

The story of Jesus healing ten lepers and receiving worship from just one of them shows us that God is not only a wonderful healer but our Saviour. As much as we might want our physical circumstances to change, what we need most is to be rescued from our sin.

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Read Luke 17:11-19 and ask God to open your eyes and ears to see Him and hear Him during your discussion.

Lepers experienced social isolation even more strongly than we currently are: they had to self-isolate and shout "Unclean" when anyone came near them, they were to dress in mourning because their life was effectively over (Numbers 5:2, Leviticus 13:45-46). For ten lepers, this all changed one day when they saw Jesus walking past and they asked Him for mercy. Jesus told them to go to the priest, who was the person who could declare them clean (Leviticus 13-14) – and as they acted on what He said, they were healed.

Only one of them turns back to Jesus, worshiping Him as God and not just a healer (Luke 17:15-16). Jesus tells him that his faith has made him "sozo" – a Greek word for both physical healing but also rescue. Luke wants us to realise that more is happening here than an improvement in physical circumstances – he starts the story by reminding us that Jesus is going to Jerusalem (verse 11) where He will die and be raised to life for our salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19, Colossians 1:19-20).

We're living in very difficult days, and we will be tempted to focus on our physical circumstances (and those of the people we love) rather than anything else. But this story reminds us that being saved is far more important than being healed. When we focus on this and on the God who saved us, we will be able to agree with incredible statements in the Bible like Psalm 84:10 and Philippians 3:8.

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Questions for general discussion

Are those Old Testament laws about things that are clean/unclean (such as leprosy) becoming any more interesting to you at this time, or at least comprehensible?

What does this story tell us about God's character and nature?

Only 10% of those touched by the power of God in this story seem to respond with saving faith. How should this impact our expectation of what will happen when we tell people about Jesus?

This is the week we remember Jesus's final days before His death and resurrection. Do you have any resources that you've found helpful in preparing for Easter?

Questions for personal application, perhaps in groups of two or three people

How much would you say Psalm 84:10 and Philippians 3:8 describe you right now? There are many practical and emotional challenges at this time: which would you say is most likely to get more of your attention than Jesus? What can you do to keep seeking God and His Kingdom first (Matthew 6:25-34)?

Someone told the lepers about Jesus and this made them call out to Him. Who do you need to tell about Him particularly now? What is the best way for you to go about this?

Pray for each other's responses to these two challenges.