**STUDY GUIDE – EPISODE SIX**

**INDESCRIBABLE COMPASSION**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**LUKE 5: 12 - 16**

Now there was a man full of leprosy in one of the towns where he was, and when he saw Jesus, he fell prostrate, pleaded with him, and said, “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, “I do will it. Be made clean.” And the leprosy left him immediately. Then he ordered him not to tell anyone, but “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.” The report about him spread all the more, and great crowds assembled to listen to him and to be cured of their ailments, but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.

**PSALM 103**

Bless Yahweh, O my soul. Bless God’s holy name, all that is in me. Bless Yahweh, O my soul, and remember God’s faithfulness in forgiving all your offenses, in healing all your diseases, in redeeming your life from destruction, in crowning you with love and compassion, in filling your years with good things, in renewing your youth like an eagle’s.

Yahweh does justice and always takes the side of the oppressed. God’s ways were revealed to Moses, and Yahweh’s deeds to Israel. Yahweh is merciful and forgiving, slow to anger, rich in love; Yahweh’s wrath does not last forever, it exists a short time only. We are never threatened, never punished as our guilt and our sin deserve.

As the height of heaven over earth is the greatness of Yahweh’ faithful love for those who fear God. Yahweh takes our sin away farther than the east is from the west. As tenderly as parents treat their children, so Yahweh remembers that we are dust. The human lasts no longer than grass, lives no longer than a flower in a field. One gust of wind, and that one is gone, never to be seen there again.

But Yahweh’s faithful love for those who fear God lasts from all eternity and forever, so too God’s justice to their children’s children, as long as they keep the covenant and remember to obey its precepts. Yahweh has established a throne in the heavens and rules over all. Bless Yahweh, O my soul.

**TABLE TALK**

* What characters impacted you this episode? What story line especially caught your attention?
* Jesus is teaching his followers while other actions are underway. How many of his parables and teachings were you able to notice? What are they? Which of the teachings / parables impacted you the most? Why?
* Leprosy was a disease in the time of Jesus which caused fear. It was a sickness which rendered a person no longer worthy of dignity, love or community. Are there any “like” situations in our world today? How do you think Jesus would respond? How are we called to respond?
* How did the disciples’ reaction to the leper differ from Jesus’ reaction? What do you suppose they thought when Jesus touched him? When he healed him?
* How would you describe the faith and courage of the leper or the paralytic’s friends? What are examples of such faith today?
* In order to take such extreme measures, what must Tamar and the 4 men who carried their friend believed about Jesus? What keeps you from pursuing Jesus with that same kind of passion?
* How did the healing of the paralytic impact the characters who were present? (Consider some or all: Abigail & Joshua, Matthew, Simon, Mary Magdalen, Nicodemus, Shmuel, Zebedee, Roman soldier, Egyptian woman Tamar and others present) – the paralytic himself?
* Can you relate at all to Matthew’s journey at this point? How do you see Matthew processing what he is witnessing?
* There is a lot of compassion emphasized in this episode. How did Jesus preach about and show compassion? What are some examples of how we can show the same kind of compassion?
* Have you had any kind of experience where you felt healed by Jesus?

**FOR FURTHER REFLECTION**

* Like the leper in episode 6, some people have radical come-to-Jesus moments. Others experience change in their lives over time. Regardless of how fast or slow, Jesus always transforms the lives of his followers. What changes has he made in your life? What new things are you hoping are still to come?
* Which of the four main characters do you relate to most regarding your own transformation? Mary, whose life changed in an instant? Nicodemus, who remained resistant and skeptical, perhaps unwilling to undergo the changes that would come from following Jesus? Matthew, who was earnest and open, though perhaps a little slower to make the leap? Or Simon, who was all-in early on, but who continued to struggle as he grew in faith?
* Are there ways today that we put God in a box? Limit God? How open are you to new understandings of God? When was a time you thought one way about God and then came to a different understanding about God?
* What have you experienced in your own spiritual journey that keeps you walking with Jesus?
* How does your faith compare to that of the leper or friends of the paralytic? What might be holding you back from that kind of faith?

**PRAYER POINTS**

* Thank God for accepting and loving you even with all of your brokenness.
* Pray for healing for people you know.
* Ask God to help you be more compassionate and to open your eyes to the people who most need your compassion right now.
* Thank God for forgiving your sins and then ask God to give you the same kind of faith as the leper and the friends of the paralytic had.

**SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS**

* For many people, a new start is hard to imagine. But what does Psalm 103:10 – 18 say about God’s capacity to forgive? How does the sacrament of reconciliation relate to the psalm?
* Choose one of the scripture passages from the teachings of Jesus in this week’s episode and use imaginative prayer to pray with it. Put yourself in the scene and let Jesus’ words soak into your being. How is he speaking to you and what is he saying?
* Read John 10”30 – 33, 37 – 39 In spite of the miraculous signs Jesus was doing, some people just didn’t believe – some even hated him. How does this knowing Jesus experienced both positive and negative reactions impact your willingness to be a witness for Jesus?

**JESUS’ TEACHINGS IN THIS EPISODE**

* A woman recalls the parable of the fishing net and asks when the day of judgment will come. Jesus replies with the parable of the 10 virgins. (Matthew 25:1 – 13
* Jesus asks if people who die in certain disasters were worse sinners than others. Luke 13:1 – 5
* Jesus says prayer should be done in private and without impressive-sounding words. Matthew 6:5 – 8
* Jesus says that when you give to the needy, you should not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Matthew 6:2 – 4
* Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Luke 18:9 – 14
* Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow Luke 18:1 – 8
* Jesus says God will clothe people just as he clothes the grass that is thrown into the fire Matthew 6:28 – 30 / Luke 12:27 – 28
* Jesus says Zebedee would not put his light under a basket Matthew 5:14 – 16 / Luke 8:16, 11:33 - 36