

MARK 1:40-45

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

⁴⁰ *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."* ⁴¹ *Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"* ⁴² *Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.* ⁴³ *Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:* ⁴⁴ *"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."* ⁴⁵ *Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.*

Wow, does this ever sound like my life! God has compassion on me, and what thanks do I give him? I disobey him and respond my own way, thank you very much. The leper is a man of faith, (*"If you are willing, you can make me clean"*). Jesus is the compassionate Savior (*Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing"*). That combination adds up to the man being cured. What does not add up according to the Divine arithmetic is the man's disobedience. Specifically having been told to do the right thing as a Jew and be examined by the priests, he allows his own enthusiasm to overwhelm him. His undisciplined exuberance actually places a road block in the access of the people to Jesus. The lesson is that although you cannot thwart the will of God, you can make it much more difficult and painful to achieve. The Hebrews made it to the Promised Land, their disobedience just cost them a generation of difficulty. Where Jesus could go into the towns to minister to the people, because of the healed leper the people had to go out and find Jesus.

Obedying God's will entails not just our words and actions, but also our responses to his blessings. The power behind the witness of the blessing is God's and not the manner in which we embellish it (even to His "glory").

Lord, make me an instrument of your blessing and prevent me from being an obstacle in your path. Through your Spirit give me the discipline to show restraint and allow you to guide my response to your love and mercy. May I always truly glorify you and not elevate myself through what you have done for me. Amen.