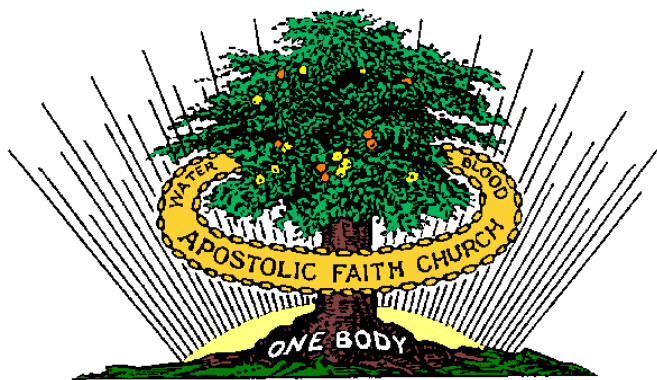


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# Showers of Blessing

No. 5497 26/09/24

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## The Touch

(Continued from Showers No. 5496.)

Let's now return again to the story in Mark. Note, the leper comes to Jesus and Jesus does not run away. Like a mother welcoming her crying, mud-covered child, Jesus allows the leper to approach him. Then what does the leper ask? Does he say, "Heal my disease?" No, he asks, "Make me clean!" We miss a great deal if we think of this request as the equivalent to "Heal my disease." The leper is saying:

- "I want to worship God!"
- "I want to be a part of God's people - in relationship to Him!"
- "I want to touch others, to be in relationship with God's people!"

That is what the leper is asking. Of course he wants physical healing. But becoming clean is much more than becoming healed! The leper falls on his knees before Jesus, and begs him, pleads with him, saying, "If you are willing..." These actions tell us that he knows four important facts:

- He knows he is unworthy. Indeed, he has had this truth drummed into him day after day, hour after hour, for many years. Even looking at himself in the reflection of a pool of water, he sees how despicable he looks. Oh, he knows he is unworthy.
- He knows he can't heal himself or make himself clean. He probably has never even heard of a leper being cured. For years he has lived with no hope at all.
- He knows that Jesus can! Note his statement of faith: "You can make me clean!" How he comes to this knowledge, we don't know. He believes with all his heart that Jesus is the one person in all the world who can cleanse him.
- He knows that Jesus has the right to refuse. "If you are willing..." He makes no demands. He has no basis for a request, other than Christ's mercy. So what does Jesus do? Look again at verse 41: "He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Jesus touches him! When was the last time someone touched this man? When was the last time anyone put his hand on this gross distortion of a human body? What was the result of Jesus' touch? Verse 42: "And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed."

Note there are two results: Jesus heals the disease and he cleanses the leper. These are two separate results, not two ways of saying the same thing. The NIV

misses the point here, by translating the verse "the leprosy left him and he was cured." In the NIV, lets replace 'cleansed' where it says 'cured'. The Greek is perfectly clear on this. And throughout the Bible healing and cleansing are two separate acts. Many of us need healing, but others need to be cleansed! The important thing is to ask Jesus to TOUCH us!

Shackled by a heavy burden,  
'Neath a load of guilt and shame.  
Then the hand of Jesus touched me,  
And now I am no longer the same.

He touched me, Oh He touched me,  
And oh the joy that floods my soul!  
Something happened and now I know,  
He touched me and made me whole.

Lyrics of 'He touched me' by Bill Gaither. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m--ptwd\\_il](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m--ptwd_il))

Article by Rev. Dr. E Kormi, London.

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The following article has been taken from The UCB Word For Today, written by Bob and Debby Gass, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

### **Listen to God's Voice**

'Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it"' (Isaiah 30:21).

One of England's finest preachers decided because of his wife's failing health not to go to America and speak at an important conference. Although he'd purchased his ticket, the ship sailed without him, and J. Stuart Holden missed a golden opportunity in the prime of his preaching career. A devoted husband, he gave himself to caring for his wife and tried not to think of what he was missing on the other side of the Atlantic. The truth is we're too easily disappointed when our plans fall through; too easily discouraged when 'great career opportunities' are missed, and our complaining proves that we don't know God like we say we do. Delay is often the protective hand of our heavenly Father. It certainly was for Holden, who resolved never again to question God's timing. Why? Because the unused ticket he held reserved his passage on the new 'unsinkable' luxury liner - RMS Titanic. There's so much talk in the Church today about self-help, that God's providence and guidance is seldom mentioned. But the bottom line is we don't decide God's plan for our lives, we discover it. Much of the time we don't understand how He leads us, and it's only in retrospect that we see His hand at work. Paul wrote, 'When I go to Spain, I hope to visit you' (see Romans 15:24). But he never made it; instead he ended up in prison. But it was from there that he wrote the Epistles. So here's the question: if you really believe God is directing your steps - why are you questioning, doubting, and complaining?

