



Unclean

By Lucy Wall

This poem is inspired by Mark 1: 40-45 which reads:

"Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If you are willing, You can make me clean."

Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction."

When I first read this story of how Jesus heals the leper, I was blown away by the compassion, love and grace shown by Jesus here. The demonstration created an incredible picture in my mind's eye from the noisy, bustling crowds surrounding Him and competing for His attention to the arrival of a man who would have been viewed as repulsive and unclean.

The leper would have broken the ceremonial law just to enter the house to see Jesus and then in turn Jesus broke the Levitical law by touching the leper in order to cleanse him. Rather than chastening him, Jesus allowed His love for the man to overrule the law and seeing his faith, rewarded him openly by making him clean.

This really spoke to my heart on how much Jesus loves His children and how He is faithful to forgive those who truly ask for forgiveness. There have been times when I've felt embarrassed to be asking my Heavenly Father to forgive me for my sins and wondering if He ever finds me repulsive because of my failures. These verses really showed me how Jesus feels on this subject.

They also showed me that our need for the grace of God is timeless and that no matter what we've done, where we've been or what condition we're in, if our hearts are truly repentant then we can always find grace and forgiveness at the feet of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I close my eyes and picture crowds of people all around.
I almost hear their dusty feet trampling the ground;
Competing for attention as they push and reach for Him.
He teaches with authority as thirsty souls flood in.

Within my mind, I stand as I observe this noisy scene.
Then from the crowd a stricken voice declares itself "Unclean!"
With gasps and cries of horror, utter panic fills the room.
A dark, foreboding atmosphere then permeates the gloom.

Where just before the bustling crowds had pushed and fought to be,
The clouds of heavy, hazy dust are now all I can see.
The silence is unnerving as it hangs in stagnant air.
I feel the disapproval in the weight of every stare.



With bodies pinned against the walls, each covering their face,
Attention turns towards one man; a figure of disgrace.
His withered form is wrapped in cloth, his rags are far from fresh.
Offending every stomach, sickly smells of rotting flesh.

I find myself now sharing in their judgement and disgust.
Self righteousness unites us in resentment and distrust.
We stare at him together now with eyes that disapprove
And then I slowly realise that one Man didn't move.

When madness overtook each soul, consuming every heart,
When mayhem had engulfed the room I saw He took no part.
Instead with silent stillness He stood steadfast in His place.
And now just yards between them, their eyes meet face to face.

The tension almost palpable for what will happen now?
Improper interaction their laws will not allow!
The leper should not dare approach the One of high esteem!
Surely Jesus will announce "Depart from me! Unclean!"

What happened next however, violated every law.
The shock was punctuated with the dropping of each jaw.
For right before our very eyes the leper lunged toward
The gentle One referred to as "Good Teacher," "Rabbi," "Lord."

Imploring Him so desperately and falling on his knees:
"If You are willing, dearest Lord, You can cleanse me, please!"
The leper trembling at His feet, his very soul laid bare,
Whose supplication lined with God, for Jesus heard his prayer.

Compassion filled this Saviour's heart and much to our surprise,
He gently touched this putrid form, right before our eyes!
The leper's peeling, pallid skin was deemed untouchable.
But Jesus saw that deep within repentance filled his soul.

Both men had broken through the law to set the leper free.
In disbelief we stared; such love displayed for all to see!
For none before had shown such selfless, sacrificial love.
This Man was different, set apart and sent from God above.



I feel my thoughts retreating now, back to reality
And find my soul's been stirred within from what this verse shows me.
Although my fallen nature means I'm sinful through and through,
As long as I'm repentant, Christ will always cleanse me too!

To think of how each day I find myself down on my knees,
While asking for forgiveness for my flaws through desperate pleas.
It almost feels like blasphemy to ask of One so pure
To touch my sinful body but Christ's shown me He's the cure.

Although I don't have leprosy destroying healthy skin,
I do have faults and sinful ways that sully me within.
So like the leper I must seek forgiveness on my knees.
"Because You're willing gracious God, I ask You cleanse me, please."

"According to Your tender mercies, purify I pray.
According to Your lovingkindness, wash me thoroughly.
Purge, refresh and cleanse me. From my sin please hide Your face.
Create in me a cleaner heart, O Giver of all grace."

"My tongue shall sing Your righteousness, my mouth bring forth Your praise.
Your mercy and compassion see me safely through my days.
A broken and a contrite heart You never will despise.
A spirit humbled at Your feet is pleasing to Your eyes."

"You know that I'm not perfect yet You reach for me in love.
You touch me with Your healing hand and cleanse me from above.
For even though I'm dressed in sin and death should be the price,
Praise be to God for I now wear the borrowed robes of Christ!"

"You've clothed me in Your righteousness and like the leprous man,
You've broken through the law to cleanse and heal me like a balm.
You warned the leper, tell no soul and let this act suffice
But still he spread the word and so You paid a costly price."

"I see the similarity, for at the Cross is seen
The costly price You paid for me so I could be made clean!
This perfect picture of Your love; my Saviour sacrificed.
My awesome King was manifest within the flesh of Christ."



"So now I may approach Your Throne with confidence secured.
You dealt my sin a deathly blow and in Your sight I'm cured.
Does this forgiveness mean that I behave just like before?
O God forbid! And let me praise and love You all the more!"

So when the devil burdens us with guilt and shame too much,
Remember we can seek our King and feel His healing touch.
Though every sin is known to Him and every flaw is seen,
O' child of God arise and hear Christ's blessed words: "You're clean!"

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."