

## Introduction

In 1990, I was in my office in Orlando, Florida, when someone came rushing in and said an older man had collapsed in our parking lot. I immediately rushed out to the parking lot and saw the man laying down on his back in the parking lot. He was gasping for breath and couldn't talk. I knew that he was having a heart attack. I had our staff call 911 and I stayed with him.

Unfortunately, by the time that the EMT arrived, the man had already died. I had stood there and watched this man die at my feet. It was a horrible experience, and I told myself that this was not going to happen to me again. I was going to get some training in CPR and be ready the next time something like this happened. I was very concerned and felt compassion for the man. I was more than willing to help. I was also willing to get personally involved, but I lacked the training needed to help the man.

Our passage today is Mark 1:40-45, and it is about a leper that came to Jesus and asked Him to heal him. Jesus' actions are a great example for all of us to learn from. Jesus had the right motivation. He was moved compassion for the man. Second, Jesus had the right mindset. When the leper asked Him if He was willing, Jesus said, "I am willing." Third, Jesus had the right method. He got involved personally and touched the man.

### A Model Ministry (Mark 1:40-45)

1. Jesus' Motivation: Compassion
2. Jesus' Mindset: I am willing
3. Jesus' Method: Touched him

(Mark 1:40-45) "And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." {41} Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." {42} Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. {43} And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, {44} and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." {45} But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere."

#### 1. Jesus' Motivation: Compassion (Mark 1:40-41)

The account begins with a leper coming to Jesus and asking Him to make him clean. The leper did not just come to Jesus; He fell on his knees before Jesus. The leper humbled himself before Jesus. In the Old Testament, there is a Hebrew word that is translated as worship, and it is shachah (Strong's H7812). It literally means to bow down. In the New Testament, the primary Greek word for worship is proskuneo (Strong's G4352), and it means towards a dog. Most scholars render it as kiss, like a dog. A dog is on all four legs before you. This leper fell on his knees, bowing down before Jesus, like he was worshipping Him.

In addition to falling on his knees, he said to Jesus, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." This leper had faith that Jesus could heal him. His only question was whether Jesus was willing to heal him. He did not demand that Jesus heal him. He did not order Jesus to heal him. He just acknowledged that Jesus could make him clean if He was willing to do it.

Mark records that Jesus was moved with compassion. The dictionary defines compassion as: “a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” That is what Jesus had. He was deeply moved by the misfortune of this leper and He had a strong desire to alleviate his suffering. The Greek word is *splanchnizomai* (Strong's G4697), and it means to have the bowels yearn. This is a deep inward passion and feeling. What Jesus does next is motivated by this compassion. Jesus was moved by compassion.

This leper may have been missing pieces of his skin. He may have smelled bad. Because leprosy was contagious, they could not be touched by anyone or the other person would become unclean. Lepers were outcasts and had to live outside the villages or towns. They were lonely and isolated. There were colonies of lepers, but they were isolated from the mainstream. Lepers were required to notify people that they were lepers and unclean. Leprosy was a terrible disease, and there was no cure for leprosy. We don't know if the sight of the leper moved Jesus with compassion; we just know that Jesus was moved with compassion.

When I was a chaplain at the Cobb County Adult Detention Center, we had a separate pod for those that had aids. It was the “P” pod. When inmates were processed into our facility, they were given a medical screening. Any inmate that had aids was sent to the “P” pod. Those in that pod did not get many visitors. In fact, they did not get many chaplain visits. Nobody wanted to take a chance and be near them. They were the lepers of our society. One day I had a chaplain request from a man in the “P” pod, and so I went to visit him. He told me how his family made him an outcast and did not want him around. This man felt rejected, isolated, abandoned, and lonely. I was moved with compassion for this man as he told me his story. This man did not have a physical condition of leprosy, but he had an emotional condition of leprosy. I shared the love of Jesus with him, and he prayed to receive Christ. The tears of loneliness turned to tears of joy.

Jesus was motivated by compassion. He also taught His disciples and others to have compassion. In Matthew 9:10-13, Jesus was sitting at a table with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees asked Jesus' disciples why Jesus was keeping such bad company. Jesus answered them and said that it is not those who are healthy that need a physician, but those who are sick. Then, He told them to go and learn what this means, “I desire compassion, and not sacrifice.” The Pharisees had no compassion on the sinners. Jesus did not just have compassion on lepers, tax collectors, and sinners, He exhorted others to learn to have compassion.

(Matt 9:10-13) “Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. {11} When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” {12} But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. {13} But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

In Matthew 12, Jesus and His disciples were walking through the grainfields on the Sabbath. Some of the disciples picked some heads of grain and ate them. The Pharisees jumped all over this and asked Jesus why they were breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus responded by telling them about what David did when he and his companions were hungry. The priest took the old bread that would be changed out, and gave it to them to eat. The priest had compassion on David and his men and used what he had to feed them. The Pharisees were more concerned about their own

rules than helping the sick, the sinner, or the starving. Jesus told them that if they understood what this means, “I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,” they would not condemn the innocent. Jesus had compassion for others, and He taught others to have compassion.

(Matt 12:1-14) “At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads *of grain* and eat. {2} But when the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." {3} But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, {4} how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? {5} "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? {6} "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. {7} "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent. {8} "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." {9} Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. {10} And a man *was there* whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him. {11} And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? {12} "How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." {13} Then He *said* to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. {14} But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him.”

## 2. Jesus' Mindset: Willing (Mark 1:40-41)

The leper asked Jesus if He was willing to cleanse him. Jesus immediately responded by saying, “I am willing.” I think that one of the questions that people have today is whether God is willing. The non-charismatic element in the church believe that God is able to heal. However, many of them do not believe that God does these things today. In other words, they don't believe that God is willing. I have an instructor who had a lymphoma cancer in the stomach. As I prayed for him, I sensed the Lord saying to me to have him ask the elders in his church to lay hands on him, anoint him with oil and pray for him. He went to the elders of his church and asked them to pray for his healing. They did not know how or what to pray, as this is not something God does today. They didn't doubt God's ability, they doubted that it is God's will today.

The Pentecostal element in the church are on the other side. They believe that healing is guaranteed by the stripes of Jesus. 1 Peter 2:24 says that by “His stripes we are healed.” They not only believe that Jesus can, but has already willed for us to be healed. If we are not walking in divine health, we are lacking faith, or in sin. There are lots of hurting and suffering Christians that have under condemnation because of this teaching.

The fact of the matter is that there are lots of godly people in the New Testament that suffered from sickness. Paul preached to the Corinthians while he was sick. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:3, “I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.” The word for weakness is *astheneia* (Strong's G769), which means disease, diseased, sickness, infirmity, sickly, sick, or weakness. This word is translated most of the time as sick. Paul had no doubt about God's ability to heal. God used him mightily to heal people, and yet Paul himself was sick.

(1 Cor 2:3) “I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,”

In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his frequent stomach ailments. He did not tell him that he needed more faith or that he needed to repent of his sins. He told him to no longer drink water exclusively, but to have a little wine.

(1 Tim 5:23) “No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.”

In 2 Timothy 4:20, Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus. There is no hint of Trophimus being in sin or lacking faith. I am sure that Paul prayed for him. For some reason, God did not heal Paul or Trophimus.

(2 Tim 4:20) “Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.”

In John 11, we have the account of Lazarus being raised from the dead. Jesus was told that Lazarus was sick. Jesus took His time getting there, and when He arrived Lazarus was already dead and buried in a grave. Prior to coming Jesus said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” Jesus was not going to heal Lazarus of his sickness. He was actually going to let him die, and then He was going to raise him from the dead. There is a sickness unto death. All of us are going to die, and sometimes it is from a sickness. Sometimes it is just from our old age and our parts wearing out, but sometimes it is from a sickness. In those cases, God could heal if He was willing, but He doesn't do it.

(John 11:4) “But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

In 2 Kings 13:14, one of the greatest prophets in the Bible died from a sickness. Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die. Elisha had a double portion of what Elijah had. They saw all kinds of miracles in their ministry. It was not a lack of faith and it was not a sin in his life. It was just the sickness that he was to die from. God could have healed Elisha, but He was not willing. It was Elisha's time to go. The question that the leper asked Jesus is a very appropriate one.

(2 Kings 13:14) “When Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"

Having presented some Scriptures that clearly show that God has not always guaranteed us healing in this life, I want to show a balance. Jesus went about healing people and casting out demons. He set an example for us to follow. In Luke 9:1-2, Jesus commanded His twelve apostles to go heal the sick and cast out demons. In Luke 10:8-9, Jesus commanded the seventy disciples to go heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God.

(Luke 9:1-2) “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. {2} And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing....{10:8-9} "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; {9} and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

In Mark 16, we have Mark's account of the Great Commission. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. The He said, "these signs will accompany those who have believed...they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." Healing the sick is one of the signs that believers are to have happen.

(Mark 16:15-18) "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. {16} "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. {17} "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; {18} they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

In 1 Corinthians 12:9 Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit gives some the gift of healing. God wants us to pray for the sick and to heal them.

(1 Cor 12:9) "to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,"

In James 5:14-15, those that are sick in the body of Christ are to call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick. God is willing to heal the sick today. I believe that it is God's general will to heal people. I don't think that it is an absolute, always, all the time. There is a sickness unto death. There are times that God chooses not to heal the sick, but I believe that we should operate on the premise that God is willing and wants us to pray for the sick and to restore them to health. We are those who have believed in Mark 16. We are those who are still given ministry gifts by the Holy Spirit. It is God's will to heal people today. Jesus was willing to heal the leper, and I believe He is willing to use us to heal people today.

(James 5:14-15) "Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; {15} and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him."

One of my favorite verses is in 2 Corinthians 1:20. It says, "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." God has given us lots of promises about healing the sick, and I believe Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, saying, "Yes! Yes! Yes! I am willing! Go for it! Yes!"

(2 Cor 1:20) "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."

### 3. Jesus' Method: Touch (Mark 1:41-45)

After telling the leper that He was willing to cleanse the leper, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and he was immediately cleansed. Jesus personally got involved and touched the leper.

(Mark 1:41-42) “Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” {42} Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.”

In Leviticus 5:3, the Law stated that whoever touches human uncleanness of whatever sort will be declared guilty of sin. We know that Jesus was without sin. Therefore, some scholars have said that the man was cleansed and healed by his faith and that Jesus simply confirmed the healing. Some say that when Jesus said, “I am willing; be cleansed,” the man was declared cleansed by Jesus. In the same way that he spoke things into being at creation, Jesus spoke cleansing and healing to the man and he was immediately healed. Some other scholars have said that because Jesus was also God that He could not contract any ritual uncleanness and was exempt from that uncleanness.

(Lev 5:3) “Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever *sort* his uncleanness *may* be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty.”

After the leper had been cleansed, Jesus sternly warned him and sent him away. Jesus commanded him to say nothing to anyone, but to go and show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifices commanded by Moses. Those offerings would include two birds, and after eight days, two male lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb, and fine flour and oil. (See Leviticus 14:4, 10.) The priests were the ones that were given the responsibility of inspecting lepers and pronouncing them clean or unclean. Jesus was encouraging the man to keep the Laws and ordinances of God. At the same time, when the man would be declared clean by the priest, it would be a divine healing of God that was verified by the priest.

Even though Jesus had sternly warned the man, he went out and began to proclaim it freely. He spread the word around to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, and stayed in unpopulated areas. But people came to Jesus from everywhere.

(Mark 1:43-45) “And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, {44} and He said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” {45} But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.”

In Luke 7:11-16, Jesus was in a city called Nain, and at the gate of the city a dead man was being carried out. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. She now did not have a husband to take care of her, or a son to take care of her. When Jesus saw the widow, He felt compassion for her, and told her not to weep. He went and touched the coffin and commanded the young man to arise. The dead man sat up and began to speak and Jesus gave him back to his mother. Jesus had compassion. Jesus was willing to act on that compassion. Jesus was willing to touch the coffin and restore the man to life. This was a pattern of ministry, a model of ministry for us. We must go and learn what it means to have compassion. We must be willing to do something about the situation. We must be willing to personally get involved and touch the lives of those that are hurting.

(Luke 7:11-16) “Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. {12} Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. {13} When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." {14} And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" {15} The dead man sat up and began to speak. And *Jesus* gave him back to his mother. {16} Fear gripped them all, and they *began* glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

### Conclusion and Applications

This morning I want to look at one more story to summarize the points. In Luke 10:30-37, we have the account of the good Samaritan. A man had gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he was robbed, stripped, beat, and left half dead on the road. A priest went down the road and saw the man, but he passed on the other side. The priest had no compassion. The priest was not willing to help the man. The priest was not willing to get personally involved and touch the man with the love of Christ. In fact, he went on the other side of the road.

(Luke 10:30-31) “Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. {31} And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”

A Levite also came by the man, and he passed on the other side. The Levite had no compassion. The Levite was unwilling to help the man. The Levite did not get personally involved, but also went to the other side of the road.

(Luke 10:32) “Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”

But, a Samaritan, someone who was considered unclean and a half-breed, went by and saw the man. The Samaritan felt compassion. Second, he was willing to help the man. He went and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He also put him on his beat and brought him to an inn and took care of him. Then, he gave the innkeeper two denarii and told him to take care of him. He also promised to make payment to the innkeeper of any additional expenses. He took personal responsibility for the man. He had compassion. He was willing. And he got personally involved. He touched the life of this man who had been robbed, beaten, and left half-dead. Notice how Jesus ends the story. He said, “Go and do the same.” What is the Lord exhorting us to do? He is exhorting us to have compassion on those who are dying and suffering around us. He is exhorting us to determine in our hearts that we will be willing to help people. We must be willing to lay down our agendas and help those around us. Third, God is calling us to take personal responsibility. He is exhorting us to get personally involved in the lives of people around us.

(Luke 10:33-37) “But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, {34} and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. {35} On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said,

'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' {36}  
 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" {37} And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

This morning I began with a story about a man dying in the parking lot. I had stood by him watching him die, feeling helpless because I did not know what I could do for him. I made a decision right then and there to get some training in CPR. I decided that I would get my entire staff trained in CPR, and that is what I did. There were firefighters that played at the golf course that I managed. I spoke to the Chief, and offered some golf lessons for his men in trade for some training in CPR. He jumped all over that offer, and we began training that same week. They brought the dummies out and my staff learned to do two breaths and thirty pumps. In no time at all we had it down. Today, they do not do the two breaths; they just do pumps. About two weeks after we finished the CPR training, I was out on the driving range giving a golf lesson, and my staff said that someone had a heart attack on the 11<sup>th</sup> fairway. I immediately jumped in a cart and went to the 11<sup>th</sup> hole. There was a man named Roger laying down on the ground. Roger was a member of the club and I knew him. His son played on the Dr. Phillips High School golf team. I unbuttoned Roger's shirt, tilted his head back, and began doing CPR on him. I worked with him for about fifteen minutes, and then the firetruck and EMT vehicle arrived on the fairway. There were about three men who jumped out and immediately took over. They took Roger to the hospital and he had a bypass operation. Roger lived and was back playing golf in a few weeks. His son and the high school team brought me a really nice clock for my office. The note with the card said, "Because you gave my father more time..." I started working with their golf team. I had written a book on sports psychology called, "Prepare To Win," and I used that material with them. That next year they went on to win the Florida State High School Golf Championship. I share that story because I had compassion and a willingness to help the first man. I was willing to get personally involved, but I lacked the training to help him. That changed when I got some CPR training. When Roger had his heart attack, I was compassionate, willing, and got personally involved. Roger's life was saved because of that.

The Bible tells us clearly that we are all going to die physically, and after this comes judgment. People all around us are dying and are facing a time of judgment before God. Those without Christ are going to pay the penalty for their sins, an eternity apart from God in a place where there is gnashing of teeth and torment.

(Heb 9:27) "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment."

We have opportunities before us to reach out to these people. Like the man who was left half dead on the road, we have a choice of showing compassion. We have a choice about whether we are going to be willing to help them. We have a choice about personally getting involved and touching them. We are God's hands and the choice is whether we are going to use them to touch people. Are we going to let them die on the road, whatever path they are on, or are we going to minister God's healing for their sins? Are we going to invest our time and resources to bring them to Christ? We have been conducting training in relational evangelism on Friday nights. My prayer is that we will follow the Model Ministry example that Jesus left. Let's be a church that is moved with compassion. Let's be a church that is willing to reach out to the untouchables. Let's be a church that touches people with the love of God. Amen.

### Three Ways To Learn To Have Compassion

1. Pray.
  - a. Ask God to give you compassion.
  - b. Ask God to give you opportunities to exercise compassion.
  - c. Humble your hearts before God by fasting. Fasting softens hearts.
2. Renew your minds with God's word. Meditate on passages that speak about compassion.  
(Rom 12:2)
3. Practice. Act on your compassion. (Ps 111:10)

(Psalm 111:10) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*; His praise endures forever."

**Introduction** (Mark 1:40-45)

- 1. Jesus' Motivation: Compassion** (Mark 1:40-41, Matt 9:10-13, Matt 12:1-14)
  
- 2. Jesus' Mindset: Willing** (Mark 1:40-41, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Cor 2:3, 2 Tim 4:20, 1 Tim 5:23, John 11:4, 2 Kings 13:14, Luke 9:1-2, 10:8-9, Mark 16:15-18, 1 Cor 12:9, James 5:14-15, 2 Cor 1:20)
  
- 3. Jesus' Method: Touch** (Mark 1:41-45, Lev 5:3, 14:4, 14:10, Luke 7:11-16)

**Conclusion and Applications** (Luke 10:30-37, Heb 9:27)