

WEEK 10: NOT JUDGING OTHERS & JESUS' MIRACLES

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

How can we work towards not judging others?

Icon Study: Jesus heals a leper

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible, Icon, paper, pencils

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 100-123

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 63-75

NOT JUDGING OTHERS

Read Matthew 7:1-6

We can all think of a time when we were dealing with someone who was incredibly frustrating to us. There may have even been other times when someone was treating us so horrifically unfair that we wanted them to recognize how mean they were being and apologize to us on the spot!

Jesus is teaching us to show mercy and forgiveness to the other person in these times, not out of submission, but out of love. What is the root cause of this person acting this way? Would we act similarly if we had the same life circumstances? Jesus tells us that He will show mercy to us at the Last Judgment IF we've shown mercy towards others. But...if we are going to be critical of others and unwilling to be merciful towards others, then He will show the same level of judgment towards us. We, essentially, create the intensity of our own judgment by how we've treated others.

How do we treat people when they've been mean to us? We look to the saints and see how they treated the people around them. More often than not, the saints were severely criticized by others. We see how peace washes over them as they place God first in their lives and they forgive all who have wronged them.

Saint Paisios shared:

If you want to help the Church, it is better to try to correct yourself, rather than be looking to correct others. If you manage to correct yourself, one small part of the Church is immediately corrected. Naturally, if everyone did the same, the body of the Church would be in good health. But, today, people concern themselves with anything but themselves. You see, judging others is easy, whereas working on yourself takes effort.

MIRACLES OF JESUS - HEALING A LEPER

Read Matthew 8:1-4

Crowds of people were continuously following and seeking Jesus. They knew that Jesus was healing innumerable people - not just people with a cold or the flu - but people who had incurable diseases or disabilities. Jesus healed countless people and each one of them became living testimonies that He was the Son of God.

We hear about some of the people Jesus healed in the gospels. The evangelists did not have room to record every last one of these miracles though. We read about many amazing ones - blind people being able to instantly see, paralyzed people being able to instantly get up and walk, and today we learn about a man with leprosy being healed.

We now know that leprosy is caused by a bacterial infection and can be cured with an intense treatment of 3 antibiotics for 6-12 months. We also know that the bacteria can be transmitted through a cough, sneeze, or runny nose - although not everyone that is infected with leprosy will develop the disease.

This was not known during the time of Jesus, but they also did not even have antibiotics at that time to cure it. It was common practice for the priest to evaluate the person to see if they thought it might be leprosy. (Leviticus 13) If they suspected the person had leprosy, they banished them from their community. The lepers tended to gather together in colonies to live the rest of their lives apart from not only family and friends - but everyone! It was a devastating disease to contract and was considered a living death!

Matthew writes, "And behold, a leper came..." indicating that the leper came out of seemingly no where. Lepers were not welcome amongst everyone else. It was common belief that the person was being punished for their sins because they had leprosy. They

also believed it would make them unclean as well to have any contact with the leper. The crowd would have parted for this person to make sure they didn't touch him. The leper had such deep faith that Jesus could heal him. The only question in the leper's mind was - Will He heal me?

"Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him," - This is a HUGE deal that Jesus touched this man. Jesus did this to show He was not subject to the law that forbids touching an unclean person, but Master of the law. 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

This man's life changed instantly on the spot. Not only was he cured of the leprosy, which affected his skin with scales and sores, his nerves, eyes, and the inside of his nose - but also enables him to live in society again. He can be with his family, have a job, and be part of the community again!

The first thing most of us would want to do in this situation is run and tell everyone, "Jesus healed me!!!!"

But Jesus tells him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

What? Why does Jesus tell this man not to tell anyone? Jesus was not interested in being praised for healing people. He healed the people because He had such deep love for them and wanted to relieve their pain. Additionally, Jesus already had huge crowds of people seeking Him out and following Him. If this man started proclaiming he was healed of leprosy by Jesus, the crowds would only get larger. This would not be beneficial to anyone because they didn't have restaurants and hotels back then like we do today. People were traveling from far and wide. The people had to bring food with them and camped outside. The cities could not support these large crowds and they would also make it impossible for Jesus to even enter the city.

However, Jesus does tell the man that he needs to follow the law and offer the gifts to the priest which Moses (Lev. 14) commanded to be done when a leper is cleansed. Afterwards, this man could formally be readmitted into society again. Jesus will be continuously accused by the Pharisees that He doesn't follow the law of the Jews. The cleansed leper can later bear witness that Jesus commanded him to follow the law.

HOW DO WE APPLY THIS TO OUR LIFE?

Not Judging Others:

We need to examine ourselves more often and go to confession when we recognize we are being critical of others. This is how we remove the plank in our own eye first.

We also need to actively look for the good in each person and each situation. When we expect to be disappointed, we are disappointed. When we expect to find something positive, we will find something positive.

Activity:

Ask the students to pause for a moment and think if there is something they need to confess in confession. (Nothing should be shared out-loud) Encourage them to find an opportunity to go to confession soon.

Pass out a small piece of paper to each student. At the top of each piece of paper is the name of one of the students present today. (Each person should *not* have their own name) Ask the students to write one thing they admire about this person, then fold the paper in half and return the paper to you. After everyone has completed the activity, open the papers and read all the positive things they see in each other out-loud.

Reminder - Go to confession to remove the plank in your own eye, and look for the positive in every person and every situation.

Icon Study: Jesus Cleanses the Leper

The leper approaches Jesus after He descends from the mountain. The mountain is shown on the left side of the icon with Jesus and “the multitudes”, including the Disciples. The city is shown in the background on the right side of the icon, along with the leper seeking Jesus.



WEEK 10: NOT JUDGING OTHERS & JESUS' MIRACLES

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

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LESSON

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MIRACLES OF JESUS - HEALING A LEPER

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This was not known during the time of Jesus, but they also did not even have antibiotics to cure it. It was common practice for the priest to evaluate the person to see if they thought it might be leprosy. (Leviticus 13) If they suspected the person had leprosy, they banished them from their community. The lepers tended to gather together in colonies to live the rest of their lives apart from not only family and friends - but everyone! It was a devastating disease to contract and was considered a living death!

Matthew writes, "And behold, a leper came..." indicating that the leper came out of seemingly no where. Lepers were not welcome amongst everyone else. It was common belief that the person was being punished for their sins because they had leprosy. They also believed it would make them unclean as well to have any contact with the leper. The crowd would have parted for this person to make sure they didn't touch him. The leper had such deep faith that Jesus could heal him. The only question in the leper's mind was - Will He heal me?

"Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him," - This is a HUGE deal that Jesus touched this man. Jesus did this to show He was not subject to the law that forbids

touching an unclean person, but Master of the law. 'I am willing; be cleansed.'
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Icon Study: Jesus Cleanses the Leper

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WEEK 10: NOT JUDGING OTHERS & JESUS' MIRACLES

3RD & 4TH GRADE

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We can all think of a time when we thought we were being treated unfairly. Sometimes it's hard to forgive the person, but Jesus teaches us to show mercy and forgiveness to the other person in these times, not out of submission, but out of love.

Jesus tells us that He will show mercy to us at the Last Judgment IF we've shown mercy towards others. But...if we are going to stay mad at the other person, then He will show the same level of judgment towards us later.

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1ST & 2ND GRADE

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CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer, collect money

JESUS HEALS A LEPER

Matthew 8

Jesus had lots and lots of people looking for Him because they wanted to listen to Him talk and also because they heard from others that He healed sick people. We read about many amazing miracles of Jesus - blind people being able to instantly see, paralyzed people being able to instantly get up and walk, and today we learn about a man with leprosy being healed.

A leper is someone who has leprosy. Leprosy is an infection that leaves the person with sores all over their body. When someone got leprosy, they were banished from their homes and cities! Nobody wanted to get it from them and so the leper had to leave and never come back! It was horrible!

This leper came to Jesus, knowing nobody wanted him around, in hopes that Jesus would heal him - and Jesus did! The man was instantly healed and all of the sores on his body disappeared!

Icon Study:

The leper approaches Jesus after He descends from the mountain. The mountain is shown on the left side of the icon with Jesus and “the multitudes”, including the Disciples. The city is shown in the background on the right side of the icon, along with the leper seeking Jesus.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Continue practice singing, “Lord, have mercy” in multiple languages



WEEK 10: NOT JUDGING OTHERS & JESUS' MIRACLES

PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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