



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

Jesus & Me “Where Are the Other Nine?”

SUNDAY 6.10.18

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, they raised their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, show us mercy!”

When Jesus saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they left, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus replied, “Weren’t ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?” Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.” *Luke 17:11-19*

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

A God who gathers outcasts

MONDAY 6.11.18 Isaiah 56:7-8

Astronauts see our planet perhaps more the way God does. They share that with us through remarkable photographs. Several of them have noted that as they view Earth from space, there are no visible border lines dividing one country or people group from another. * Isaiah sensed that perspective long before space travel (or even Galileo)—God’s house was “a house of prayer for all peoples.” God, he said, gathered Israel’s “outcasts,” foreshadowing Jesus’ love for and welcome of all sinners, tax collectors, Samaritans and “lepers.”

- ✚ Jesus appeared to love Isaiah 56:7. Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46 all reported that he quoted the text as he challenged the exploitive dealings that went on in the Temple courts at Passover time. In what ways could those dealings have been an obstacle that kept the Temple from being a house of prayer for all peoples? Are there ways, intentional or inadvertent, that we may make our “temples” unfriendly to some people God wishes to welcome?
- ✚ Many mainline scholars believe Isaiah 56 spoke to Israel after their return from exile in Babylon. It said God did not consider the work of gathering outcasts finished: “I will gather still others to those I have already gathered.” Jesus certainly took that attitude (cf. John 4:35, Matthew 22:8-10). Resurrection is celebrating opening the first new church building in downtown Kansas City in over 80 years (click here [facebook.com/RezDowntown] for more information). Do you believe that means we’ve nearly finished our work of gathering outcasts at all campuses, or that we’re just starting?

Prayer: Dear God, your epic story in the Bible shows you again and again reaching into forgotten corners of the human family, gathering outcasts into the circle of your love. Thank you for including me. Help me welcome outcasts, as you do. Amen.

* Archibald MacLeish, viewing a photo of Earth taken by astronauts circling the moon (click here for that photo), wrote on Dec. 25, 1968, “To see the earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers who know now they are truly brothers.” Quoted from <http://cecelia.physics.indiana.edu/life/moon/Apollo8/122568sci-nasa-macleish.html>.

Jesus came to set free the oppressed

TUESDAY 6.12.18 Isaiah 61:1-3, Luke 4:16-29

Jesus went home to the little village where he had grown up. In the synagogue, he read from Isaiah 61, in which God's servant said he had a mission to "preach good news to the poor...to liberate the oppressed." Then Jesus said, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled," claiming that mission as his own. He angered the hearers by pointing to Old Testament events where God reached far beyond Israel's national and ethnic borders.

- ✚ Jesus quoted from (and adapted) Isaiah 61:1-3 in the synagogue in Nazareth to define his mission. "To preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" has a nice poetic ring. What can you do each day to live into the meaning of those words in life's gritty, unpoetic, day-to-day realities?
- ✚ After Jesus spoke, the people of his hometown tried to kill him. Why? Scholar N. T. Wright said Jesus' message was that "The servant-Messiah has not come to inflict punishment, but to bring the nations God's love and mercy. That was a central theme in Israel's own scriptures, yet...Jesus' claim to be reaching out with healing to all people...was not what most first-century Jews wanted or expected." * Does it inspire or frustrate you that Jesus loves and invites all people, not just the people of your country or denomination?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Cory Asbury's song "Reckless Love" ** says, "There's no wall you won't kick down, lie you won't tear down coming after me." Grow me into your partner in kicking down walls and tearing down lies that keep people from you. Amen.

* N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, pp. 48-49.)

** "Reckless Love," written by Cory Asbury, Caleb Culver, Ran Jackson. © 2017 Bethel Music Publishing (ASCAP) / Watershed Publishing Group (ASCAP) (adm. by Watershed Music Group) / Richmond Park Publishing (BMI). All Rights Reserved.

Touching the untouchable

WEDNESDAY 6.13.18 Matthew 8:1-3

"Jesus reached out his hand, and touched him" may not seem odd to us—but it was stunning, even forbidden, in his day. Today we know "leprosy" as Hansen's disease, an infection caused by slow-growing bacteria called *Mycobacterium leprae*. In Jesus' day, people called any skin disease "leprosy." Leviticus 13-14 gave detailed rules, and called for isolating anyone with a skin disease to keep it from spreading. Most people feared these sufferers, and avoided all contact. But Jesus touched the man, and said, "Become clean."

- ✚ Today, as we know more about leprosy and other skin diseases, people don't wear signs that say "unclean." But social shunning still goes on in 2018, based on race, age, gender, socio-economic or educational level, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and even personal quirks, political beliefs, or looks. Have others ever shunned you? Have you ever shunned someone else? How is God asking you to live up to Jesus' example in touching the leper today?
- ✚ Jesus sent the man to follow the ritual from Leviticus 14 (cf. Matthew 8:4). That would certify his cleansing and let him rejoin his community. Limited as it seems to us, that was the best equivalent then of a clean medical bill of health. In what ways does God's power work in and through the medical, counseling and other professions today? How can human wisdom work with, rather than against, God's healing power?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you knew it hurt when people shunned you. You knew the healing power of touching the untouchable. Help me know how to reach out in ways that include and heal the untouchable. Amen.

Prophetic perspective for a puzzled prisoner

THURSDAY 6.14.18 Matthew 11:2-10

Stalwart John the Baptist was in prison for boldly speaking truth to power (cf. Matthew 14:3-4). But he began to wonder: when was Jesus going to “clean out his threshing area,” “burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out” (Luke 3:17)? Was Jesus really “the one,” as John had preached? He sent the question to Jesus. Jesus pointed to actions that matched Isaiah 35 and 61, including healing “lepers.” It was a different brand of Messiah-ship than John had expected and preached. Yet to the crowd Jesus strongly defended John’s ministry.

- ✚ How did Jesus’ words in verses 4-6 respond to John’s troubled question in a gentle, Bible-based way? Why was it important, not only for John but for early Christians facing the hostility of the Roman Empire, to remember that wishes for a conquering Messiah grew from a partial reading of the Old Testament prophets? How can Jesus’ gracious way of dealing with John’s question help you feel safe in taking your questions or struggles to Jesus in prayer?
- ✚ Scholar N. T. Wright said, “Just as wicked people don’t like the message of judgment, because they think (rightly) that it’s aimed at them, so sometimes good people don’t like the message of mercy, because they think (wrongly) that people are going to get away with wickedness.” * To what extent can you empathize with John’s nervousness about Jesus’ merciful words and actions? Who are the “lepers” Jesus shows mercy to today that might make you nervous?

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, at times I can identify with your struggling forerunner. Thank you that even when I’m filled with questions, I always find in you the merciful person who truly was “the one.” Amen.

* N. T. Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–15*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 127.

Ten lepers cleansed; one Samaritan grateful

FRIDAY 6.15.18 Luke 17:11-19

These sufferers were desperately isolated. “Keeping their distance,” they raised their voices and called to Jesus. Their isolation may have broken down ethnic barriers—at least one was a Samaritan, but the story’s setting (verse 11) hints that some of the lepers were Jewish. Jesus certainly broke down those barriers—he healed them all. Yet, sadly, only one—the Samaritan—came back to express gratitude, and Jesus gladly accepted his thanks.

- ✚ All ten were “cleansed.” But when the Samaritan came back to say “thank you,” Jesus used a stronger word that can even mean “saved,” saying, “Your faith has healed you” (verse 19). Pastor Bruce Larsen wrote, “The other nine were merely cleansed. If ingratitude is more deadly than leprosy, they were in worse shape than before. Only one came back and was made whole.” * What blocks gratitude in your life? What helps you remember to thank God every day?
- ✚ Jesus’ command—“Go, show yourself to the priests” (verse 14)—was the way to verify people’s healing. But his command preceded the actual cleansing. It seems that when they acted on Jesus’ word, they opened the way for his power to flow. In what ways does this speak to you? In what part of life might you need to act on God’s wishes, rather than waiting for him to make everything right before you act?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you so often do good things in my life; I so often take them for granted. Make my heart whole, so that I can live a life of wonder, gratitude and praise. Amen.

* Bruce Larson, *The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Volume 26: Luke*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, p. 250.

Gratitude turns disciples into apostles

SATURDAY 6.16.18 Matthew 10:7-8, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Earlier in this passage (cf. Matthew 10:2-4), Matthew called Jesus' twelve followers apostles, not disciples, for the first time. Jesus promoted them from students to representatives. The first instructions they received as apostles showed that for a disciple to become an apostle, he or she must turn the love received from Jesus into love to share with others. Paul echoed this in his letter to the Thessalonians: to be representatives of Christ, to be his apostles, we must give thanks always.

- ✚ Jesus taught that acting generously is the natural and desired result of feeling gratitude. How do you show your gratitude for your teachers and mentors? Do you thank them by carrying on their teachings? How do you show your gratitude for Jesus' teachings? Do you thank him by carrying on his ministry of loving and healing his children?
- ✚ The church in Thessalonica (addressed in 1 Thessalonians) was a group of new Christians. How did Paul tell them to handle stress or uncertainty? How do you handle pressure differently because of your relationship with Christ, compared with how you handle stress alone?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am grateful for the love and healing that you so freely gave. Send me your Spirit to turn my gratitude to generosity and my discipleship to apostleship. Bless me as I carry on your healing and love. Amen.

Family Activity: God's love is never-ending! Tell your kids you are going to play a measurement game. Give each child a measuring stick or tape and ask them to measure items around the house. Point to or holler out the name of possessions in your household (couch, cabinet, pets, toys, etc.) and have the kids measure each item individually. Invite them to shout out the measurements after each one. Keep the game moving quickly and give the kids lots of encouragement along the way. After they've measured a few items, holler out, "Measure God's love for us!" Watch as they think about what you have asked them to measure and talk about ways we can measure God's love. Remind them that God's love is too big to measure—it is bigger than anything in our home, the world and the universe! Thank God for his love that is bigger than we can ever imagine.