**Grace Downtown CG Discussion Guide Feb 5-8, 2017**

 Matt. 4:23-25, 9:35-38

 Series: Signs of the King

**Announcements**

 **Habitat Build Day:** We are in need of volunteers to help build houses for Habitat for Humanity DC on **Saturday Feb 10** from 8:30 am-3:30 pm. No experience required. Please email joeiwaskiw@gmail.com if you are interested.

 **CQ Black History Month:** Join the Cultural Intelligence ministry team for an evening with the legendary poet Nikki Giovanni at Busboys and Poets, 2021 14th St NW, on **Saturday Feb 10**, 6:00-8:30 pm. Sign up on our website.

 **Q&A Regarding Our Move:** Join us after the service next **Sunday Feb 11** in Kendall 1 to hear about our upcoming move to the Chinese Community Church and bring any questions you have. Our first worship service in the new space will be Sunday March 4.

 **Mom’s Evening Winter Discussion Series:** All Grace DC moms and moms-to-be are invited to a discussion series on the book *Present Over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist on **Thursday, February 15** and **Thursday March 15** from 7:30-9:30 pm. For more info, email Meg Hoburg at mhoburg@msn.com.

# Introduction

In tonight’s passage, Jesus has just finished giving perhaps his most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. As he is on his way “down from the mountain,” Jesus is approached by a man with leprosy. The term “leprosy” is used in the Bible to describe a variety of serious diseases affecting the skin. It was apparently incurable and often deadly, the equivalent of modern-day terminal cancer. But leprosy was a fate worse than death, because the leper was cut off from society. Under the Old Testament law, lepers were ceremonially “unclean.” They were forced to live outside the community (Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:1-4), and were generally shunned—anyone who touched a leper would himself become unclean. Indeed, anytime someone approached a leper, the leper was required to call out “Unclean, Unclean!” (Lev. 13:45) Leprosy was also seen as a sign of God’s disfavor—numerous figures in the Old Testament were cursed with leprosy for their disobedience (e.g., Miriam (Num. 12:9-15); Gehazi, Elisha’s servant (2 Kings 5:20-28); Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21)).

Nevertheless, Jesus reaches out and touches the leper, who is immediately “cleansed.” Jesus instructs the now former leper to present himself at the temple to confirm that he has been healed. At the same time, Christ instructs the man to “say nothing to anyone” about what had taken place.

# Read and Discuss:

##  Read Matthew 8:1-4 aloud together.

1. What is the leper asking Jesus to do? Is he asking for healing, or something more than that?
2. What does the leper’s request reveal about his faith and who he believed Jesus to be?
3. Given the social status of lepers in Jewish society, how did the “great crowd[s]” who were following Jesus likely respond to the leper’s request?
4. Jesus has just given perhaps his most famous sermon and is surrounded by numerous followers. Amidst all of that, he stops and cares for an outcast. What does that tell us about the nature of the gospel?
5. In the very next passage, Jesus heals a centurion’s servant with a word (Matt. 8:5-13). Why then did Jesus touch the leper?
6. Why does the passage emphasize that the leper was not just healed, but made clean?
7. Why did Jesus tell the man to “say nothing to anyone”? (**Hint:** Remember the point in the sermon last week about those who came looking for miracles and missed the message.)
8. Why did Jesus tell the now former leper to present himself to the priest? (**Note:** This was required by Old Testament for lepers who believed they had been cleansed.)

# Application:

* 1. How is the leper’s approach to Jesus a good model for our prayers?
	2. Whom does our culture today treat as “lepers”? Have you been approached by one of these modern-day “lepers”? What was your reaction?
	3. How does Christ’s approach to the marginalized in his society inform how we should treat the marginalized in our society?

# Prayer:

... for each member of our community and our knowledge of the Lord. Pray that we would continually ask the Lord to open our eyes to know him more and pursue his calling for each of us with strength and vigor as we live with purpose and grace as witnesses in our city. (Psalm 57:2)

... for the Kingdom Prayer meetings. Pray that the Lord would use these meetings to turn our hearts to prayer and teach us to rely more on our heavenly Father. Pray that we use the meetings to reflect on our church and lift up its leaders and our mission in the city. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

... for those in need of healing in our community and our loved ones, whether that be emotionally, spiritually, or physically. Pray that we would ask in faith for the Lord to heal so we may glorify him and his good works. (Luke 18:35-43)