

# JESUS: HOLISTIC HEALER

## Open

Acts of compassion have the potential to heal wounds, restore relationships, curb hatred, and prevent violence. Jesus showed God's mercy in amazing ways for the sick, the poor, the hungry, the outcast, and the weary.

- When you think of Jesus, do you think of Him as a merciful healer? Why or why not?

## Context

In Jesus' kingdom, powerful oppressors are brought low, while those cast to the margins are elevated (1:50-53; 2:34-35). After declaring his mission to liberate society's "underclass" (4:18-19), Jesus begins rescuing creation from sin, disease, poverty, evil spirits, and death (4:31-44), and calls humble fishermen to be his first apprentices (5:1-11).

Read [Luke 5:12-26](#) (NIV)

## Discuss

1. Imagine you are in the crowd witnessing the events in verses 17-26. Describe the key characters. What is most striking to you? How might you describe the experience to a friend?
2. Why does Jesus touch the leper while healing him (vs. 13)? What implications do Jesus' instructions to the leper (v. 14) carry for his social and spiritual health?

Leader Note	Lepers were social outcasts forced to live outside their communities and dress in mourning clothes (Lev. 13:45-46). Jesus touches him and heals him—a shocking reversal of social norms. Jesus' instructions in verse 14 show His concern for the man to re-enter his community's social and spiritual life (See Lev. 14:1-32).
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3. As with the leper, how might Jesus' "touch" today empower a person living on society's margins to experience friendship and community? What examples come to mind?

4. Why might Jesus' statement, "*Your sins are forgiven*" (v. 20), be welcome news to this suffering man?

Leader Note	Pronouncing forgiveness of sins liberates the paralyzed man from the social stigma of his disability. People in Jesus' time believed that illness was a result of God's judgment. For example, jaundice was thought to be caused by hatred, and respiratory problems by slander or failure to pay tithes. Jesus' disciples even questioned if a man's blindness was caused by his own sin or that of his parents (Jn. 9:2).
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5. In verses 22-24, how does Jesus answer the religious leaders who challenge his power to forgive sins (vv. 21-22)?

Leader Note	Jesus' question highlights the difference between words and actions. Saying, " <i>Your sins are forgiven</i> ," is easy, but telling someone to " <i>get up and walk</i> " can be proven true or false. Jesus' healing proves that he has the authority to forgive sins. Jesus' power to forgive sins challenges the authority of religious leaders and demonstrates that spiritual healing is available to everyone, not controlled by those in power.
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## Reflect

"We have drugs for people with diseases like leprosy, but these drugs do not treat the more problematic disease of being unwanted," said the late Mother Teresa. "The sick and the poor suffer even more from rejection than material want,"

she said. Jesus calls us, like Mother Teresa, to serve as channels of physical, spiritual, social, and emotional healing for the whole person.



- Do you relate to the men afflicted with leprosy and paralysis, the tax collectors and "sinners," or the Pharisees? What might you see in Jesus that would encourage you to seek his help?
- The paralyzed man's friends took bold risks to bring him to Jesus. What might their initiative imply about our role in others' healing?

- How can medical and healthcare professionals go beyond treating symptoms to addressing patients' full well-being?

## Pray

Consider which character(s) you identify with. Ask Jesus what he might want to say to you. Sit in silence and listen to his words. Confess any sinful attitudes and pray for his guidance and empowerment.