

1, First let us see leprosy from medical perspective in the Bible

The first reading from the book of Moses provides us a very realistic, medical description of leprosy, mentioning almost all the signs of the illness. It might have been really frightening at that age to realize these signs on someone, since there were no medicines against leprosy. Therefore we might understand the defensive attitude of Moses and Aaron and of contemporary society fighting against this dangerous disease. They defend themselves by separating lepers from healthy people. They want to keep the illness as well as infected people out of society. Separation seems to be best solution to the problem of dangerous infection since there are no medicines curing leprosy in those days. The inability of solving the problem, forced the people of Israel to separate the problem.

A little sign of hope still remains for the lepers: we also see if somebody recovered by chance. People of Israel welcomed that person again in society if the priests – Aaron and his sons – officially justified their recovery. The law of separation in case of leprosy was an absolutely strict law, but subjective solutions in case of incredible recoveries were also allowed. We cannot help you and heal you so you must keep out of society but if God's mercy is upon you, and you are not leper any more, and the priests officially justify it, we welcome you! You can come back to our circles!

2, Let us see leprosy from a different, social perspective

Even today a lot of people are separated from society for different reasons. What to do with them?

You might see homeless people even in the streets of Szeged. We listen to the news every day, that there are a lot of immigrants hoping to find better life in the European Union - coming from neighboring countries. Also there are different habits of people even subcultures, or illnesses that we would like to separate from our so called normal society, our own circles.

Of course we should wear proper clothes if we are doctors or social workers, when we go directly close someone infected with TBC, or Ebola or Aids, - because we do not want to spread their illnesses further but I think it is more important to let them feel that we do not despise them, we do not want to leave them alone with their problems. We are to cure them, we try to give our consolation and solidarity to them even if we cannot solve all of their problems.

All over the world, even in Hungary, alcoholism, drug addiction, computer addiction is a great problem. Are we brave enough to stay close to these people? It would be too easy to exclude them from our thoughts or society- saying we do not really want them to disturb our lives. I think we still have responsibility towards them especially if we are to follow Christ. Staying close to these people- sometimes our own family members – is the clue to a better, world with Christ has proposed to us.

Showing solidarity to the lepers of our days - does not mean that I want to drink with these people or share their addiction. Instead I take his or her life seriously, trying to find proper

medical or spiritual help. It is naivety to think that we can help an addictive person alone. What can I do for him then? First I have to ask: do you need help? I believe God can cure other people through me. That's what doctors do every day, that is what Christ does every day. Do you want to be well again? Jesus asks us about this all the time. Let us try to follow him.

This is the second step: if the person says yes, we try to support him till the end of our capacities. We try to find him the best place where he can get professional treatment to his addiction and pray for him everyday asking for God's support in his case. God is omnipotent. He can help him even if we cannot.

3, Leprosy still exist in our spiritual life. Nationality, religion, colour of skin... Have you - dear brothers and sisters - ever experienced any kind of segregation when you were kept out of any community because of who you are? In what you believe? From where you have come from? Cruel experience – it feels like you were the leper. But if you have experienced even once in your life, give thanks to the Lord and remember this experience! It might be easier for you to turn towards people neglected and separated and offer your solidarity to them. This should be our fight together with Christ against separation.

4, Since Jesus'- answer to separation is this: he goes close to the leper and cures him. God himself touches the man segregated and denied by others, in Christ. God says: I am not afraid of your loneliness your worthlessness, your fears, not even your sins. I do not care about what other people say. I would like to heal and above all: love you. I do not leave you alone any more.

If we look at Jesus we see that he felt sorry for the leper - he had sorrow and empathy in his heart - through his empathy he really met this man. He reached his arm and touched the man. He did not look only at the problem itself, but he met the person himself heart to heart. He did not turn away, he went close to the leper and healed him by the power of God.

The leper needs to be cured even nowadays. I have to realize his or her needs and offer him my support. God gives his blessing to our cooperation of we ask him, and this is how the order of creation is restored. Do not forget about God's grace. God Created a perfect world, and perfect human beings. Physical, mental, spiritual illnesses do not belong to God's original plan misunderstood and neglected by men. But God' grace has always been with us, intending to recreate this original plan through Christ. Healing comes from the cooperation of the "leper" intending to be healed, the supporter brave enough to get close and touch the person in need and above all God's omnipotent, and tender grace blessing their cooperation. A beautiful triangular cooperation, worth to take part in. This is our invitation to re-create the original order of Creation through the love of Christ.

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