



## LIKE AN OUTCAST

October 2018

*And a leper came to him beseeching him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be clean."*

Mark 1:40-41 (RSV)

At the time Jesus lived, touching an outcast with contagious leprosy was unthinkable. Imagine how it must have felt to be such a person, banned from living with the friends and family he

knew and loved. When the leper in this story asked Jesus if he was willing to heal him, Jesus responded with compassion and healed him.

Consider the great love Jesus must have felt for this “untouchable,” to willingly reach out to him and touch him! It’s one thing to have compassion and heal a lame man or a blind man, but to lay hands on a person with ugly sores all over his body?

How great the love of Jesus!

Jesus came close to the leper and cared for him like the real person he was—a person deserving a normal life, a person deserving love.

We who live with mental illness are often treated like lepers were years ago. Too often we are shunned, not accepted like others, not considered someone to get close to. How would it have felt to have Jesus show us the kind of respect we’ve been missing for so long?

But he does—even now.

With tenderness he cares for us and reaches out, like he did to the leper. He offers to heal the pain we have inside. And he can do that in a way no one else can.

Open yourself to his tender touch.

marja

An inspiring thought:

*A woman in a leprosy center in India is quoted saying, "I want to praise God that I am a leper because it was through my leprosy that I came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior. And I would rather be a leper who knows Christ than be completely whole and a stranger to His grace."*