



## Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

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### Week 7: Jesus Heals a Leper (5:12-16)

<sup>12</sup> In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. “Lord,” he said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.”

<sup>13</sup> Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” And instantly the leprosy disappeared. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, “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.”

<sup>15</sup> But despite Jesus’ instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. (Luke 5:12–16 NLT-SE)

### The Text:

- <sup>12</sup> **In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. “Lord,” he said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.”**
- **Jesus came upon a man with advanced leprosy.** Maybe we should take a brief look at what leprosy is and how it might have affected this man’s life...
- **The term “leprosy”** (including leper, lepers, leprosy, leprous) **occurs 68 times in the Bible**—55 times in the Old Testament and 13 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the instances of leprosy most likely meant a variety of infectious skin diseases, and even mold and mildew on clothing and walls. The precise meaning of the leprosy in both the Old and New Testaments is still in dispute, but it probably includes the modern Hansen’s disease and infectious skin diseases.
- For the Hebrews, leprosy was a dreaded condition which **caused its victims to be considered ceremonially unclean—that is, unfit to worship God.** Anyone who came in contact with a leper was also considered unclean. Therefore, lepers were isolated from the rest of the community so that the members of the community could maintain their status as worshipers. Other physical disorders or the flow of certain bodily fluids also rendered one unclean (Lev. 12:1 — 14:32; 15:1-33). Even houses and garments could have “leprosy” and be considered unclean (Lev. 14:33-57).

- **For many centuries, leprosy was considered a curse of God, often associated with sin.** It did not kill, but neither did it seem to end. Instead, it lingered for years, causing the tissues to degenerate and deforming the body.
- **References to leprosy have a different emphasis in the New Testament.** They stress **God's desire to heal.** Jesus freely touched people with leprosy. While people with leprosy traditionally suffered banishment from family and neighbors, Jesus broke from the tradition. He treated lepers with compassion, touching and healing them.
- Although we can't know all the reasons that God allows disease into our lives, **biblical leprosy is a powerful symbol reminding us of sin's spread and its horrible consequences.** Like leprosy, sin starts out small but can then spread, leading to other sins and causing great damage to our relationship with God and others.
- **This man's response to Jesus is significant.** When he saw Jesus he fell to the ground, and begged Jesus to heal him. His specific words were, **"if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."**
- **What faith!** He had never read about Jesus, been taught about him, or come face to face with him before. He may have heard stories about the miraculous things Jesus had been doing in and around Galilee, but his faith was not coming from *what* he knew, but *who* he saw!
- **<sup>13</sup> Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "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."**
  - According to the Mosaic Law, **a person who was leprous was never touched by anyone who was ceremonially clean.** When someone clean touched something unclean, the clean became unclean. Luke, in describing Jesus' actions, showed that Jesus was the Source of ceremonial cleansing.
  - **Jesus was the Source of cleansing** for that leper, in the same way he would be the Source of ceremonial cleansing for the nation, and ultimately for all mankind!
  - This theme is carried on into the next healing (vv. 17-26) and into the call of Levi (vv. 27-39). **At the touch of Jesus,** immediately the leprosy left him. The immediacy of the healing brings to mind 4:35 and 4:39.
- **<sup>15</sup> But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. (Luke 5:12-16 NLT-SE)**
  - **Healing from leprosy was rare.** The Scriptures record only **Miriam** (Num. 12) and **Naaman** (2 Kings 5) as having been healed of leprosy (cf. Moses; Ex. 4:6-7). So, it would have been extremely unusual for a person to present himself before the priest and offer the sacrifices for cleansing. Instructions for an offering for cleansing from leprosy are given in Leviticus 14:1-32.
  - The story illustrates how **Jesus healed people in response to faith** and it shows how his reputation was growing, both as a teacher and as a healer. The fact that a man would go to the priest claiming healing from leprosy would alert the religious leaders that something new was unfolding in Israel. Why did Jesus command him not to tell anyone?

- **The Main Points:**

- **The man with leprosy had faith to believe Jesus could heal him.** Our faith is based upon the Word of God and the teaching we receive from the Holy Spirit. But why would people like this man have faith? Where would it come from?
- **Jesus is willing to heal.** In the Message version it says, "If you want to, you can cleanse me." Jesus put out his hand, touched him, and said, "I want to. Be clean." (Luke 5:12–13 MESSAGE)
- **Jesus wanted to send a message to the priests.** The message was very clear...He could and would set people free from sin!
- **Jesus was revealing something very important...beyond simply healing a man of leprosy.** Jesus was not just interested in demonstrating his power to attract crowds, but was much more interested in revealing the heart of the Father to a people who knew his law, but didn't necessarily know him.
- **Being in the presence of the Father was life to Jesus.** The more the crowds pressed in, the more Jesus found a sanctuary in the presence of his Father.

- **What would you have learned, had you been with Jesus that day? Here are four things that seem to stand out...**

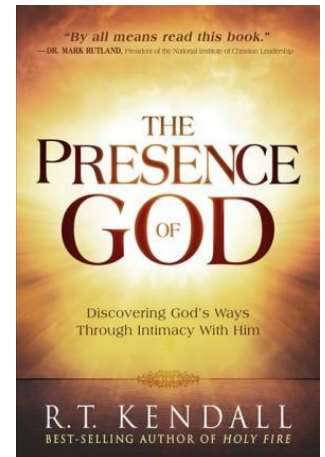
- When it comes to healing, **our faith is in God and our belief that He is good!**
- **Leprosy was a metaphor for sin.** The most painful consequence of sin is separation, from God and from others.
- **One touch from Jesus** can change everything!
- **"Timing is everything" with Jesus.** He wasn't just obedient to the Father's leading, but paid close attention to the timing as well.
- **Pleasing God by Valuing his Presence**
  - **Many scriptures point to God's goodness.** Here are just a few...
    - **How great is the goodness** you have **stored up** for those who fear you. **You lavish it** on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world. (Psa 31:19 NLT-SE)
    - The Lord replied, **"I will make all my goodness pass before you**, and I will call out my name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. (Ex 33:19 NLT-SE)
    - **The Lord is good**, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him. (Nah 1:7 NLT-SE)
    - **Taste and see that the Lord is good.** (Psa 34:8 NLT-SE)
      - In one verse, David reveals the depth of what it means to **experience God**.
      - **"Taste and see,"** not that he is God, but that he is good!
        - Let's start at the beginning: Food enters your mouth, meets your teeth and begins to be broken down by enzymes in your saliva. The morsel soon moves over your papillae, the few thousand bumps that line your tongue. Each papilla houses onion-like structures of 50 to 100 taste cells folded together like the petals of

a young flower about to bloom—taste buds, we call them. These cells have chemical receptors attuned to the five basic tastes—bitter, sweet, sour, salt and umami, the last a word borrowed from Japanese that describes the savory flavors of roast meat or soy sauce. ~ Scientific America, Sept. 1, 2013

• **Going after the presence of God**

- <sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, <sup>10</sup> because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. <sup>11</sup> You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psa 16:8–11 NIV)

- **R.T. Kendall**, best-selling author of many books including his most recent release, *The Presence of God*, was commenting on the practical nature of this beautiful psalm and looked closely at what David was doing when he “set the Lord” before him.



- He goes on to say that there are times when you may not consciously feel the Lord’s presence in your midst. What do you do then? His encouragement is that you do what David did, you “set the Lord before you.” David pictured the Lord before him. By faith, David “saw” the Lord at his right hand. The truth is, Jesus is always with us. We just are not always consciously aware of his presence.

- We all want the conscious presence of God. But what about when you don’t feel him there? Actually, you have an opportunity to set him there more when he is not consciously there. asked the question, “Which gives you greater satisfaction, when God is pleasing you, or when you are pleasing him?”

- When God’s presence is consciously with you, He is pleasing you, right? The you do not sense his presence, you have an opportunity to please him by setting him before you. Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” When we get to heaven, we won’t need faith and we will be continually pleased by him. While we are here on earth, we have the privilege to please him and one of the ways we do that is by setting him before us!

- **Question:** Which is more significant, that we know God is POWERFUL, or that we are sure He is GOOD?

- This really should (could) be a primary anchor point for any local congregation...**God is good!**

- **“The real underlying flaw in your life, Mackenzie, is that you don’t think I am good.** If you knew I was good and that everything—the means, the ends, and all the processes of individual lives—is all covered by my goodness, then while you might not always understand what I am doing, you would trust me...trust me to know what's right and do what's best.” ~ William Paul Young, *The Shack*



**“Papa is especially fond of you.”**