



Embracing the *UNTOUCHABLE*

PREVIEW

Today we're going to look at how Jesus ministered to individuals in a meaningful way, but a way that probably would get Him canceled by today's culture.

PRAISE

Take a few moments and discuss some things each member of the group have done to help those in need.

Has anyone ever been a part of a clothing drive? Food bank? Feeding homeless at church?

How did being a part of those events make you feel?

PARABLE

Throughout Jesus' life, we see Him impacting the world around Him one story at a time. He offered hope, healing, and restoration in ways that we struggle to wrap our heads around sometimes. Read Mark 1:40–42. A leper approached Jesus and knelt before Him. Leprosy, a dreaded incurable disease in ancient times, not only caused physical suffering but also brought immense social and religious stigma. Lepers were considered unclean and were isolated from society, shunned by their families and friends. Yet this desperate, marginalized man dared to approach Jesus.

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PARABLE *(continued)*

Filled with compassion, Jesus did something unthinkable in that cultural context—He reached out and touched the leper, defying social norms and religious taboos. He touched him. Lepers, when they came near people, had to announce themselves as they were approaching so people could move out of their way—like today's ten-foot-pole rule. But Jesus touched him. In that touch, Jesus conveyed not only physical healing but also a profound message of love. He shattered the walls of isolation and rejection, affirming the worth and dignity of every human being. Jesus saw beyond the external condition and showed the leper that he had worth.

Instantly, the leper's body was cleansed and his skin made whole again. But the healing went beyond the physical; it went deep into his soul. This outcast, once burdened with shame and despair, was now restored to society, his life forever changed by the love and compassion of Jesus.

PRESENT

Now consider the individuals in your classes, the people you walk through the hallways with. No matter how broken, marginalized, or despised they may be, Jesus reaches out to them with open arms. He longs to touch their lives, to heal their wounds, and to restore them to wholeness. Let us be inspired by the compassion of Jesus—girls who have complicated backgrounds; guys that have issues you don't know how to address; students who are clearly searching for something. Jesus' example

love and genuine care, recognizing the inherent worth of every person. Just as Jesus transformed the life of the leper, we too can become agents of transformation, carrying His love to the broken and wounded in our world.

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PRACTICE

When someone expresses a pain point in their life, think of it as a cue card. "My parents are going through a divorce." Cue card. "My aunt was just diagnosed with cancer." Cue card. "My whole family is falling apart right now." Cue card. "My dad just lost his job." Cue card. "Nobody at this school likes me; I have no friends." Cue card. Take these moments to be their friend—not to correct them, not to fix them, but to be there for them. When you have the power of God in you, you can be His love. You can touch their life in a profound way by being an encouraging voice and a friendly face. Do not be afraid to befriend someone completely different than you. Do not be afraid to embrace someone who has a different belief system than you. Jesus has proved repeatedly that He cares for individuals, so we should too. You do not have to have all the answers. You do not have to figure out their life. But let God love them through you.

PRAY

Jesus, I see in Scripture that You reached out to people who were untouchable in society. When I think about the world around me, there are individuals that I honestly don't know how to relate to. But I see Your example, and I want to be like You. Help me to love people who are different than I am. Help me to show compassion to people who are broken and outcast in this society. I know You offer hope, healing, and transformation. I ask today that You will help me to build a bridge of community

lives.

PLUS

Here are some practical pieces of advice to help us be the love of Jesus to those around us:

1. Practice active listening
2. Show kindness and mercy
3. Serve others selflessly
4. Practice empathy