

Jesus and the Lepers

Teacher Preparation

1. Study **Lesson 3**, pp. 17–23.
 - Scripture **Matt. 8:2–4; Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–14, 17:11–19**
2. **Visuals** to use in class.
 - Memory Verse Visual 3
 - Teaching Visuals 6–8
3. Have **Focus**, Ls 3 ready to distribute after lesson (1 per student).

Opening Sequence (optional)

Greet teens as they arrive; assistant takes attendance.

Welcome Comments

Prayer Teacher

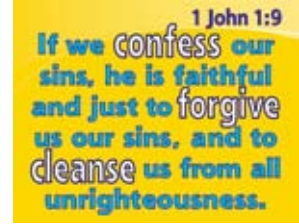
Announcements Notes

Songs *Redeemed* p. 22 #3
Love Lifted Me p. 16 #7
He Paid a Debt p. 14 #5

Prayer (Choose 1 or 2 teens to pray.)

Memory Verse

Class read 3x. Say verse 2x.



Verse Visual 3

Lesson 3

PART ONE: Jesus Heals One Leper

Introduction—Leprosy, a dread disease



Card 6

At the time of Christ's earthly ministry, nothing struck terror in people's hearts more than the dread disease of leprosy, for leprosy did terrible things to the bodies of its victims. It disfigured them with horrible ulcers and painful sores that gradually spread until fingers, toes, hands, feet, arms, and legs were eaten away. The body seemed to slowly rot away until the leper died.

At that time there were no leprosariums or hospitals, no doctors or medicines that could ease the suffering, for leprosy had no cure. According to Old Testament law, a leper had to

leave his home, leave his town, and go off to live by himself or with other lepers so he would not give the disease to anyone else. When a leper saw healthy people coming toward him, the law required that he cry out, “Unclean! Unclean!” This was his warning—“Don’t come any closer; I have leprosy!” If a leper did not call out the warning, the healthy people could pick up rocks and stone him to death. That’s how terrible leprosy was—it meant pain, loneliness, and certain death.

A leper comes to Jesus for healing

One day as Jesus was preaching in Galilee, a leper came limping up to Him, unmindful of the fearful and angry looks in the eyes of all the people who saw him. The leper knelt down before Jesus, worshipping Him, and pled, “*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*”

Jesus looked in love and tender pity on the leper bowing before Him. Then He reached out His hand and touched the man, saying, “*I will; be thou clean.*” Jesus could have just spoken to him, but He did more. He touched him.

The people standing around must have been shocked. They wouldn’t have touched a leper for all the money in the world. One touch might have made them lepers, too. But Jesus did not fear leprosy. Healing poured forth from the body of Jesus into the poor leper, making him completely well. The very moment Jesus spoke, the leprosy instantly disappeared! Now the healed man could go home to his family and friends; he could go to work; he could go anywhere. He was so thrilled and excited he wanted to shout his good news to everyone.

In the Old Testament, the Lord had commanded that lepers who thought they were healed must show themselves to the priest for close examination. If they were truly clean, the priest would declare them so. Then there would be no doubt in anyone’s mind that they were cured, and they could offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to God.

Jesus told the man, “Do not tell anyone about this, but go immediately to the priests to be examined.” Jesus wanted everything to be done according to the law of Moses, and the

first thing the man needed to do was to show himself to a priest.

The healed man tells everyone

But the man was so excited about what Jesus had done that he could not keep quiet about it. His intentions were good, but he did not obey Jesus completely. He told his friends, and they told others, until the news spread far and wide. Soon everyone was talking about this great miracle.

People come to Jesus from every side

Word of the leper’s healing caused great multitudes of people to flock to Jesus, so many that His work was hindered and He would no longer go into the cities to preach and teach. After this, He spent much of His time in the country, but even there people came to Him from all parts of the land.

Leprosy and sin

In the Bible, leprosy is always a picture or a type of sin. It speaks of the uncleanness and dreadfulness of sin.

First, leprosy was contagious, and it quickly spread throughout a person’s body. A leper had to be excommunicated (removed) from society to prevent him from spreading the disease to others. And though the disease began with just a small sore, it spread and “ate away” the leper’s body, leaving him disfigured, blinded, and crippled. Likewise, sin is contagious and spreads. Just as one rotten apple will soon ruin a whole crate of apples, so, if one associates closely enough and long enough with those who have given themselves over to sin, he is soon contaminated and finds himself thinking, talking, and acting like those he associates with. We may begin with what we think of as just a “little” sin. But that sin quickly grows, and soon we lie about it and then we have committed two sins. If we do not confess right away, we will find ourselves lying again to cover up the first lie, and perhaps committing “bigger” sins. Sin, like leprosy, starts small, but it spreads and grows until we cannot control it.

Second, leprosy separated people from others. The leper had to leave home, loved ones, friends, and jobs. He was miserable, unhappy, and lonely, deprived of fellowship with healthy people. So sin separates people from God. Isaiah says, *“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.”* As long as sin is allowed to stay in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us—we are separated from His fellowship. For those who have not accepted God’s gift of cleansing and forgiveness, the ultimate end is eternal separation from Him.

Third, leprosy was incurable. There were no doctors, medicines, or hospitals that could cure leprosy. Its victims eventually died. Only Jesus could cure leprosy. Sin also is incurable, and the punishment for sin is eternal death. But Jesus can cure sin. Because of His death on the cross, He offers free salvation and forgiveness of sin to all who will invite Him into their hearts and trust Him for everlasting life. And if a saved person sins, God has a wonderful promise of forgiveness in 1 John 1:9: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

PART TWO: Jesus Heals Ten Lepers

Ten lepers come to Jesus



Card 7

One day while Jesus and His disciples were traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem, ten lepers came out of the woods and made their way toward Him. Their bodies were marred by the dread disease; some were blind, and some had only stumps for legs. Haltingly, they came to Jesus and bowed before Him.

Jesus looked at the ten lepers before Him. What a horrible, pitiful sight. Their clothes were ragged and dirty; their hair was tangled and their beards matted; their eyes were sunken in thin faces; and their bodies were covered with

sores and ulcers. Worst of all, they were sad, helpless, and completely hopeless.

But Jesus did not send them away. He knew all about their misery, and He had sympathy and compassion for them. He loved those unlovely lepers.

He said, *“Go shew yourselves unto the priests.”*

What a disappointment! These ten men thought that Jesus would touch them then and there and make them well. But the Lord does not deal with everyone in the same way. He told them to go show themselves to the priest. They understood what that meant, for no leper could ever come back into society unless the priest said he was cured.

As they slowly turned and began to make their way down the road, the lepers suddenly realized that they were healed. Perhaps a blind leper rubbed his eyes and screamed, *“I can see! I’VE BEEN HEALED!”*

Then one of them cried out, *“My feet! I can walk! I’ve been healed, too!”*

Soon all ten were talking at once. *“It’s true! Look at us. We’ve all been healed! Look at my skin—it’s as smooth and clear as a baby’s! Look—my fingers are whole again!”*

They slapped each other on the back, danced around hugging each other, laughing and crying for joy. No longer would they be outcasts, living in the dark woods and scrounging for food like animals; no longer would they be lonely, miserable, and homesick.

As they were all hurrying off to see the priest, one of them, a despised Samaritan, stopped in his tracks. He realized that he had forgotten to do something.

One of the ten thanks Jesus

As the other nine ran happily away, the one leper from Samaria turned back with a loud voice, praising God. He returned to Jesus and thanked Him for making him well.



Card 8

His words of gratitude made Jesus very glad, but the thought of the others saddened Him. “*Were there not ten cleansed?*” Jesus asked. “*Where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*”

Only one leper out of ten returned to thank Jesus for healing him. What a lesson we can learn from that! We know that when we do a favor for someone, or help out a friend, we like to be thanked. We feel hurt when others take us for granted. So it is with the Lord. He wants us to thank Him, to be appreciative when He does things for us. He still asks, “*Where are the nine?*” Where are those who have been saved by His grace but do not remember to thank Him and give Him glory?

If you don’t have a thankful heart, the Bible says it is sin. In 2 Timothy chapter 3, the Apostle Paul lists *unthankfulness* right along with lying, disobedience, selfishness, cursings, pride, impurity, and many more of what we call “bad” sins.

Maybe some of you are thinking, “What must I thank Him for?” Why not make a list of our spiritual, physical, and material blessings, and see how many we can think of! We will probably thank Him first of all for Jesus, His love and death on the cross. We will certainly include salvation, everlasting life, forgiveness of sin, God’s Word, the Holy Spirit, and prayer. And when we take just a minute and think of the hundreds of thousands who are sick, helpless, lonely, homeless, or starving, shouldn’t we give Him grateful thanks for our good health, our homes and parents, our schools and teachers, churches and pastors, country and freedom? And what about food and clothes, medicine, doctors, and all the possessions that God has provided for us? We’ll never get through thanking Him, will we?

The man who returned to give thanks to God was not merely healed of his leprosy, but faith in the Lord Jesus had been planted in his heart, and he was forgiven of his sin and given eternal life. Jesus said to him, “*Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*” The Lord Jesus was telling this man that he was cleansed in his soul because he believed and trusted Christ. And that is what Jesus is still doing for those who ask Him into their hearts.

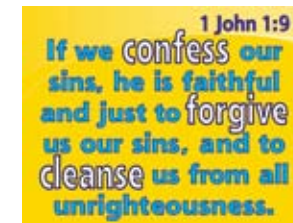
Prayer

Review **1 John 1:9.**

Sing *Redeemed*

p. 3 #22

Distribute *Focus 3.*



Verse Visual 3