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~ **The Leper and the Paralyzed Man** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. For the leper read Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, and Luke 5:12-16. For the paralyzed man read Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; and Luke 5:17-26. In this study, for the leper we are providing the Mark passage and for the paralyzed man study we are providing the Luke study.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story from the New American Standard Bible and from the Easy Read Version

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The Leper

Mark 1:40-45 - NASB	Mark 1:40-45 - New Living Translation
<p>⁴⁰ And a leper *came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and *said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. ⁴³ And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, ⁴⁴ and He *said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.</p>	<p>⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said. ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" ⁴² Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. ⁴³ Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning: ⁴⁴ "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed." ⁴⁵ But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone what had happened. As a result, large crowds soon surrounded Jesus, and he couldn't publicly enter a town anywhere. He had to stay out in the secluded places, but people from everywhere kept coming to him.</p>

The Paralyzed Man

Luke 5:17-26 - NASB	Luke 5:17-26 - Easy-to-Read Version
<p>One day He was teaching; and there were <i>some</i> Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting <i>there</i>, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and <i>from</i> Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was <i>present</i> for Him to perform healing. ¹⁸ And <i>some</i> men <i>were</i> carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. ¹⁹ But not finding any <i>way</i> to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on</p>	<p>¹⁷ One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus.</p> <p>¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to</p>

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<p>the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹ The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" ²² But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" ²⁴ But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." ²⁵ Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. ²⁶ They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."</p>	<p>Jesus, ¹⁹ but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."</p> <p>²¹ But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, "Who does he think he is? That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!" ²² Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? ²³ Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'?" ²⁴ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" ²⁵ And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God, exclaiming, "We have seen amazing things today!"</p>
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The following insights from A Social Science Commentary on the New Testament by Bruce J. Malina

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

The Leper

- Jewish tradition said lepers were to wear torn clothes, let their hair hang loose, and cry out "unclean, unclean."
- They were to live alone, outside the city although they could beg at the city gates during the day.
- Touching a diseased person rendered one unclean until evening.
- Purity systems drew boundaries to protect societies and to provide a norm for what was allowed and not allowed. Those people, activities, places, and food within the boundaries were clean and those outside were unclean. One unclean activity was to touch leprous people.
- Leviticus 14 gave the procedure for showing self to a priest, giving an offering, and being declared clean. But Jesus already declared him clean.

The Paralyzed Man

- The Mediterranean world distinguished between disease and illness. Disease was a biomedical condition. Illness was the disruption of social networks because of the disease. Illnesses cut people off from the groups. The kingdom of God comes to restore

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the outcasts to the people of God. Thus, Jesus says to him, “Friend, my son, take courage.” By calling him my son/child – he is drawing him into his social sphere.

- “Since the introspective, guilt-oriented outlook of industrialized societies did not exist in the first-century Med world, it is unlikely that forgiveness meant psychological healing. Instead, forgiveness by God meant being divinely restored to one’s position and therefore being freed from fear of loss at the hands of God. Forgiveness by others meant restoration to the community. Given the anti-introspective attitude of Med people, “conscience” was not so much an interior voice of accusation as an external one – what the neighbors said.”
- Jesus does not forgive sins; rather, he declares that God forgives the paralytic’s sin. This blasphemy in the judgment of “some of the scribes,” since it is insulting to God to declare that God forgives a person; only God can make such a declaration. After all, a sin was behavior that shamed or dishonored God. As any honorable person, God was expected to wreak satisfaction and thus maintain the divine honor. To forgive some shameful and disgracing behavior is to renounce satisfaction. Jesus’ declaration here meant God would not seek satisfaction in the case of the paralytic.”
- Mark uses the word for a mat or pallet that could be rolled up during the day of a one-room house. This was the type of sleeping accommodation for a common person. It could also be used on a trip and one’s possessions would be placed in the roll-up mat.
- Jesus tells him to go home. He is now a full member of the village and community.
- It was easier in that society to restore him physically than it was to restore him socially. Jesus restores him socially and then restores him physically.

3. Answer these reflective questions.

The leper and the paralyzed man were both in great need but their needs in addition to healing were different. Which of the two do you think was in worse shape and why?

Jesus reached out and touched the leper. What do you think this meant to the leper to be touched by Jesus? Who do you know needs the physical and emotional touch of others?

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Jesus told the leper not to tell anyone what had happened to him, yet the leper told everyone. Why do you think the leper did this and do you think Jesus was upset with him?

In what ways did the paralyzed man and his friends show faith? What does this say about the kind of faith Jesus is looking for?

Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man. Read Daniel 7 and record what you learn about the Son of Man from this passage.

Does your faith measure up to the faith of the paralyzed man and his friends? Why or why not? Do you have someone that you need to bring to the feet of Jesus?
