

INTRODUCTION 引言

Humans and animals differ in a lot of ways. Your dogs and cats only eat, sleep, play and go to the bathroom. Perhaps your pet can sing, open doors or do backflips. Those are special talents. But in general, they look happy if their basic needs are met. They do not seem to feel bored or stressful. Humans are complicated in that we have more than physical needs. Psychologist Abraham Maslow published a paper titled “A Theory of Human Motivation” in 1943. He grouped human needs into a few categories. Allow me to modify his classifications to make things simpler. The most basic needs we have are survival needs. We need food and water, and clothes and a shelter. Then we also have emotional needs. We want to feel loved and accepted by family and friends. Beyond those needs, we also want to reach certain goals. We find life meaningful when we can achieve something for ourselves or contribute to mankind. The main character in our story today had some needs too. Jesus met the man’s deepest need. In doing so, Jesus touches the untouchable because He wants to reach the unreachable.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Recognize the Problems 正視問題 (v. 12-13)

A man with leprosy came to Jesus for help. He recognized his problems. Leprosy, or Hansen’s disease, is caused by bacterial infection. It can damage skin and even nerves. The word “leprosy” in the Bible is actually a general term for various skin diseases. Some are contagious, others are not. The problems might not be curable several thousand years ago. At that time, people with leprosy had to be quarantined. Items got in contact with a leper were either washed, burned or thrown away. Patients would feel shameful of how their skin looks like. It is like some teenagers may want to stay home if they have an outburst of pimples. Similarly, leprosy affects people’s social life. Leviticus 13:45 says lepers must warn others in public: **“The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’”** The closest thing we can think of is COVID-19. Some people get nervous when they hear others nearby sneeze or cough. Imagine how you feel if you have to yell aloud “COVID! COVID!” when you are infected? People around you will immediately spread out like the water in the Red Sea. The medical problem will create a relational barrier. Leprosy does not only make people sick. It also makes them ritually unclean. They could not participate in worship. They feel alienated from people and even abandoned by God. In verse 12, this desperate man went to see Jesus: **... And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”** He showed his sincerity and humility by bowing down before the Lord. This

patient taught us the proper attitude when we pray to God. We honor Him as our Master. Also, we should not cast any doubt on God's power. The only factor we are uncertain is His will. God can do anything if only He is willing. We must be ready to accept His responses with obedience. That is why Jesus teaches us to pray "Father, Your will be done." Prayer should reflect our trust in God. We should plead to God like the man did to Jesus. We affirm that God is our only help. In the case of this leper, he received mercy from Jesus. Look at verse 13: **And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him.** His sickness was gone instantly. Jesus performed the miracle by touching the man. Jesus does not need any physical contact to release His power. He cast out demons and calmed the stormy sea using voice commands. By touching the leper, Jesus showed compassion and acceptance. The Law requires the patient to keep a distance from others. However, Jesus approached the man. Jesus did not worry about getting infected or becoming unclean. Making personal contact expresses encouragement. A warm handshake, a pat on the shoulder or a hug conveys love and care. Instead of praying for someone in need, you can pray by laying a hand on the person. Sending a hand-written note feels more personal than sending a text message. Donating money to a charity is a nice thing. But serving needy people face-to-face with your hands tell them how much you truly care.

2. Reconcile the Patient 使人和好 (v. 14-16)

The leper recognized his problems. He wanted to be clean. In healing a disease, Jesus showed that He had the power to reconcile the patient with God. After Jesus cured the man, He asked him to do a few things. Jesus says in verse 14: **And he charged him to tell no one, but "Go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them."** First, the man had to let a priest confirm that he no longer had leprosy. Second, he had to present sacrifices. It was a week-long process based on Leviticus 14. A recovered leper brought two birds to a priest. One would be killed, the other one would be released after dipping it into the blood of the slain bird. The person would be sprinkled seven times with the same blood. Eight days later, animal sacrifices would be made. They were either two lambs, or one lamb plus a bird if the person was poor. Afterward, the person would be declared clean and could resume normal life. That person's sin was atoned. God sees the disease as an offense because sickness makes people imperfect. Of course, not all diseases are the direct effect of sins. We live in a world full of germs. Next time when you have a cold, you may take some medicine instead of making a confession to God. Jesus asked the man to follow the instructions as a proof. It was a testimony of Jesus' healing power. More than likely, the priest would ask the man how he got well. Then he testified that a man called Jesus laid hand on him and cured him. However, Jesus told the man not to tell anyone else about the incident. Jesus hoped that the miracle would not create any fanfare. However, the man did the exact opposite. Look at verses 15-16: **15 But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.** Everybody went to Jesus as a

result. So much so that Jesus had to retreat to remote areas to pray. We wonder why Jesus did not use His power to help more people. He might as well set a booth everywhere He went with a sign that reads: “Got problems? Call 1-800-GOJESUS!” Jesus did not heal sicknesses or cast out demons in every town. He did not want people to see Him as a miracle performer only. He came as a gospel messenger. He did not come to provide solutions to people’s problems on the outside. He gives us a solution to our sin problem on the inside. We are separated from God due to our sins. Only Jesus has the power to reconcile us with God. He grants us salvation, not services. Christian organizations over the world provide great help to needy people. They build hospitals and schools. They give food and clothing. Those are all noble causes. How do people react after their needs are met? Most of them never return until they need help again. We will only be like treating people’s leprosy on the skin if we do not deal with their sins underneath. As a church, we welcome everyone who comes through our doors. Perhaps they are seeking help with their financial, emotional, medical or relational problems. We mobilize manpower and resources, or we refer them to outside experts and agencies. However, we will not be faithful to God’s calling if we do not care about their spiritual problem. Everyone is a sinner, and everyone needs Jesus. Solving people’s temporary problems are opportunities to introduce them to the Great Physician. We should be Jesus’ representatives in the world and help reconcile people to Him.

CONCLUSION 結論

Only Jesus can make us clean. He touches the untouchable because He wants to reach the unreachable. Jesus has the grace to meet our deepest need. I brought up Abraham Maslow’s study at the beginning. I intentionally omitted the highest form of need Maslow proposed. It is a transcendental need. We are created in God’s image. Therefore, only things eternal can give us an everlasting joy. Success, money, materials and relationship cannot give us a long-term happiness. It will be like drinking salty water to quench our thirst. Only God can satisfy our longing for a relationship with Him. The Bible says we are lost in sin when we do not know God. We are like homeless people wandering around. We are sinful but God is sinless. Therefore, we can never reach God on our own effort. Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to call us back home. Jesus reaches out to us because He wants to touch our hearts. He shows no concern that He will be contaminated by our sins. He even took our sins to the cross. To those who do not know Jesus, He is welcoming you now. In order to be reconciled with God, first you must admit that you are a sinner. Jesus once said that only sick people will consult a doctor. You will not look for a Savior if you do not realize that you are a sinner. Second, you must believe that Jesus is the only true God. He died for your sins. Third, you must commit your life to Jesus. You accept Him as your Savior and Lord. From now on, He is the Boss of your life. You listen to Him and follow Him. If you have never made this decision before, would you like to receive Jesus today? On that day, Jesus healed the leper. Jesus can save your soul today.

Luke 路加福音 5:12-16

INTRODUCTION 引言

人類和動物在許多方面都不一樣。你的狗和貓只會吃飯、睡覺、玩耍和上廁所。也許你的寵物能夠唱歌、開門或翻筋斗。那些都是特殊人才。但一般來說，動物會覺得高興如果牠們的基本需要得到滿足。牠們似乎不會感到無聊或有壓力。人類卻是比較複雜的，因為我們不只是有身體上的需要。心理學家亞伯拉罕·馬斯洛 (Abraham Maslow) 於 1943 年發表了一篇題為《人類動機理論》的文章。他將人的需要分為幾類。請允許我把他的分類修改並簡化。我們最基本有生存的需要。我們需要食物和水、衣服和住處。另外，我們也有情感上的需要。我們希望感受到家人和朋友的愛和接納。除了這些需要之外，我們還希望達到某些目標。當我們能為自己取得一些成就或為人類做出貢獻時，我們就會覺得生命有意義。我們故事中的主角也有一些需要。耶穌滿足了那個人最深層的需要。藉此，耶穌觸摸了不可觸摸的人，因為祂想要靠近無法靠近的人。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Recognize the Problems 正視問題 (v. 12-13)

一個患有大痲瘋的人來尋求耶穌的幫助。他正視自己的問題。痲瘋病或漢森氏病 (Hansen's disease) 是由細菌感染引起的。它會損害皮膚甚至神經。聖經中的「大痲瘋」可以指各種不同的皮膚病。有些會傳染給別人，有些卻不會。這些疾病在幾千年前可能是無法醫治的。當時，痲瘋病患者必須被隔離。與痲瘋病人接觸過的物品不是被清洗、焚燒，就是被丟掉。患者為自己的皮膚狀況感到難堪。就像有些青少年如果長了青春痘，可能就想留在家中。同樣，大痲瘋影響人們的社交生活。利未記 13:45 說，大痲瘋病人必須在公共場合警告其他人：「身上有長大痲瘋災病的，他的衣服要撕裂，也要蓬頭散髮，蒙著上唇，喊叫說：『不潔淨了！不潔淨了！』」我們能想到最接近的情形就是新冠病毒。有些人在聽到附近的人打噴嚏或咳嗽時會感到緊張。想像一下，如果你被感染必須大聲喊：「新冠病毒！新冠病毒！」你會有何感受？周圍的人可能就會像紅海的水一樣立刻分開。疾病的問題造成了關係的障礙。大痲瘋病不僅讓人生病，它也會使人在禮儀上不潔淨。病人不能參與敬拜。他們感到與人疏遠，甚至被神厭棄。在第 12 節中，這個絕望的人去見耶穌：...看見他，就俯伏在地，求他說：「主若肯，必能叫我潔淨了。」他在主面前下拜，表現出他的真誠和謙卑。

這位病人告訴我們向神禱告時應有的態度。我們尊崇祂為我們的主。此外，我們不應該對神的能力有任何懷疑。我們唯一不確定的是祂的旨意。只要神願意，祂就能成就任何事情。我們也必須準備好順服神的回應。這就是為什麼耶穌教導我們禱告「天父啊，願祢的旨意成就」。禱告應該反映出我們對神的信靠。我們應該學習這個人向耶穌懇求的態度向神祈求。我們確信神是我們唯一的幫助。結果，這個大麻瘋病人得到了耶穌的憐憫。請看第 13 節：**耶穌伸手摸他，說：「我肯，你潔淨了吧！」大麻瘋立刻就離了他的身。**耶穌行神蹟時觸摸那個人。耶穌不需要任何身體接觸來釋放祂的能力。祂用語音趕鬼並平靜風浪。透過觸摸那個大麻瘋病人，耶穌表達了同情和接納。律法要求病患者與他人保持距離。然而，耶穌靠近那個人。耶穌並不擔心被感染或變得不潔淨。個人接觸能表達鼓勵。熱情的握手、拍拍肩膀或擁抱傳達了愛和關懷。你可以陪伴有需要的人禱告，你也可以考慮接手在那個人身上為他禱告。寄一張手寫的卡片比發簡訊讓人覺得更溫暖。捐款給慈善機構是件好事。但親自面對面地服事有需要的人更能夠表達你有多關心他們。

2. Reconcile the Patient 使人和好 (v. 14-16)

那位大麻瘋病人正視自己的問題。他渴望得到潔淨。藉著醫治疾病，耶穌顯明祂有能力使人與神和好。耶穌醫治了那個人之後，祂要求他做一些事情。耶穌在第 14 節說：...**「你切不可告訴人，只要去把身體給祭司察看，又要為你得了潔淨，照摩西所吩咐的獻上禮物，對眾人作證據。」**首先，他必須讓祭司確認他沒有大麻瘋。其次，他必須獻祭。根據利未記第 14 章，這是一個為期一週的過程。一位康復的大麻瘋病人拿兩隻鳥到祭司那裡。一隻會被宰掉，另一隻會在浸入被殺的鳥的血液後被放生。祭司會用同樣的血灑在那個人身上七次。八天後，將進行動物獻祭。他要提供兩隻羔羊。如果他負擔不起的話，他可以獻一隻羔羊加一隻鳥。之後，他將被宣布為潔淨並可以恢復正常生活。如此，他的罪就被贖了。神看疾病是一種冒犯，因為疾病使人變得不完全。當然，並非所有的疾病都是罪的直接後果。我們生活在一個充滿細菌的世界。下次感冒的時候，你可以吃點藥，而不是向神認罪。耶穌要求那人遵守指示作為證據。這是對耶穌醫治大能的見證。祭司很可能會問那個人是怎麼康復的。然後他便說一個名叫耶穌的人接手在他身上治好了他。然而，耶穌告訴那個人不要把這件事告訴其他人。耶穌不希望這個神蹟會引起轟動。然而，那個人卻做了完全相反的事。請看第 15 至 16 節：**15 但耶穌的名聲越發傳揚出去。有極多的人聚集來聽道，也指望醫治他們的病。16 耶穌卻退到曠野去禱告。**結果所有人都跑去找耶穌，以至於耶穌必須退到偏僻的地方去禱告。我們會問為何耶穌不使用祂的超能力幫助更多的人。祂應該在所到之處設立一個攤位，上面掛著招牌，上面寫著：「有困難嗎？請打 1-800-GOJESUS！」耶穌並沒有在每個城鎮醫病或

趕鬼。祂不想讓人們認為祂只是一個行神蹟的人。祂來是要作一個福音使者。祂不是來為了解決人們外在的問題。祂乃是要解決我們裡面的罪。由於我們的罪，我們與神隔離。唯有耶穌有能力使我們與神和好。祂拯救我們，而不是提供服務。世界各地的基督徒機構為有需要的人提供許多幫助。他們蓋醫院和學校。他們分發食物和衣服。這些都是很好的貢獻。人們的需要得到滿足後會有何反應？大多數的人會等到下一次有需要時才會回來。如果我們不處理他們內心的罪，我們就如同只是醫治他們表面的大痲瘋。作為一個教會，我們歡迎任何人進來。也許他們正在尋求幫助，比如財務、情感、疾病或關係上的問題。我們動員人力和資源，或介紹外面的專家和機構給他們。然而，如果我們不關心他們屬靈的問題，我們就沒有忠心於神的呼召。每個人都是罪人，每個人都需要耶穌。解決人們暫時的問題，就是把他們介紹給天上的大醫生的機會。我們應該成為耶穌在世上的代表，幫助人們與祂和好。

CONCLUSION 結論

唯有耶穌才能使我們得潔淨。祂觸摸了不可觸摸的人，因為祂想要靠近無法靠近的人。耶穌有恩典滿足我們最深層的需要。我一開始時提到了亞伯拉罕·馬斯洛的研究。我故意忽略了馬斯洛提出人最高的需要。那是超然的需要。我們是按照神的形象被創造的。因此，只有永恆的事物才能帶給我們持久的喜樂。成就、金錢、物質和關係不能給予我們長久的快樂。這就像喝海水想要解渴一樣。唯有神才能滿足我們與祂建立關係的渴望。聖經說，當我們不認識神之時，我們是在罪中迷失。我們就像無家可歸的人，到處流浪。我們有罪，但神是無罪的。因此，我們無法靠自己的努力到神那裡。我們的天父如此愛我們，因此祂差派祂的兒子耶穌基督來呼召我們回家。耶穌靠近我們，因為祂想要觸摸我們的心。祂不擔心會被我們的罪所污染。祂甚至把我們的罪帶到十字架上。如果你不認識耶穌，祂正在歡迎你。為了與神和好，你首先必須承認自己是個罪人。耶穌曾經說過，只有病人才會去找醫生。如果你沒有意識到自己是個罪人，你就不會尋找救主。第二，你必須相信耶穌是獨一的真神。祂為你的罪而死。第三，你必須將自己委身予耶穌。你要接受祂成為你的救主和生命的主。從今天起，祂就是你生命的老闆。你聽從祂並跟隨祂。如果你從來沒有做過這個決定，你願意接受耶穌嗎？那一天，耶穌醫治了一個大痲瘋病人。耶穌今天也能拯救你的靈魂。