin.
 - a. We can't worship properly.
 - b. We can't pray without our prayers being hindered by sin.
 - 3. Many in sin lose all hope of life.
 - a. Sin is so destructive that it fools us into thinking we can't get out of it.
 - b. Many become so entangled that they never come out of it, thinking there is no way to do so.
- K. So besides all the symptoms of these two killers, there are also dreaded complications that result when one has either of them.

III. The healing.

- A. Thankfully, with leprosy, man has now devised ways to treat it, where it is not the death sentence it once was.
 - 1. In the late 1800's, a scientist found the particular bacteria that causes the disease and it is now known as Hansen's disease, named for the one who found the bacteria.
 - 2. Various antibiotics can be given to treat it and people can lead fairly normal lives if diagnosed early.
- B. However, in the time we read of in scripture, there was no known cure or healing for this disease.
 - 1. When one was diagnosed with it, that person was immediately banished and hope for recovery was not to be found.
 - 2. It was literally a death sentence.
- C. The ten lepers recorded in Luke 17, however, were able to be cured and cleansed.

1. The same was the case for the leper about whom we read in Mark 1:40ff.
 2. These lepers were blessed by the presence and healing ability of Jesus.
- D. For the leper in Mark 1, Jesus touched this man, making him well.
- E. For those ten lepers in Luke 17, Jesus simply told them to show themselves to the priest and were made whole on the way to see the priest.
- F. Only by the power of God through Jesus could these men be saved.
- G. The same holds true for the dreaded disease of sin.
1. Only Jesus can save people from their sins.
 2. It is His blood that washes it away (Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7).
- H. There was no hope for the lepers apart from Jesus and there is no hope for sinners apart from Jesus.
1. There is no other remedy for sin.
 2. If one is not saved by the blood of Christ, he or she can never be saved.
- I. It is said of Jesus that He “moved with compassion” towards the leper to heal him in Mark 1.
1. God shows us His compassion through the giving of His Son (Romans 5:8).
 2. Ephesians 2:4-5.
- J. Both leprosy and sin were cured by the love of Christ for mankind.