

LENT 2

“I Do Choose”

Read Luke 5:12-16

Healing was central to Jesus' ministry, and a sign of God's reign of love and compassion breaking in. This story is striking in that this man's illness has resulted not only in physical suffering and deformity, but also in devastating social stigma and isolation. Even so, he bravely asks Jesus for help, hoping He might be different and choose to come near instead of running away.

“Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” Jesus reaches out, touches the untouchable, and verbally assures him, saying, “I DO choose! Be made clean.”

Of course, from our perspective, it seems a no-brainer that we would choose to heal someone if we could. However, the way he asks makes it clear that many people previously walked away, leaving him with little hope.

We today have so many choices, don't we? We have the choice to save our resources for ourselves or share them. To keep our love and compassion only for those who look or think like we do, or give it freely. To see those who are suffering or look away. But Jesus chooses to see him, reach out to him, and share his gift of healing and wholeness.

Through Zoe Empowers, we are offered a chance and a choice—to see vulnerable children and their families, and to choose to offer them holistic health, healing love and a future with hope. For impoverished children, food is medicine!

Let's travel to Tanzania now and visit Salha, and see how the stigma and fear of a skin condition caused great hardship for this family until they joined Zoe.

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Jesus doesn't stop at physical healing for this man. He realizes his need for social healing. Thus, he sends him to the priest to be seen and restored to his place in the community. Here he can also give a witness to God's grace in his life!

Orphaned children often experience stigma and isolation, sometimes because of fear of AIDS, sometimes because of their begging for food, or just for the fact they are living in extreme poverty. Through Zoe Empowers, we get to see once stigmatized and isolated children restored to dignity and connection in their communities.

Come and see how as Marianne in Rwanda shares her life story of moving her family out of the stigma of extreme poverty.

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Questions for Reflection & Discussion

1. How is your Lenten fast going? What choices are you making?
2. How can you as a family, small group or church choose to bring healing and hope to vulnerable children?
3. Who in your local community are stigmatized or marginalized?
4. How can you choose to offer them a hand of healing and welcome?

Prayer

Jesus, we give thanks for your example of never hesitating to choose reaching out and touching people with your love and compassion. Help us to be more aware of those needing us to choose- kindness, gentleness, a soft word in response to anger, healing touch, or even just a smile. May we be generous and unhesitating in our compassionate love. For we are your body, praying in your name, Amen.

Action

Discuss ways you, your extended family, small group or church can choose to touch more orphaned young people in the future. Let this scripture speak to you about your financial choices. Add to your Blessing box today.

"We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." - 1 John 3:16-18