

If thou wilt. The man had no doubt of Jesus' power; he was not sure of His willingness. Perhaps he had heard that Jesus was avoiding healing for the sake of preaching, Mark 1 : 38. *Make me clean*; fit to return to his home and friends.

Vs. 3, 4. *Touched him*; a symbol of His sympathy and willingness to heal. *Be thou clean*; literally, "Be cleansed". This is more than a declaration that the man is cleansed. It is a word of cure. *Tell no man.* Jesus frequently enjoined silence upon persons whom He healed, Mark 3 : 12 ; 5 : 43 ; 7 : 36. Why? He did not wish to make a reputation as a wonder-worker. His mission was spiritual—not merely to heal the body, but to preach the good news of the kingdom. If people regarded Him as only a Physician their demands upon Him for healing would interfere with His supreme calling. *Shew thyself to the priest.* The law required this, Lev., chs. 13 and 14. The priest was the health officer who alone could give a certificate of cure. *Offer the gift.* See Lev. 14 : 10, 21. For a testimony unto them; unto the people that he was actually cured. This bill of health was necessary that the leper might be socially restored.

II. The Centurion's Servant, 5-13.

Vs. 5-7. *A centurion*; an officer, in the Roman army, over a hundred men, the sixtieth part of a legion; this one was probably an officer in the army of Herod Antipas, which was modeled after that of the Romans. The man was a Gentile, although Luke (ch. 7 : 1-10) says he was a friend of the Jewish church. *Servant.* The Greek word may mean either "son" or "servant". Many think that the sick one was the centurion's son. *Lieth.* The sufferer was bedridden. *Grievously tormented.* This was not a usual feature of paralysis. It explains why the victim could not be brought even on a stretcher. Luke says, "ready to die", Luke 7 : 2.

Vs. 8, 9. *Speak the word only.* This shows his remarkable faith. *Under authority.* He speaks very modestly of his position as a military officer. *Go. Come. Do this.* He believes Jesus can order sickness about, as he commands his soldiers and servants.

Vs. 10-12. *Marvelled, and said.* Jesus shared our human emotions, and He could

not conceal His admiration of this signal manifestation of faith. *No, not in Israel*; where faith might naturally be expected. Early in His career, Jesus must have lost hope of bringing back Israel to the rule of Jehovah. *East and west*; the Gentile world. This prophecy was fulfilled in the ministry of Paul. *Sit down*; recline at a feast. The Jews often spoke of the joys of the kingdom of heaven under the image of a banquet. *The children of the kingdom*; the Jews, who thought the Messianic kingdom was theirs by inheritance of birth. V. 13 tells of the complete cure.

III. Peter's Mother-in-law, 14, 15.

Vs. 14, 15. *Peter's house*; evidently a favorite retreat of Jesus. Peter was married, and had a home at Capernaum, according to Mark (ch. 1 : 29), at Bethsaida, according to John (ch. 1 : 44). Some suppose that Bethsaida was the port of Capernaum. *Laid*; literally, "thrown down". Typhus fever was accompanied by sudden and complete prostration. *Left her.* The cure was instantaneous and thorough. These three cures illustrate the sympathy of Jesus.

IV. The Multitudes, 16, 17.

Vs. 16, 17. *Possessed with devils.* Mark (ch. 1 : 21-28) explains how the cure of a demoniac in the synagogue on that Sabbath morning created a great sensation, and gathered a crowd of similar sufferers at Peter's door in the evening. *Esaias the prophet*; a quotation from Isa. 53 : 4. *Himself took. bare.* So perfect was Jesus' sympathy, that He made the sufferings of others His own.

Light from the East

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LEPER—The term leprosy in the Bible covers several diseases, but there is no doubt that Jesus healed that terrible and incurable disease, which has been known for thirty-five centuries. It is caused by a specific bacillus which produces degeneration of the nerves of the skin, but how it enters the system is not yet known. The tubercular form appears in a gradual loss of appetite, power and vivacity, feverish attacks and pains in the limbs and joints. Discolored blotches appear on the skin, lumps form on the cheeks or lips, which soon begin to ulcerate, the fingers and toes are attacked, then the disease eats down