

# Finding Help

*Mark 1:40-45*

- I hate having to call a support hotline, don't you?
- It's not the person on the other end of the phone's fault, usually. They have a job to do and they are doing it.
- However, inevitably, you end up talking to the wrong person and having to get transferred time and time again.
- This has been the case with our health insurance this year. I have gone back and forth with different people. Twice, I've ended up on hold for an hour or so, only to find out I was sent to the wrong person to begin with.
- Isn't it refreshing, though, when you finally find the person who can help get your bill straightened out your cable turned on or your classes right?
- There's a feeling of relief that comes when you finally find the person who can help you.
  
- Imagine, though, you weren't just trying to get your cable turned on or a bill straightened out; imagine you had been diagnosed with an incurable disease, and you finally found someone who could help.
- That's the situation we find here in **Mark 1:40-45**.
- We find a man who has been diagnosed with leprosy, which was a broad word used to describe a bunch of different skin diseases in Jesus' day.
- We don't know exactly what he was suffering from, but we do know that it would have made him ceremonially unclean, so he wouldn't have been allowed to go to the Temple and worship with everyone else.

- He couldn't touch anyone, nor were they allowed to touch him because they too would be defiled ceremoniously and possibly even contract the disease he had.
  - It may be that he had what we would call Hansen's disease, which would disfigure and eventually lead to his death.
  - In those days, leprosy was considered incurable.
  - Frustration doesn't even begin to describe how this man would feel; utterly hopeless would capture it better.
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- Here, then, a hopeless case comes to Jesus. As we read this interaction, I want you to pay close attention to the attitude and actions of the leper.
  - They are going to demonstrate for us the essential principles for how we need to approach Christ when we need help, whether that is something in our physical life, our relationships, our battle with sin, our struggle with our salvation, or anything else.
  - Let's read the story together. Start with me in **verse 40**.
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- Can you read this without feeling some emotion?
  - Here was a hopeless man who finally got through to the only one in the world who could help him, yet his request has this sincerity and humility that we have to both admire and emulate.
  - Maybe this morning, you are in a mess...some kind of situation that seems absolutely hopeless.
  - Can I tell you that, whatever it is, you can find help in Christ?
  - In fact, if you walk out of here with nothing else, I would encourage you to remember this: Find your help in Christ first.
  - Let's use this leper's story to discover four steps to finding the help we so desperately need.

- **First, we must...**

## 1) Come.

- Don't overlook the first step in finding the help we need.
- When we need help, we have to come to the right person!
- That's what this leper did.
  
- Remember, he was in a hopeless situation.
- When he went out in public, the Jewish leaders would have required this man to call out "Unclean! Unclean!" as he walked along so no one would touch him.
- Yet, having heard about all Jesus had been doing throughout the region, he was willing to risk it all and come to the one who could help.
  
- Think about the biggest problem you have in your life right now. Is it a sinful attitude you can't seem to fight? A habit you can't break? A relationship you can't seem to fix?
- What's your first response when that problem surfaces? Where do you turn for the help you need?
- Do you pick up the phone and call your friends? Do you look to another book, blog, or podcast? Do you simply drill down deeper and just try harder? Maybe the way you face your hard stuff is simply to try really hard to ignore it or worry yourself sick.
- None of that stuff will work to bring about permanent change if you skip this first step! God may and will use other things to work in your life, but you start by coming to Him with it.
- When you are coming to Him, you are allowing Him to shape your thinking about the issue you face. You are allowing Him to show you just how wrong you have been or just how big He is in relation to what you are facing.

- You can come to Him for help on anything. Come to Him with your sin, come to Him with your failures, come to Him about your health and your relationships and your finances.
- The first step to find help is to come to Jesus!
- Now, before you jump to conclusions, I want to challenge you to listen to this entire message. There is a crucial clarification I will be making towards the end.
- However, whatever your problem, the first thing you have to do is come to the right person.
- **When you come to Jesus for help, you also need to...**

## 2) Ask.

- Imagine this: what if you were this man, and you heard all the stories about how Jesus was healing people.
- You knew He could heal you, and He was in your town.
- Can you imagine walking up to that crowd, seeing Jesus, hearing Him, and never going up to Him to ask for help?
- You would be an idiot to be that close to Him, have the opportunity to ask for His help, and not do it.
- This takes us back to what we looked at last week. Remember how we talked about making prayer a priority?
- We have the privilege and opportunity to ask the God of the universe to help, so why don't we come to Him and ask?
- Maybe you know the facts, but you're ashamed to ask God to help you with this.
- Shouldn't you know better? Shouldn't you be past this by now? Shouldn't you be able to figure it out?
- Stop! You're not in this battle alone. Listen to these incredible verses:

*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15–16, NASB95)*

- Jesus has faced every kind of temptation and struggle you are facing. Not only that, but God already knows!
- In our small groups, we have been talking about being open and honest with God about our sin and our struggles.
- If you're going to find the help you need, you need to be transparent. Open up your heart, and ask God for His help!
- Stop worrying about it; put it in His hand to trust Him:  
*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7, NASB95)*
- That's what this leper was doing. He had the opportunity to come to Jesus physically and ask His help, but we have just as real an opportunity to ask Him to help us when we pray.
- As you ask for His help, make sure you are willing for Him to answer that however He sees fit.
- For instance, He may use doctors and medicine to heal you of the disease you are facing. He may help you develop a budget and the discipline to stick with it so you can move forward financially, and He may use a counselor to help you with the problems in your relationship.
- Ask God what tools He wants you to use, or how He wants to work. Go to Him first and allow Him to direct you to what He

wants you to do. Allow Him to use the wisdom He has given you to know what direction to go.

- For this man, there was no other option. He had no hope of healing. No doctor could fix it, so he came to the only one who could help.
- Did you notice the way he asked?
- The word here is translated "*beseech*", and I doubt you have used that word this week.
- I, however, have seen it in my own life. You see, most of this week, I was home with my two daughters while my wife and son were out of town.
- My daughters are convinced I am a softy, so they will often beseech me to do something for them, allow them to do something, buy something, etc.
- The word has the sense of making "*an urgent appeal, 'I beg of you, please.'*"<sup>1</sup>
- He didn't say, "Hey, Jesus...if you get some time, do you think you could cleanse me?"
- No; he beseeched Him...urgently pleading with Him.
- There's a desperation in his asking.
- How desperate are you for help?
- When you come, you're coming to the God of the universe, and you have the right to plead with Him to help.
- **However, if you noticed, there are two more steps to finding help. Come, ask, and then...**

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. [\*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader\*](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Print.

### 3) Submit.

- Although three of the four Gospels have this story, Mark is the only one who includes this note: *"and falling on his knees before Him..."*
- This completes the picture for us.
- Yes, because of who Jesus is, you have the privilege, right, and expectation of boldly coming before God with your requests.
- However, that is not something to do arrogantly.
- This man clearly realized his dire need and Jesus' authority, so he physically submitted himself to Christ by kneeling.
  
- That's not a bad habit to get into, by the way.
- When we kneel, we are allowing the outward position of our body to match the inward posture of our hearts.
- It is a physical symbol of the fact that we realize God is God and that we are not.
- When we ask for help, we are praying boldly, with assertiveness, but without arrogance or aggression.
- There is a difference
  
- God is not our cosmic vending machine or Santa Claus.
- We cannot demand that He do what we want Him to do; we can come to Him, humbly, and ask sincerely for Him to act.
- **We demonstrate that submission fully not through our physical posture, but also through our fourth step:**

### 4) Surrender.

- Listen to the words the leper uses...*"If You are willing, You can make me clean."*
- He didn't say, "If You're able"—there was no question in this man's mind that Jesus was able to heal Him.

- In the same way, we need to seal and settle in our hearts that God is able to do anything that we could possibly need Him to do.

*“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27, NASB95)*

- When we come to Him for help, we have to recognize that He is absolutely able to do what we need Him to do.
- However, we also have to surrender ourselves to the reality that He may not want to do what we are asking.
- Putting it that way makes God sound lazy or selfish, doesn't it? Like He is sitting on His cosmic couch watching TV--“Eh, I don't feel like it right now.”
- That's not why He doesn't want to—nothing is hard for Him; He spoke the universe into existence!
- Not only that, but He loves you more fiercely than you can ever understand or imagine.
- If God doesn't want to do it, it's because He knows it isn't best.
- When you come to God for help, whether it is about health, finances, relationships, or almost anything, you have to be prepared for Him to say, “No.”
- When He does, realize that means He has a better plan.
- It isn't because God isn't able, doesn't know how to fix it, or just wants to watch you squirm.
- He knows more than you and I could ever begin to believe, so He sees how all this is going to play out.
- In this instance, this fit with the plan and purpose Jesus had. Look again at His response (**verse 41-42**).



- Seeing the man's heart and humble plea, Jesus was moved with compassion.
  - Jesus did the unthinkable—He touched a leper.
  - At the same time, He pronounced the man clean.
  - With a word, Jesus did the impossible and removed every trace of that terrible disease.
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- You know He can do this for you?
  - In fact, He already has.
  - There's a bigger picture here.
  - You see, leprosy is an interesting disease. In the Bible, it is a picture of the corrupting power of our sin.
  - Sin makes us gross and destroys us, just like leprosy. It makes us unclean before God, and we cannot cure ourselves.
  - Jesus came to cleanse us from that.
  - In fact, there is one thing I can promise you that Jesus will help you with: He promises to cleanse you from your sin.
  - If you will come to Him, ask for forgiveness, submit and surrender to His will, He promises He will remove the stain of sin from you:
 

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9, NASB95)*
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- What do you need help with? Why don't you come and lay it at the feet of the only one who can truly help.
  - He may point you to another resource that He wants to use, He may work in a miraculous way, or He may tell you that what you think you need isn't what you really need.
  - However, you will never know unless you come, ask, submit, and surrender.
  - Do you need to do that physically this morning?