

# Be made clean!

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter. (Mark 1:40-45)

*Touching a person with leprosy was not allowed. Lepers were seen as unclean, and touching them made you unclean. Yet Jesus touched him in order to heal him. Who in today's world is treated like the leper? Who are we expected to not interact with? How might Jesus treat them?*

# I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:13-17)

*Tax collectors were seen as helping the Roman occupation. More than that, they also took extra money beyond the taxes required in order to live (and sometimes in order to line their pockets). In Judaism at this time, any sinner (including tax collectors, but also others) were not worthy of sharing a meal with. Yet Jesus welcomes them and eats with them.*

*Who in today's world is looked on like the tax collectors, as dishonest or disreputable? When have you ever acted like Jesus in this story? When have you ever acted like the Pharisees?*

# Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again." (John 8:2-11)

*Adultery was punishable by death in Judaism at this time, yet Jesus uses his authority to save her. Have you ever seen someone being picked on by a crowd, either at school, in your neighborhood, or somewhere else? How did you respond? How might you respond?*