



CRAZY FAITH

THE KIND OF FAITH THAT MOVES MOUNTAINS



Small Group Discussion Guide



PREPARATION

STUDY

Spend the week studying Matthew 8:1-4. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

LANDING POINT

I have confidence in God's power, character, and plan for me.



GROUP DISCUSSION

CONFIDENTIALITY | What's said in the group stays in the group.

NO CROSS-TALK | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

NO FIXING | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

SHARING | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

FAITH IS REQUIRED

Faith is at the heart of Christianity. What we believe and how that impacts our lives depend on faith. Faith is required if we want to please God, and Jesus tells us that with faith we can move mountains (Matthew 17:20).

So, what is faith? It isn't wishful thinking or blind trust. Skeptics say biblical faith is a "leap in the dark" or that faith and reason are incompatible.¹ But biblical faith is "a confident trust in the eternal God who is all-powerful, infinitely wise, eternally trustworthy..."² Faith is about belief and surrender. It's believing who God has revealed Himself to be in His Word. And it's surrendering to God's will and trusting Him to do His best for your best.

In this series we'll be looking at stories of faith from Matthew. This week your group will discuss a time when a leper showed great faith in Jesus and how his faith then gives us confidence today to trust in God's power, character, and plan.

Q: *What one word best describes faith for you? Explain.*



DEEPER DIVE

Select 2–3 questions to discuss as a group.

JESUS ENCOUNTERS A LEPER

If you lived in Jesus' day, the last thing you would want is leprosy. This terrible skin disease made you an outcast in society. You were forced to live separated from others; and if you ever did encounter someone outside your leper colony, you had to alert them, saying, "Unclean! Unclean!"

One day a leper noticed a crowd following Jesus and this leper, an outcast who was unwelcome anywhere, had the audacity to approach Jesus with a request. Let's take a closer look at their encounter.

Q: Have someone read Matthew 8:1-4. In what ways does the leper demonstrate faith?

Q: Share about a time when you had to trust God in faith about something.

Q: What's one area in your life that needs Jesus's healing touch?



REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

A FAITH THAT TRUSTS

We can learn a lot from the bold faith of this leper. He trusted Jesus and He know what Jesus could do for him. Put simply, faith is trust in God. It's **trust** in God in the following ways:

- *God's Power.* The leper needed a miracle because, up to that point, no one from the nation of Israel had been healed from leprosy except Miriam, Moses's sister. But the leper believed Jesus could heal him. Faith is believing that nothing is impossible for God.
- *God's Character.* Jesus touched the leper which was scandalous, because the law stated that touching a leper would make you unclean. But Jesus showed compassion to the leper that day and, instead of becoming unclean, He made the unclean clean. Faith is believing that God is good, loving, kind, and always does what's best.
- *God's Plan.* The leper knew that Jesus didn't have to heal him, which is why he told Him, "If you will, you can make me clean." God has a plan for everyone and His plan is bigger than we can fully comprehend. Faith is believing that God's plan is for His glory and your good. He may not grant every request but everything He does is leading you closer to Him.

Q: What makes it difficult to trust God in faith?

Q: How could remembering the character of God change the way you look at situations in your life?

Q: What's one way you can draw closer to God in faith this week?

Q: How can the group be praying for you this week?



COMMENTARY

LEPROSY AS SIN “Leprosy is an illustration of sin (Isa. 1:5–6). The instructions given to the priests in Leviticus 13 help us understand the nature of sin: Sin is deeper than the skin (Lev. 13:3); it spreads (Lev. 13:8); it defiles and isolates (Lev. 13:45–46)...”³ Jesus’s healing of the leper foreshadows what He will do at the cross. He will make the unclean clean.

PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING In the gospels, we see Jesus functioning in three main Old Testament roles as Messiah: prophet, priest and king. The healing of the leper “is a reminder to us of the priestly function of the Messiah. In the Old Testament, it was the priest who dealt with skin diseases such as leprosy (see Lev. 13–14).”⁴

WHY KEEP QUIET? “Jesus frequently tells people not to talk about him, even in contexts in which it is highly unlikely he will be obeyed, probably to avoid stirring up even more hope for a militaristic and royal Messiah who would rid the land of the Romans.”⁵

ENDNOTES:

1. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2379.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 33.
4. Iain D. Campbell, *Opening up Matthew*, *Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2008), 55–56.
5. D. A. Carson, “The Gospels and Acts,” in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 1714.