



THE MISSION

LOVE

LIKE JESUS

LIVE

LIKE JESUS

LEAD

LIKE JESUS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cleansed

Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16

1. Begin by reading **Mark 1:40-45**, 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 clean!" ⁴² Immediately, leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere. What grabs your attention in this passage?

How does this story relate to your life? What might God be saying to you through this story?

2. Reread verse 40, please, **Mark 1:40 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.** The man in this story was forced to live as a social outcast. He could not hold a job or be with his family. Leprosy had taken everything from him. There is no cure. He has only one hope, Jesus. Just like the leper, we have desperate needs. We too, should run to Jesus with all of our needs. Do you see Jesus as the primary solution to the issues in your life and run to Him, or do you tend to go to Jesus as a last resort? Tell a story of a time when you took an issue to Jesus, and it was resolved quickly, or tell a story of a time you went to Jesus last instead of first.

3. Please reread verses 41 and 42; **Mark 1:41-42 Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately, the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.** Here we see the compassion and love of Christ. We are also called to see people in need and respond with love and compassion; how is that going for you in this season of your life?

The leper was ceremonially unclean and anyone who touched him also became unclean. So, when Jesus touched the leper, he was cleansed, but Jesus became unclean. Jesus took his place. Jesus took our place, too. **2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** Reflecting on the Gospel, Tim Keller said, **"The Gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time, we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."** Share your thoughts and feelings as you see the Gospel play out in this story.

Tell the story of the first time you fully accepted that Jesus had died in your place and forgiven your sin. What did you experience at that moment?

4. At this point, the story takes a turn, ⁴³**Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them."** Jesus leads with unapologetically clear communication. The strong warning indicates Jesus spoke with emotion, raising his voice. I am drawn to this phrase **"...as a testimony to them."** Jesus wants the priest to know God's power is at work. He is sending this man to give his testimony. When you talk about Jesus, do you use unapologetically clear communication? Why or why not? Has God ever sent you to tell your story to someone? How did you respond? How did they respond?

5. Let's finish by reading verse 45. ⁴⁵**Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.** The saddest part of this story is, instead of obeying Jesus, he did what felt right to him. It's as if he says, "I will gladly take what you offer Jesus, but I won't give back to you the obedience you desire." His actions say, "I will accept life from you, Jesus, but I will not live the life you call me to live." So many people today live this same way. Has there ever been a time in your life when you lived just like the man in this story, accepting blessings from Jesus but not giving him the obedience he deserves?

The result was that Jesus could no longer enter larger towns; his ministry suffered. Any time someone claims to live in Christ but does not live in obedience to him, their ministry and testimony suffers. How does the end of this story motivate you? Do you need to make specific changes to avoid living like the leper in this story?