

## "WALKING WITH THE CHOSEN" | FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 22

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "INDESCRIBABLE COMPASSION" | EPISODE 6

*You have shown me the way of life, and you will fill me with the joy of your presence. ~ Acts 2:28 NLT*

### OPENING PRAYER

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion (Psalm 103:2-4). You, Lord are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness (Psalm 86:15). Praise you our compassionate God for the loving ways you reach out and touch our hearts! In the kind name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

### CONNECTING QUESTION

Life can be so hard. Is there a time you felt like an outcast? Did anyone reach out to you? Describe your feelings. If you are comfortable, share the circumstances with those who want to reach out to you now.

### SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 35:4-7; Mark 1:40-45

### WATCH VIDEO

The Chosen | Season 1 | Episode 6 (*Please note that artistic license has been taken with character portrayals and dialogue.*)

Scan to Access Episode 6



### EXPLORE THE TEXT

*Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.*

1. Leprosy described various skin diseases that caused physical suffering and emotional and mental suffering, due to the way these people were treated. They had to live alone or with others who had the disease. They were considered unclean and had to declare that when they approached anyone. Read Mark 1:40-45. How did the man with leprosy approach Jesus? Jesus could have healed him with a word or a thought, but how did he heal him? What is significant about Jesus touching the leper prior to healing him? If you watched Episode 6, how would you describe the disciples' reactions?
2. Many translations say Jesus was "moved with compassion" and stretched out his hand to touch the man. Look up the definition of compassion. How is it different from sympathy or empathy? How did Jesus show his compassion in the following: Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 6:34; Matthew 15:29-38?

3. Discuss ways you as an individual or as a group can show compassion and break barriers to help those in need. (See Ephesians 4:29-32, Philippians 2:1-4; Colossians 3:1-14; 1 Peter 3:8-9.)
  
4. Read Isaiah 35:3-7. How did Jesus' miracles fulfill the prophetic vision of salvation and restoration? (See Luke 7:21-22; Mark 2:1-12.) Why was the idea that Jesus was the Messiah difficult for some people to accept, especially the religious leaders?
  
5. It is easy for anyone to say, "your sins are forgiven," because it cannot be seen or proven. Only God can forgive sins, which Jesus did. He showed his power to heal physical ailments, and more importantly spiritual disease and sin. What do you see as the connection between the physical and the spiritual? (See Psalm 32:3-5; 1 John 1:8-10; 3 John 1:2)
  
6. Life changes after you experience the compassion of Jesus, as it did for the man with leprosy and the man who was paralyzed. Some people have radical come-to-Jesus moments. Others experience change in their lives over time. Regardless of how fast or slow, Jesus always transforms the lives of his followers. He is patient with every person, because he knows that when God declares, saves and proclaims, no one can turn it back. (See Isaiah 43:11-13; 18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.) What changes has he made in your life? What new transformations are you hoping Jesus has in store for you?

### **MOVED BY COMPASSION**

Healing and forgiveness are found in God's presence.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3)

"Jesus comes not for the super-spiritual but for the wobbly and the weak-kneed who know they don't have it all together and who are not too proud to accept the handout of amazing grace." (Brennan Manning)

"The healing stories are more than just accounts of physical restoration; they are rich with symbolic meaning. They show Jesus confronting the powers of darkness and oppression and bringing God's liberating power to bear on real human need." (N.T. Wright)

In what areas of your life do you need and want Jesus' healing touch and cleansing? Have you sought physical, emotional, and spiritual healing from him? Why or why not?

Is a new start hard for you to imagine? Read a portion of Psalm 103 each day this week to discover who God is, reasons you can praise him, his capacity and desire to forgive you and help you begin again. Also read the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-24 about forgiveness and new beginnings.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Jesus, your presence in the world is the ultimate act of compassion. We did not deserve your sacrifice on the cross, but because of God's great love, we have received mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing. Please continue to transform us, along with all those who are chosen to follow you. Reach out through us as we show your care, concern, and loving actions to others. In your healing name Jesus, Amen.

*Our Father...*