

## Introduction

Hi everyone! I want to thank you for the opportunity to share a message with you today.

## Ministry update

But before we jump in, I just want to say a huge word of thanks for all your support for our campus ministry. <BAM>.

Even though our season ended a lot differently than any of us expected, we still had an amazing year on all of our campuses.

God transformed the lives of so many students as we lived out our mission to be an incredible community where people experience Jesus and His transformation.

If you would like to hear some testimonies of how God has been working you can go to our website [genevahouse.ca](http://genevahouse.ca) or email us and we will send a copy of our latest ministry report.

It is full of stories of how lives have been changed, and I know you will be encouraged when you read them. So thank you for all of your support and for your partnership in our mission to disciple young adults.

## Message Introduction

The passage I would like us to reflect on today is Luke 17:11-19. <BAM>

I have been reading through Luke every morning for my devotions, and when I came across this section, it made me think about the situation we find ourselves in today. <BAM>

I am not sure all the ways that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted your life specifically, but communally, life has been shaken to the core.

We are facing scenarios that we have never faced before. Globally we are bombarded with sickness, grief, anxiety, financial uncertainty, and isolation.

It seems like so many things have changed, and not for the better.

In Kingston, you are not even allowed to sit on a park bench anymore. The other day 2 of our GH residents got kicked off one as they sat down by the water, and they were threatened with an \$800 fine.

Well let me tell you that that didn't sit well with them, so then ran all the way home to GH, where they can sit for as long as they want.

Things are very different now.

And in a time like this, I think it is so important to turn to God, and to ask Him to help us, and to speak to us. In a time like this I think we need a Word from the Lord. We need some encouragement and some direction.

And I think Luke 17 can offer us both. <BAM>

It has some rich wisdom as to how to live as followers of Jesus in the midst of struggle.

And I am excited to reflect on it with you today.

Before we jump into our text let's pray together:

### Prayer

HS, this is our prayer – please speak to us. We want to hear you. We need to hear you. We are surrounded by lots of voices – but we only want to hear one voice today. Your voice. Please speak to our very souls as we reflect on your Word, and transform us we pray.

### Context

Leading up to our passage, Jesus was making his way toward Jerusalem.

As he went, he stopped in villages along the way to teach about His Kingdom and to heal people from all sorts of sickness and evil spirits.

In Luke 17, Jesus is about to enter into a small town, when he comes across 10 men who have leprosy.

These 10 men see Jesus coming, and they cry out desperately to Him.

And do you know how Jesus responds?

He turns to them and speaks powerful words to them. Words that would change their lives forever.

Let's read the story and see how God wants to speak to us today. **<BAM>**

*I will be reading from the NIV and there is also a message HO attached to this message also.*

### Passage

#### *Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy*

<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

[Because leprosy was so contagious and so dangerous, anyone with the disease had to practice strict social distancing and isolation. They could only be around others who had leprosy. That meant that usually, they couldn't be close to family, or friends. And because it was over 2000 years ago, they didn't have the technology that we do. They couldn't Zoom their colleagues or Facetime their friends. The life of a person with leprosy was filled with loneliness and hopelessness. B/c there was no known cure at the

time. So catching the disease was usually a life sentence. As a result these 10 men were desperate to be healed from their sickness and set free from their struggle.] <BAM>

<sup>14</sup>When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

[In Hebrew culture, when people with leprosy were somehow miraculously healed, which was pretty rare, there was a special ceremony that took place to welcome them back into the community. If you want to read all about it, you can go to Lev 14 in the OT. The details are very specific, and they involve rituals, sacrifices, washing clothes, shaving heads, and more days of quarantine. It was a very extensive process that proved they were disease free and no longer were a danger to others.

So, the 10 men left, presumably to go through the ritual, but as they leaving, verse 15 says... ] <BAM>

<sup>15</sup>One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup>He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

[The fact that he as a Samaritan was a big deal because Jewish people did not like Samaritans. Samaritans were their cousins who had disobeyed God’s law and had intermarried with the Assyrians. As a result, Samaritans were considered impure to the Jewish people. They were an unclean people group. And there is a great irony here -because it was the most unclean of the unclean... who was the only one to embrace not just the gift, but the giver. He came back and fell at Jesus’ feet in praise and submission. And... ] <BAM>

<sup>17</sup>Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup>Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup>Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

## Teaching

There is always so much that we can reflect on in a passage of Scripture. There are so many layers, and such deep truth.

But as I reflected on this section, and as I thought about all that we are going through today with COVID infecting our lives in one way or another, I felt that there are at least 3 things that our passage was calling me to do in such a time as this. And I wonder if these 3 things might be something that God is calling all of us to do.

### 1. Focus on Jesus More [c]

The first thing I was challenged to do when I read this passage was to Focus on Jesus More.

Have you ever noticed that there are a lot of things in life that are trying to get our attention?

The other day I wanted to find a recipe for pork tenderloin, and my wife Julia suggested I look on Pinterest. <BAM>

Have you been on Pinterest before? I hadn't really spent a lot of time on it, but I always listen to Julia, so I thought I would give it a try.

So I went onto Pinterest and found a nice-looking picture of pork tenderloin. <BAM>

And everything was going great up to that point, but as soon as I clicked on the link, all of a sudden it was like I was in Times Square.

There were ads popping up everywhere. Big shiny boxes that said – Follow me! Subscribe now! Click here! And most of the them had nothing to do with cooking.

It took me a long time to wade through all the distractions and to even find the ingredients list.

And if you ask me, looking for tenderloin instructions on Pinterest, was a recipe for disaster. I was hog tied by all the visual stimulation.

Ok maybe I am hamming it up a bit, but have you ever had an experience with pop up ads bombarding you?

The CBC had a mind-blowing article a little while ago which talked about the science behind apps. <BAM>

And it turns out that app designers are using neuroscience, the study of the brain, to get people hooked on their product.

You can find a link to the article in the handout I prepared:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/marketplace-phones-1.4384876>

One designer who runs a firm called Dopamine labs, said this: <BAM>

To make a profit, companies "need your eyeballs locked in that app as long as humanly possible," ... "And they're all in a technological arms race to keep you there the longest."

I guess they figured if it meant making more \$, working with neuroscience was a no-brainer.

The app designers are trying to get into our heads and they want control of our minds.

And the big goal is to keep our attention.

They are trying to reel us in and keep us in.

One of the games I got hooked on is called Homescapes. <BAM> Ever heard of it?

Homescapes is a seemingly harmless little game where you design a home.

You add on rooms, put in furniture, and help a guy named Austin fix up his place. Doesn't that sound like a great idea?

But...here is the catch...in order to do all these things, you need stars. And you get stars by playing this little match game. If you win you get rewarded with more stars. If you lose, you can try again, as long as you don't run out of lives. If you run out of lives you have to wait, or you can buy more lives. You need lives to get the stars to unlock more rooms, and to go to the next level. And there are always more levels.

And if you let yourself get sucked in, before you know it, you just spent 3 hours of your life that you will never get back, glued to your phone playing Homescapes. And for what purpose? Well, I got a lot of stars, and I made the app designers very happy.

If it is not Homescapes, it could be Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Minecraft or whatever else is giving you push notifications right now.

It seems like there is an endless line of people who want our time and focus.

And sometimes, they can distract us from what is most important in life.

One of big goals on our campuses is to get students connected to God on a deep level. **<BAM>** And one of the ways we do that is by inviting them to be part of discipleship groups that we call huddles.

Huddles are designed to get students reflecting on the Bible and listening to what God wants to say to them. We encourage them to spend time doing this every day, and that might sound easy, but it actually takes a lot of discipline to do it.

Students often struggle with making time to listen to God.

And do you know why students often struggle with this?

Well, they tell me that there are so many distractions. So many other things to do.

I did a little survey with some of them and I asked them to tell me the top 3 things that distract them from spending time with God. Do you want to guess what they said? **<BAM>**

1. #1 answer = Their Phone
2. School
3. Tie between – Netflix and Worrying about their future

If you were to come up with a list, what would it look like?

What distracts you from spending time with God? **<BAM>**

Anything can become a distraction and can get in the way of spending time with God, if we let it.

In our story, the lepers realized that they were given an amazing opportunity to meet with Jesus. God was coming close to them and all they had to do was call out. And when they reached out,... Jesus met them in such a powerful way...it would change their lives forever.

I realize that everyone's specific situation is a little different today. Some people are being forced to stay home, others are being forced to work. For some, the daily routine hasn't even changed that much.

But I think for all of us, today is a great day to focus on Jesus more. When everything is changing, we can hold on to the truths that Jesus remains the same. He never changes.

And this present age is a time of preparation for an eternal age where Jesus will be the main focus. Our life is a time of training for what comes next, and one of the best things we can do now is to learn to focus our whole lives on what is most important in life - Jesus.

Here are some questions for reflection: <BAM>

#### Questions

- In a normal day (whatever that means for you), how much time do you spend focusing on Jesus?
- <BAM> What distractions keep you from paying attention to Him?
- <BAM> What can you do to make Jesus more of a priority?

So challenge 1 = Focus on Jesus More <BAM> (BLANK)

#### 2. Praise God More

The second challenge our text raised for me was this – I need to Praise God More.[c]

You know how we said that app designers are messing with our brains?

Well it turns out that practicing thankfulness can also impact our brains and it can even lead to greater mental health.

A study <BAM> by Univ of California Berkley found that "Gratitude has lasting effects on the brain".

They write that being thankful can help set us free from "toxic emotions".

And it turns out that the more we are thankful, the more thankful we become.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_gratitude\\_changes\\_you\\_and\\_your\\_brain?fbclid=IwAR3clWD89NC5-d3FyYMXPF-zAszkWED8rLGRQVxvIhgu5R6VXaZVaxtaC8](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain?fbclid=IwAR3clWD89NC5-d3FyYMXPF-zAszkWED8rLGRQVxvIhgu5R6VXaZVaxtaC8)

In our text, <BAM> the thankfulness of the Samaritan stands in stark contrast to the other 9 who had exactly the same experience.

The Samaritan was grateful. He praised God because Jesus did an amazing thing for him.

He was released from a terrible struggle and given a new life.

But I did wonder this - what if Jesus didn't heal him?

What if his prayers were not answered the way he wanted?

Would he still praise God?

When I thought about this, I was reminded me of another man in the bible who was also afflicted with a skin disease. He had boils all over his body, from top to bottom. His name was Job. <BAM>

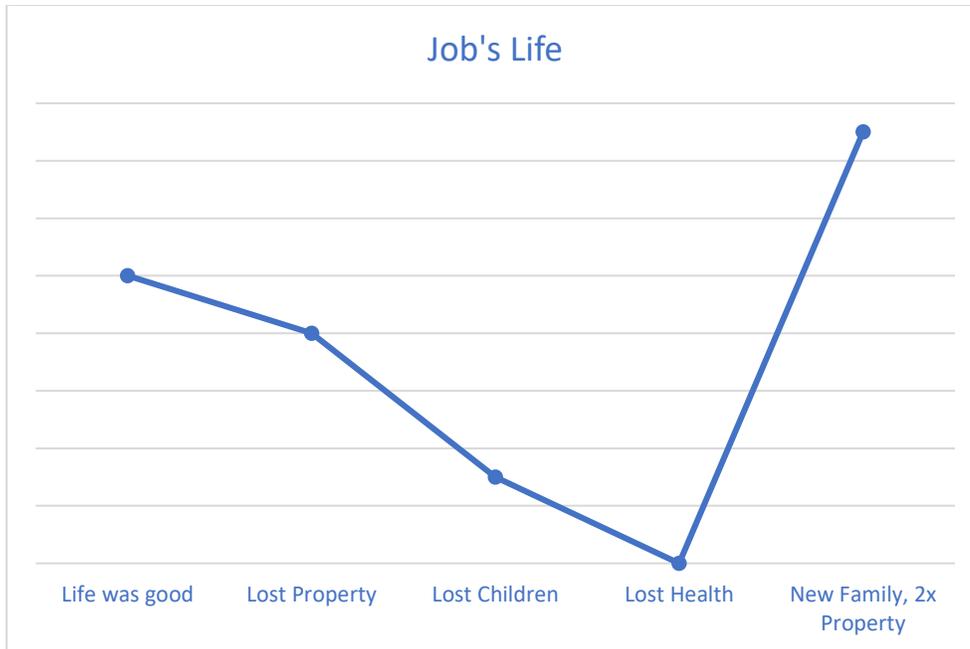
Job is often held up as one of the best examples of a person in the bible who endured tremendous struggle. He had it all and then lost it all. Eventually things turned around for him again, but not before he had to go through terrible loss.

He lost his finances, his family, and his fitness.

He experienced tremendous highs and lows.

His life was a little bit like the stock market right now.

And if we were to map out his life it might look something like this: <BAM>



The book of Job is an authentic and honest look at his pain, his questions, and his commitment to God. And one thing that Job said always stands out for me.

As he was grieving all that he had lost, at one point, he fell to his knees and said this:

“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Praise the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21)

When I read that verse and I read our text, I am challenged to praise God more, no matter what the circumstance.

I am pretty good at praising God when He gives me exactly what I was hoping for.

But I am not very thankful when things don't go well.

Here is a tough Q I am faced with:

Would I praise God if I lost everything?

A classic song that comes to mind is Matt Redmond's – Blessed be your name. <BAM>

For some of you that is an old song, for others it is a new one.

On your outline there is a link to a good version on Youtube that you can listen to later:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw4H5t3TWHM>

And here are a couple of verses that remind me to praise God when things are going well and when things are really challenging.

Blessed be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's 'all as it should be'  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name  
On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name

*HO additional reading on Praising God....*

<https://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/debbie-mcdaniel/what-the-power-of-praise-can-do.html>

Here are some Questions: <BAM>

Who are you most like:

The healed man who returned to praise God.

9 healed men who got what they wanted and didn't come back to say thanks.

Job

<BAM> How quick are you to praise God?

<BAM> What can you do to praise God more, no matter what the circumstances?

That's our second challenge – praise God more.

3. Have More Faith

And the third challenge from our text is this - <BAM> (blank) have more faith.

Someone once asked Billy Graham to give them “a simple definition of faith”, and he responded by saying this: - <BAM>

Faith simply means believing that something is true, and then committing our lives to it. In the Bible, “faith” means believing in God, and in what Christ has done for us to make our salvation possible—and then committing ourselves to Him.

<https://billygraham.org/answer/can-you-give-me-a-simple-definition-of-faith/>

So faith has 2 big parts - believing and surrendering.

In our story the Samaritan showed faith by doing both of those things:

- He believed what Jesus said
- And He surrendered his life to Christ

And did you notice what Jesus said to him in verse 19...

“Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

10 men were healed, but only one had faith.

We don't know what the next month, or the next 6 months, or the next year is going to look like. -

**<BAM>blank**

And that can be a very unsettling thought.

But what do we know? What are the unshakeable truths that we can hold onto? What does God say that we can believe in and put our trust in?

Well, We can trust God when He says: **<BAM>**

10 ...do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

We can choose to believe that **<BAM>**

... God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

And, we can **<BAM>**... know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Questions **<BAM>**

What do you need to believe about Jesus?

- That He loves you?
- That He will take care of you?
- That He can save you from whatever trouble you are facing if you let Him?

And <BAM> What do you need to surrender to Jesus?

- Where are you holding back?
- Is there an area of your life that is off limits to God?
- Is there something that you are clinging to that is keeping you from clinging to Christ?
- What would it take for you to fall at Jesus feet and call Him the Master of your life?

Faith is believing and surrendering.

And if we have faith,....what else do we really need?

## Conclusion

<BAM> blank

When chaos strikes, it shows us that we are not in control of our lives.  
And it reminds us how much we need God.

The 10 men cried out to Jesus because they knew there was no one else who could help them the way God could.

When it seems like everything is out of our control, there is something we can do -

We can turn to the one who is in control.

Today let's

- Focus on Jesus More
- Praise God More
- Have More Faith

And let us remember these words from Jesus: [c]

- Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NLT)

Prayer

Song of Response: Lord I Need You ?