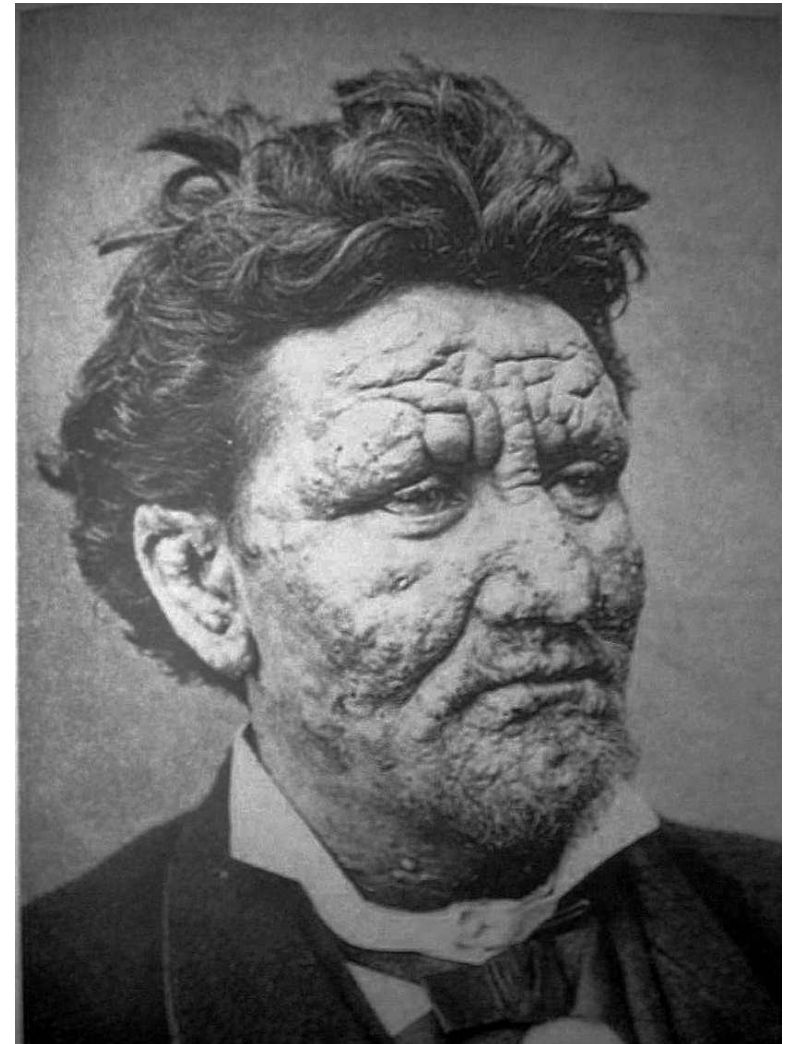


Shaking Hands with a Leper

# Shaking Hands with a Leper

Leprosy - Hansen's Disease from mycobacterium leprae is primarily a granulomatous disease of the peripheral nerves and mucosa of the upper respiratory tract; skin lesions are the primary external sign. Left untreated, leprosy can be progressive, causing permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes. Contrary to folklore, leprosy does not cause body parts to fall off, although they can become numb or diseased as a result of secondary infections; these occur as a result of the body's defenses being compromised by the primary disease. Secondary infections, in turn, can result in tissue loss causing fingers and toes to become shortened and deformed, as cartilage is absorbed into the body. Transmission is unknown; 95% of the population is immune.



# Uncleanness Under The Old Law

- Some people temporarily made unclean by touching the dead - Lev. 15
- Some declared unclean for a chronic condition, skin diseases - Lev. 13
- Unclean person was cast out of the camp; was to cry out, “Unclean! Unclean!” to warn others.
  - Lev. 13:45-46 - “Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’  
46 He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

# Uncleanness Under The Old Law

- Purpose was not evil, but for the health of the community.
  - God was not punishing these people, but protecting the healthy.
  - If a disease has no cure, isolation is the only way to limit its spread.
  - Humiliating and difficult; persons not only have to suffer with the illness, but are viewed as outcasts; must intentionally keep others away from them.

# Uncleanness in the New Testament

- Pharisees and sinners
  - Matt. 9:11-13 - “And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”
  - Luke 7:36-50
  - How would they respond to one who could transmit ritual uncleanness to them?

# Uncleanness in the New Testament

- Jesus had compassion on sinners and unclean persons and healed them.
  - Matt. 11:4-6 - “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’”

# Uncleanness in the New Testament

- Luke 17:12-19 - “Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ 19 And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.’”

# Uncleanness in the New Testament

- Matt. 9:20-22 - “And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. 21 For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ 22 But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well. And the woman was made well from that hour.’”
  - This woman was ritually unclean - Lev. 15:25-28
  - Did Jesus condemn the woman because He became unclean by the contact?



# 21st Century Uncleanness

- There is no literal, ceremonial, or ritual uncleanness today under the new covenant.
  - 1Cor. 8:8 - “But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.”

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- Eph. 2:11-18 - “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- Heb. 9:8-14 - “The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- 10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- However, there are many considered unclean; people who are viewed as social outcasts, who many professed Christians would rather forget than receive.
  - Homeless persons,
  - People suffering from AIDS or other STDs,
  - Persons in poverty,
  - Drug users and alcoholics,
  - Prostitutes,
  - I am certain others could add to the list.

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- What are the possible reactions we can have to such persons?
  - We could just avoid them lest we be “contaminated.”
  - WWPD - What would Pharisees do; they did not associate with sinners lest they become tainted.
  - It *is* easier to avoid them.
  - But is this what Jesus would have us do?

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- We could have compassion, as Jesus did.
  - Did Jesus show approval of sin and extortion by eating with sinners and tax collectors?
  - Matt. 9:10-13 - “Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- We could have compassion, as Jesus did.
  - If we believe that eating with un-baptized sinners shows approval of their sins, then we also believe that Jesus approved of sin.
  - Jesus ate with them, because they were sick and needed a Physician.

# 21st Century Uncleanness

- Have you ever considered what Jesus expects of us before He will admit us to heaven?
  - Matt. 25:31-46
  - Might also include people considered unclean by society and my own brethren.
  - Does this legitimize sin?



# 21st Century Uncleanness

- How can they learn how to avoid sin and to be cleansed from it unless we take the Gospel to them?
  - Rom. 10:13-17 - “For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

# Shaking Hands with a Leper

- Would you shake this man's hand?
- Whatever it takes to facilitate teaching him the Gospel!
- After all, someone shook your hand and taught you the Gospel.
- If you believe yourself better than him, you probably won't see heaven regardless of how often you attend and take the communion.

