

Welcomed Now! 5 Day Prayer Devotional

Day 1: The Kingdom for the Outcast

Scripture Focus: Mark 1:40-2:17 / Psalm 68:4-6

Reflection: Rejection is a painful fact of life, and the fear of it can dominate our lives, sometimes turning us into vicious pack animals. We all know the loneliness of being the outsider. But the good news of the Kingdom is that Jesus has come in His power for every outcast person *now*. God is a "Father to the fatherless" and places the lonely in families.

Prayer: Lord, thank You that Your Kingdom welcomes the rejected. When I feel like an outsider, remind me that You have come in power for me. Heal the fear of rejection in my heart, and help me to rejoice in Your presence. Amen.

Day 2: Social Outcasts and the Willingness of God

Scripture Focus: Mark 1:40-45

Reflection: The leper was a social outcast, isolated and hopeless, much like people today who are "different" and whom we fear might be contagious. When he asked for healing, Jesus responded, "I am willing," and He reached out and *touched* him, making Himself ceremonially unclean in the eyes of the religious. People crave contact, and to touch the outcast is to become one with them.

Prayer: Father, thank You that You are always "willing" when we come to You. Give me the courage to be like Jesus—to reach out and touch those who are isolated, bringing Your love and acceptance to the social outcasts around me. Amen.

Day 3: Physical Outcasts and Faith-Filled Desperation

Scripture Focus: Mark 2:1-12

Reflection: The friends of the paralyzed man showed a desperation that moved them to tear through a roof (probably Jesus' own home!) to get him

to the Savior. We often face desperate situations, but there is a profound difference in how we handle them: "Worry is desperation that looks to Self; Faith is desperation that looks to God".

Prayer: Lord, when I face impossible obstacles, keep me from worry that only looks to myself. Transform my desperation into faith that looks to You. Give me the persistence of the four friends who carried the paralytic to Your feet. Amen.

Day 4: Carrying Others and Overcoming Unforgiveness

Scripture Focus: Mark 2:3-5

Reflection: While only God has the authority to forgive sins, we have a role to play: we can *carry* people to forgiveness. Furthermore, we must recognize what paralyzes us from the inside. There are many things that can cripple our lives, but "at the top of the list is UNFORGIVENESS of others AND of Self".

Prayer: Jesus, reveal any unforgiveness in my heart that is paralyzing my walk with You. Grant me the grace to forgive others and myself. Help me to be a faithful friend who carries others to Your restorative grace. Amen.

Day 5: Moral Outcasts and the Great Physician

Scripture Focus: Mark 2:13-17

Reflection: Jesus called Levi, a tax collector and moral outcast, offering friendship instead of rejection. By eating with him, Jesus extended fellowship and acceptance. Jesus reminded the religious leaders that a physician is for the sick, and "we can't bring healing if we are not with them". Any rejection or isolation suffered in church wasn't Jesus; it was fear.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for being the Great Physician who comes for the sick. Help me to offer true fellowship and grace to those the world labels as moral outcasts. Let my life reflect Your willing Father-heart. Amen.
