

## **The Untouchables**

### **Matthew 8:1-17**

*He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and healed all the sick. This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said, "He took our sickness and removed our diseases." Matthew 8:16b & 17 NLT*

This passage contains the first three healings of Jesus that Matthew records, all three of them involve people who were at least somewhat on the outskirts of Jewish society in Jesus' time: a leper, a gentile, and a woman. The leper was considered unclean because of his physical condition, the centurion's servant because of his ethnicity, and Peter's mother-in-law because of her gender. Yet Jesus extended mercy and grace to them, especially in "touching" the leper.

**What groups in our society are sometimes on the outside looking in and how can followers of Christ extend grace, mercy, and love to them?**

Jesus did many healings while he was on this earth and he continues to heal today through the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet not everyone was healed in Jesus day and not everyone is healed today.

**What purpose(s) do you think the healings and miracles of Jesus served?**

**What does it mean to you personally that Jesus "touched" the leper and included the outsider (the centurion's servant) at the banquet? Can you relate to how either of these people might have felt when Jesus reached out to them?**

### **Something to Think About**

"The Gospel, in fact, has something far more important to tell than that Jesus healed (or can heal today). These single stories, these specific healing narratives, are not the heart of the gospel.

Disease is not the true enemy that must be overcome: that enemy is sin, for the fallen world produced by sin lies ultimately behind the suffering and sickness of this age. This is the enemy to be conquered by the end of the story (cf. 26:28). Properly perceived, these healings are most important as symbols of the much greater "healing" that is at the heart of the gospel, the healing of the cross. At the same time, they foreshadow the fulfillment of the age to come when all suffering and sickness are finally removed (cf. Rev 21:1-4)."

Donald Hagner in the Word Biblical Commentary

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