

Content

Jesus here in this passage we are looking at this morning is continuing his ministry of kingdom inauguration. What do learn about His kingdom ministry through this particular narrative? First, we learn that it was prepared with prayer. Another way of putting it is Jesus' own life was saturated with prayer. Isn't it amazing that as Jesus becomes busier and more and more people are clamoring for His attention that He withdraws, basically in the middle of the night to go off alone and commune with His Heavenly Father? But we see then as we follow this narrative that as Simon and the others search for him he responds to them with his purpose of preaching, which is our second point. Jesus' ministry is a ministry of the word, of gospel proclamation. But then we learn that Jesus' ministry is not an either/or ministry of the Word or deed, but is a both/and ministry of both Word and deed. Our third point is the power of pity and follows the account of Jesus healing the leper. Moved with compassion Jesus meets our needs in every dimension of life, showing his care for the entirety of our human condition, and he calls us to minister as he did. How do we do that?

Gospel Connections

To understand the significance of what Jesus did in this passage we need to understand a little background about the horrific nature of leprosy in the Old Testament. To be a leper, which marked a wide variety of skin diseases was to be a total outcast. It was not only physically painful but it also cut you off completely from the community. The Old Testament law in Leviticus described a leper as dwelling outside the camp (Lev. 13:45-46). But in Hebrews we read, ***“So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured” (Hebrews 13:12-13)***. That means Jesus, on the cross, entered our condition of loneliness, exile and complete alienation, moved from compassion and love, in order to bring us in and meet our needs. And He cared for and ministered to the whole person. We will only embody the ministry of Jesus as we appropriate and apply the power of the gospel to our lives, both individually and corporately as a church.

Application and Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically
 - a. What insights did you learn?
 - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don't

understand?

c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?

2. What do we learn here about Jesus' prayer life? How can you grow in your prayer life?

3. What do we learn about Jesus from how he healed the leper? Who are the "lepers" in our community – people that others are afraid to touch? How can we, as individuals and as a church, reach out to them?