



## B REVEALING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

# Jesus and people affected by leprosy



## Why use this Bible study?

To learn how Jesus acted towards people affected by leprosy, and how Christians should therefore respond.



## Jesus felt compassion...

### Read Mark 1: 40 – 45

This story takes place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was travelling around Galilee preaching and healing the sick when a man affected by leprosy came to him. We read that Jesus was 'indignant' or 'felt compassion' for the man (New International Version) or, as the King James (Authorised) Version says, Jesus was 'moved with compassion' for him. Compassion is not feeling sorry for someone but rather seeing their need and being determined to meet it. Jesus heals the man and tells him to not tell anyone, but to go to show himself to the priest and offer sacrifices as a testimony of healing.

### Read Mark 14: 3

This story takes place towards the end of Jesus' earthly ministry in the week before his death. Jesus was having a meal at the home of Simon, a man affected by leprosy. Many others would have rejected Simon, but Jesus accepts him and gives him the honour of having Jesus eat in his home.



## Key points

- Jesus deliberately associated himself with people affected by leprosy throughout his ministry.
- Jesus sees a need and meets it. Jesus becomes friends with people that others rejects and he calls us to do the same.



## Questions for discussion

- The healing in Mark 1 happens at the start of Jesus' ministry, soon after calling his first disciples. After they had become disciples, this was probably one of the first miracles that Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John saw. What do you think their reaction would have

Awareness-raising

Children &amp; youth

Climate &amp; environment

Conflict &amp; peace-building

Corruption &amp; governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination &amp; inclusion

Food &amp; livelihoods

Gender &amp; sexual violence

Health &amp; HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration &amp; trafficking

Water, sanitation &amp; hygiene

been when they saw Jesus put his hand on the man and he was healed of leprosy? How do you think they felt?

- Jesus touches the man affected by leprosy. How important is physical contact – a touch, hug or handshake – between you and your family or friends? What difference would an action such as a hand on the shoulder or even having people chose to sit next to them, make for people affected by leprosy?
- Jesus told the man to go to the priest for official verification of his healing and then to the temple to give thanks to God. The modern day equivalent of the priest could be the local health post. Health posts such as skin clinics and hospitals are important in diagnosing and checking people for leprosy. How can your church support local health workers and encourage people who may be affected with leprosy to attend clinics?
- The man couldn't stop talking about his healing and raised awareness of Jesus across the area. Some people still do not know about leprosy, that there is an effective cure (MDT) and that leprosy is not very infectious. How can you raise awareness of leprosy in order that those who need treatment are diagnosed and to reduce prejudice and stigma towards people affected by leprosy?
- Jesus ate a meal in the house of a person affected by leprosy. What would people think in your community if an important religious or political leader ate in the house of someone affected by leprosy? Who do they normally eat with?
- Jesus was not afraid to eat with someone affected by leprosy, in fact Simon may have been a friend of Jesus. Why do people refuse to eat with people affected by leprosy? Would you accept food and hospitality in the home of someone affected by leprosy?



## Reflection

When you meet people affected by leprosy how do you feel? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with compassion for people affected with leprosy so you too can follow in the footsteps of Jesus and be determined to meet their need.



## Notes

This Bible study is adapted from material written by James Pender for The Leprosy Mission

### Related tools:

- B – Attitudes towards disease and difference (Bible study) [*B: Discrimination & inclusion-1*]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [*B: Discrimination & inclusion-2*]
- B – Healing from leprosy is at the heart of the Gospel (Bible study) [*B: Health & HIV-3*]