

The Healing of the Man with Leprosy – Mark 1:40-45

1. What was a leprous person's lot in life (especially in regard to community) once they were labeled as "unclean"? [Leviticus 13:45-46] Share what it might be like to live in isolation from one's community while dealing with an infectious disease, and the label of being "unclean."
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' physical touch to heal the man.
3. How does Jesus' healing impact the man and his community?
4. Where do we find Jesus at the end of the miracle? What might this imagery foreshadow? How does it result in "community" according to Mark's description in verse 45?
5. How does Jesus bring His touch today through His Church?
6. How does His compassion through us draw together people "from every quarter"?

Final Thought

The Lord faithfully sent His Word among His people through the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. Throughout their messages, God painted a picture, gave a promise, that one day He Himself would come among His people. Jesus did not come merely spiritually or even virtually. He came in flesh and blood, fully taking on our human nature yet sinless. As He came, Jesus constantly drew community around Himself. He sometimes addressed great crowds with His teaching of God's forgiving mercy. He sometimes instructed His disciples on their own. He sometimes brought the touch of His mercy to just one individual. Yet through all of His Incarnate earthly ministry Jesus was drawing and shaping a new community ... one that would be founded upon Himself, especially His cross and empty tomb ... and a community that would go "in person" with the Lord and in His Name to the various communities of the world with His message of hope and everlasting life.



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A Bible Study from the LCMS Northern Illinois District

Session II Community Around Christ

Focus Verse:

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I among them."
Matthew 18:20*



Session II Community Around Christ

Opening Prayer: Gracious heavenly Father, out of your steadfast love for the world You sent Your only Son, Jesus, into our midst. Through His incarnation and birth, you placed Him in a family and a greater community. He gathered this community to reveal the signs that His gracious reign had come, to proclaim Your Word of salvation, and to fulfill Your plan of redemption through His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection. We praise You for the gift of Jesus, God with us, in the midst of community. As we walk with Jesus today through the Scriptures, may Your Spirit deepen our understanding of the blessings Christ gave to the neighbors of His incarnate ministry that we might also see the blessings He so imparts among us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Circles They all attended the same event, but saw it from very different perspectives, experienced it in different ways, and even identified with different groups at it. A pop music group came to town for a concert! Most who were part of the event were the audience. They came with their families. Some brought their dates. Others came in groups with friends and co-workers. Everything from the place of their seats in the concert hall to the conversations they had during the concert, to how well they knew the musical group shaped their impression of the event. Yet, they were not the only ones who attended. There were concert promoters and vendors, security details and ushering staffs. There were the stage crew, lighting coordinators, and sound engineers who all had their experiences of the event. Of course, there were the musicians and singers themselves, whose perspective and experience of the concert were vastly different compared to those who sat in the “nose bleed” balcony or those who never even saw the stage as they staffed the t-shirt booths. It was the same event, but many circles of community were a part of it.

1. What are some of the differences between being a part of an “inner” or “outer” circle of any event in life?
2. How does your community consist of different “circles”?

Video Segment

1. What stood out for you in today's video segment?
2. If you could have been “in person” at any event recorded in the Gospels, which would it be and why?

Gathered Around Jesus

Whether it was teaming crowds, a close circle of disciples, or intimate one-on-one encounters, Jesus is seen as regularly gathering community around Himself in the Gospels. No matter what the community, Jesus always used those “in person” encounters to carry out His gracious will.

Let's take a look at various communities in which Jesus lived and served.

The Feeding of the 5,000 – Luke 9:10-17

1. Who were the various communities who were gathered around Jesus in this text?
2. What were some of the various blessings that each community received from Jesus?
3. How might Jesus' instructions to gather the largest circle of people into groups of fifty for the meal be a teaching moment for the crowd?

The Healing of the Paralytic – Mark 2:1-12

1. Who were the various communities who were gathered around Jesus in this text? What might have been their understanding or perspective of Jesus before the miracle?
2. How did Jesus address the paralyzed man's deepest need first? Why might it be said that Jesus' forgiveness was the greater of the two miracles He did that day?
3. What blessings do the various communities who witnessed and later read about this event receive from Jesus' care for the paralyzed man?

The Woman at the Well – John 4:1-30, 39-42

1. What “community boundaries” did Jesus stem to speak to the Samaritan woman?
2. Share one or two highlights of the blessing Jesus' teaching brings into her life.
3. How did this woman's encounter with Jesus impact her, and in turn, her community?