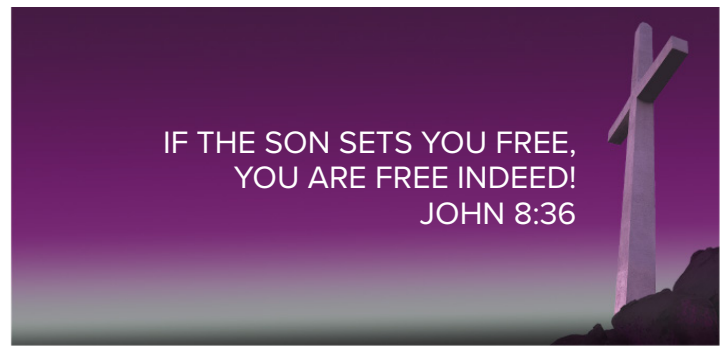


Jesus 101

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

"I am willing; be cleansed." –Matthew 8:3

We don't hear much about leprosy anymore, even though the disease is still around. Yet there are other physical, mental, and emotional conditions that carry a similar social stigma for their victims. Sometimes people end up being known by their misfortune, bad experience, or mistake, instead of their name: There goes the divorcée! Or did you hear about the jailbird? How about the adulteress?! Unfortunately, society in general is quick to judge and marginalize, robbing people of their worth.

It is hard for us to fully understand the impact the story recorded in Matthew 8:2, 3 would have left on the listeners. At the time, leprosy was the most dreaded disease, barring its victims from society because they were considered ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 13; 14). People afflicted by leprosy had to warn others about their misfortune by crying out loud: "Unclean! Unclean!" (Leviticus 13:45). A leper came to Jesus and prostrated himself in front of Him (Matthew 8:2). Somehow, perhaps by witnessing a miracle of Jesus, this man had become convinced that Jesus had the ability to heal him from leprosy: "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" (verse 2). It was all up to Jesus; it was His choice! Would He be willing? In an astounding show of compassion and care, Jesus "stretched out His hand and touched him" (verse 3). Can you imagine the shock? The leper probably had not felt human touch in years! The ritual law stated that if someone touched a leper, they too immediately became ceremonially unclean (see Leviticus 5:3). But not in this case! Instead of Jesus becoming a leper, the leper was cleansed. Jesus had not only the power to heal but also the willingness to do so. He said, "'I am willing; be cleansed.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (verse 3). Jesus wanted to heal this man. When, due to our mistakes, addictions, or the guilt of our sin, we feel separated from our true selves, others, and God, let's remember that Jesus has the power and willingness to heal us. Let's come to His feet and ask for healing and peace. He will answer: "I am willing; be cleansed."