

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 5: 12-16**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we'll continue reading Luke chapter 5, verses 12-16.

Yesterday we read about how, in the matter of Peter's fishing, God performed a miracle: they caught two boatloads of fish, and as a result, Peter and John left everything and followed Jesus. Therefore, the miracle itself was not intended for people to gain some kind of benefit. Peter and John received two boatloads of fish, yet they left all the fish behind and even left their boats behind. The miracle is God transcending certain natural laws so that we can see God's great power and God's glory. Once you see God's great power and God's glory, there is only one thing you can do: leave everything behind and follow the Lord. Then Jesus promised them that catching people would be like catching fish! This is the ministry Jesus came to earth to fulfill: to obtain those whom God has called.

The following passage is about a leper, where Jesus heals a man full of leprosy. Every arrangement in the Bible is under the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. We need to think about why, right after Jesus called His disciples to the ministry of catching people, the next thing recorded is Jesus healing a man full of leprosy. In the Old Testament era, leprosy was an extremely serious disease because it was highly contagious; therefore, those with leprosy had to be separated from others. In Leviticus 13:45-46, it is even stipulated that when a leper comes out, because people might accidentally come into contact with them and become infected, he must stand far away and cry out loudly, "Unclean! Unclean!" to let people know to avoid them. So in the Old Testament era, lepers were actually separated from the community, extremely isolated, and had no fellowship with others.

Today we know that leprosy is a skin disease caused by bacteria that specifically destroy the sensation in people's nerves, and on the outside of the body, it causes tumors and ulcers. Because the nerve sensations are destroyed, people do not feel

pain or heat, and as a result, they lose fingers or even have limbs amputated; such conditions frequently occur.

From a spiritual perspective, leprosy is connected to sin, especially the sin of rebellion. In the Old Testament, the most detailed record is in Numbers chapter 12. Moses married a Cushite woman as his wife, and because of this, his sister Miriam and brother Aaron spoke against Moses and did not submit to Moses' authority. They said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" Because of this matter, God came forth to testify for Moses, saying, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth." And because Miriam did not submit to God's authority, God caused her body to be covered with leprosy, and she was isolated outside the camp for seven days; the whole congregation of Israel also stopped moving forward for seven days because of this.

Moreover, leprosy has another characteristic: when it is just beginning and has not yet fully manifested, its contagiousness is particularly strong. Once it fully breaks out and the whole body turns white, it no longer has contagiousness, and the person can then go to the priest to be examined to determine if they have become clean. Once we understand this background, let us come back to read today's verses.

**Verse 12: "And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'"**

Actually, this man was already in violation of the Mosaic law; he should not have come into contact with people. When people approached, he should have shouted, "Unclean! Unclean!" to make them avoid contact with him. But we can imagine how extremely lonely these lepers were and how greatly they needed fellowship. Being cut off from fellowship, as soon as he saw Jesus coming, he immediately fell on his face. This leper had full confidence in Jesus. What he asked was "if You are willing"—he absolutely believed that Jesus had the power to heal him, but he was

not sure whether Jesus was willing to heal him. Therefore he said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

If we truly know God, we know God's great power—He can do all things; He speaks and it is done, He commands and it stands fast. It is not a matter of ability, but a matter of whether God is willing. This leper deeply recognized Jesus' great power, and he also knew his own condition was wrong, so he came to ask Jesus whether He was willing to heal him.

**Verse 13: "Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately the leprosy left him."**

Let us carefully look at Jesus' response. Jesus is the Son of God; His words carry power. If He simply said, "Be cleansed," the man should have been cleansed immediately. Yet Jesus reached out His hand and touched him. Generally, people cannot touch those with leprosy. But Jesus reached out and touched him. Jesus deeply understood that leprosy is a physical disease, but what such a person needs even more is the need within—the need for fellowship with God. Jesus' reaching out to touch him was not because He needed to touch him in order to heal the disease; Jesus could have healed him with just one word. Jesus reached out and touched him to say, "I am uniting Myself with you. I know your condition, and in your condition, I am willing to unite with you and help you." Jesus reached out His hand, touched him, and said, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Actually, Luke places this as the first incident right after Peter and John were called, and it carries very deep spiritual meaning. They were going to catch people—how were they to catch people? The entire human race, because of our forefather Adam's sin, has fallen into sin. When people are in sin, God is righteous, God is holy, God is glorious, and God cannot have proper fellowship with people. But through Jesus reaching out His hand and touching him, Jesus was willing to unite with him, thus opening a new and living way. Through Jesus' union, we can return to the presence of the righteous God, the holy God, the glorious God.

Of course, when Jesus said, "I am willing; be cleansed," Jesus was fully aware that when He said "I am willing," this willingness would require Him to pay an enormous price, but this was also the very purpose for which He came to earth to save mankind. Therefore, when Jesus said, "I am willing; be cleansed," immediately the leprosy left his body. We see that Jesus' healing was immediate in effect and complete in effect. And after this man received healing,

**Verse 14: "And He charged him to tell no one, 'But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.'"**

If we say this man's leprosy was due to sin, Jesus united with him and healed him; afterward, He still instructed him to go back and show himself to the priest, to prove according to the law that his body had become clean. Not only that, but according to Leviticus chapter 14, he had to offer the prescribed sacrifices; in this way, it would serve as a testimony to everyone. Before we received Jesus' healing, we were unable to keep the law, and thus we were all shut up under sin by the law. But once we have union with Jesus Christ, just as Jesus instructed this leper, God wants us, through the life that comes from God, to live a life that conforms to the law. And such a holy spiritual life of ours must be able to withstand examination by others; it must have evidence.

This incident is recorded right after Jesus called Peter and John, as if Jesus set an example for His disciples; just as today God also sets an example for us. Aren't there still many of our family members and friends around us who do not yet know God and are still living in isolation, cut off from God? Today God is calling you to proclaim this great joyful message. Through our preaching, those who are separated from God can be reconnected to Jesus Christ and restore fellowship with God.

**Verse 15: "However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities."**

Although Jesus told this leper, "Tell no one," the news of his immediate cleansing from leprosy spread quickly. Once it spread, His fame spread even more, and many people came to hear Jesus preach and hoped that Jesus would heal their diseases. Although this was also part of Jesus' purpose in coming to earth, verse 16 records something very meaningful.

**Verse 16: "So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."**

While on earth, Jesus never accepted glory that came from people. When people brought all kinds of physical needs to Him, very often Jesus chose to withdraw. He deeply knew that healing diseases and casting out demons were only to manifest God's power and glory; what was important was that people would come to follow God. When people, because they heard of miracles, were willing to come to Him, most of them came to watch the excitement or to have their illnesses healed. Jesus would rather withdraw into the wilderness to pray, to see what leading God had for Him, to see whether God could bring a few who truly repented and could follow Him. While on earth, Jesus never sought to do some great work; instead, He wanted to obtain a group of people—a group who could truly leave everything behind to follow Jesus. Jesus also wanted, through this group of ordinary, limited people, to continue His work and expand God's kingdom. This group consists of people whose lives have been transformed.

Let us pray together: Lord, yes, we too were once lepers, fallen into sin and separated from God. By Your grace, our sins are forgiven, and we can restore fellowship with the heavenly Father. Help us to testify of this grace to the friends around us. Just as You obtained them one by one, reaching out to heal them one by one, help us also to learn to testify for You one by one among the friends and relatives around us. We also ask the Lord to show grace, so that they too may soon

come to know You and restore fellowship with You. Bless our lives today, we pray  
in the holy name of Jesus Christ.