

Congregational Study: Luke's Epiphany

January 23, 2025

Home Study: Luke 5:12-16

TODAY'S READING

Open your Bible and read Luke 5:12-16.

Leprosy was a dreaded disease. In ancient Israelite society, people with leprosy were cast out from societies for protection of the healthy and viewed as cursed by God. The leper in the text had no hope. His disease was incurable, socially stigmatizing, and viewed as God's punishment for his sins. Having heard about Jesus, he came looking for him, despite being strictly forbidden to go near other people as he was considered unclean. But in his desperation, he approached Jesus anyway. He fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Have you ever been so desperate for something that you've broken a rule, law, or even a social norm? Did you get what you were looking for or were you ultimately disappointed?

After the miraculous healing, Jesus urged the cleansed leper to keep the Mosaic law and go to the priests, but not to tell anyone of the healing Jesus did for him. Despite these instructions, the news about Jesus' healing spread even more widely, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

Have you ever had something so good happen to you that you couldn't keep it to yourself? Where you ever in a situation where you were asked to keep news to yourself, but were so excited that you accidentally shared it anyway?

Afterwards, Jesus had to withdraw to lonely places and pray as the crowds were so large. Prayer in lonely places was the best way for Jesus to take a break and become refreshed and is often mentioned in the Scripture. Through his actions, Jesus showed us that prayer is one of the best ways to be centered on God so that you get physically and spiritually refreshed through your own prayer life.

Can you think of any other instances where Jesus withdrew from the crowds to pray alone or with only a few of his disciples? Have you ever been so overwhelmed that you've had to find a quiet place for prayer and contemplation? When you keep the Sabbath day holy, it is the true Sabbath, a break and refresh, for you? Can you think of any verses in the Bible where we are instructed to pray?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, make us humble and poor in spirit before you. Make us be full of the Holy Spirit and serve you in the power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did. Make us free from all selfish desires. Lead us to prayer life so that we may be physically and spiritually refreshed by you. Amen.