

## **If You are Willing: An Unmerited but Conditional Miracle**

Jesus' miracles can be seen as analogies of salvation. While they are about physical healing, we can learn lessons about spiritual healing. That is how I view **Matthew 8:1-4**. This miracle is a great illustration of conditional, yet unmerited salvation.

A leper came to Jesus, bowed down before Him and said, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean" (ESV). Jesus said He was willing, stretched out His hand, and cleansed the man.

Do we not all long for this same cleansing? At some point, we all contacted sin and it has clung to us like a disease, defiling and putrefying us. Unlike this leper, our sin was our choice, but now we would be cleansed and set free. But how?

We have to come to Jesus, or else we cannot be saved from our sins. Consider the leper in our story. Would he have been saved if he merely looked on Jesus from a distance, believing Jesus could heal him? Of course not. He had to do something. He had to come to Jesus. He had to ask. He had to meet a condition.

However, when he came to Jesus, was he somehow special? Had he earned healing? Did Jesus owe him healing? Certainly not. Thus, he approached Jesus saying, "If you will..." The leper understood Jesus was in control of the healing. The leper understood he could not force Jesus' hand and demand healing. The leper understood coming to Jesus to seek healing was not some amazing work that mandated healing. It all depended on Jesus. Was He willing to bestow mercy on this man who had come to Him begging for it?

That is the exact picture of our salvation. We cannot sit among the crowd, hiding from Jesus merely thinking or believing Jesus can save us. We actually have to come to Him. We actually have to act. In **Romans 10:9-10**, Paul said we must believe in Jesus and confess our faith. In **Acts 2:38**, Peter said we must repent and be baptized. We have to meet conditions.

However, when we come to Jesus we must realize salvation only comes if Jesus is willing. Our acting does not require salvation. Believing in Him, confessing Him, repenting of our sins, and submitting in baptism does not place Jesus in our debt. Salvation is by grace (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). We should be grateful that, as with this leper, Jesus tells all those who faithfully and humbly come to Him seeking healing that He is willing. That is how gracious He is.

We must not however take the parallel too far. Because of the pragmatics of Jesus' earthly ministry, He told the leper not to say anything about this healing. We on the other hand should joyfully tell all about our healing so they too might turn to Jesus and hear, "I will; be clean."

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