

## World Leprosy Sunday Sermon Notes

Luke 17:11 -19 This story is taught in the context of Jesus talking about the Kingdom of God, and that it is faith which brings us in, and it will surprise us who has faith.

*The reading is Luke 17:11-19*

*I would read the sermon to yourself five times to feel comfortable with it. I have left margins and space for you to write notes/comments which you may find helpful yourself.*

### **INTRODUCTION: Slide 11 in service order**

Jesus used to travel about the villages with his disciples. They would go from hamlet to town. And many people heard about him. He was heading to Jerusalem, and was about to go into a village. Before he entered the village, ten men with leprosy started shouting at him. They had to shout because they weren't allowed in the village. The law and custom discriminated against them because of their disease. So they shouted at Jesus from a distance "Jesus, Master, have pity on us". Were they calling out to be cured? Or did they just want to be noticed by Jesus? Just to be noticed by someone might have been all they wanted. Ever since the priest had told them they had leprosy they had had to leave their families. They had left their wives, their children and their friends. They weren't allowed to go into villages, or towns. They had to keep their distances from people. So maybe they just wanted Jesus to notice them. Leprosy is one of the oldest diseases in the world. We don't know for sure if the ten men with leprosy in Luke 17 had leprosy, like we know it for today. But we do know they were left stigmatised and isolated the same way people affected by leprosy are today. Leprosy means your nerves end up being damaged, and you can end up with severe disabilities.

At the start of the 1990s there were over 20 million people living with the effects of leprosy. Thanks to the implementation of Multi Drug Therapy – a combination of 3 antibiotics, better screening for people affected by leprosy, it is now down to 5 million people living with the effects of leprosy. People used to have to take dapsone for life, but now they take Multi Drug Therapy for 1 year.

But every year there are still thousands of people who are diagnosed with leprosy. People just like Shabnam. Like the 10 men with leprosy she wanted to be noticed. She wanted to be helped.

### **Hoping to be noticed: Slide 12 in service order (Slide of Shabnam)**

Shabnam was only 16 years old when she was frightened to see her hands swelling up and discoloured patches appeared on her face. Soon, she had no feeling in her hands at all. **She was terrified.**

Shabnam's leprosy began to destroy her face and her body, the patches spread across her face. Then, the bridge of her nose completely collapsed.

*'At first my nose began to bleed a lot and I didn't know why. But now I understand that my condition with my collapsed nasal ridge is as a result of being leprosy affected,' says Shabnam.* She broke down in tears as she talked about how frightened she was.

Shabnam was very insecure about the telltale signs of leprosy on her face, **but what broke her heart most of all was being rejected by members from her own family because of her leprosy.** She dropped out of school and she felt isolated and alone.

Shabnam was desperate and needed to be helped!!

***Like the 10 men with leprosy this could mean that Shabnam could end up living at a distance from her community, rejected by some of her very own family members.***

### **Working Hard**

The 10 men with leprosy wouldn't have wanted to live at a distance from their family. Shabnam didn't want to live at a distance from her community and her family either.

They would have wanted to keep working hard. Shabnam also wanted to work hard and to be loved and accepted by ALL her family.

Shabnam wanted to be cured of leprosy. Shabnam lives in India.

India has the highest number of people affected by leprosy and it accounts for 60% of all new leprosy cases in the world.

Devastatingly, India also has the world's highest rates of new Covid-19 cases. The pandemic there makes life doubly hard for people with leprosy.

Like the 10 men with leprosy Shabnam ended up isolated from her community and some of her family. Unable to participate in life with others, Shabnam needed a life line!!! She needed a miracle!

### **Being Healed Slide 13**

So the ten men stood at a distance shouting at Jesus "Jesus, Master, have pity on us".

When Jesus saw them, he shouted back at them, "Go, show yourselves to the Priests." Because it was the priest who would determine if they were healed and could go back and join the community. And as the men went, they became healed!

One of them, when he was healed, could not contain himself! He came back, praising God, loudly, shouting louder even than he had before. He threw himself at Jesus' feet, thanking him, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan. He was the one least likely to come back!

Jesus asked him "Were not all of you healed? Where are the others? Has no one come back to praise God except you, a foreigner?" Then Jesus looked at him, and said "rise and go; your faith has made you well."

In the same way the ten men wanted to be healed so did Shabnam. She didn't have anyone to call out to though. Instead someone called out to her!

Immediately, some of her family took her to the Mission's Shahadra Hospital in Delhi where she was diagnosed with leprosy.

Shabnam was put on multi-drug therapy, the cure for leprosy. *She will take daily antibiotics for 12 months and she will be cured from leprosy.*

### **Slide 14 (Slide of Shabnam)**

As part of her healing journey, Shabnam will receive medical care and counselling. Shabnam will learn to overcome the pain of rejection she feels and she will rebuild her confidence.

*Shabnam's life will be completely transformed.*

Shabnam will be cured of leprosy. She will also be taught physiotherapy to ease the stiffness in her hands.

Shabnam will attend the Mission's Faizabad Vocational Training Centre. She will be able to learn a sewing skill and be supported into employment or to start her own small business.

### **SHOWING GODS LOVE**

Jesus healed the ten men with leprosy. In the same way Jesus healed the ten men with leprosy, Jesus was able to **touch** Shabnam, HEAL her and restore her!

*Who in your life needs to be touched? Who in your neighbourhood needs a loving word said to them, or a kind deed performed for them? We all need to make attempts to love those who often go unloved. Sometimes we might need to ask Jesus to help us learn to love those we would rather not love, and to love those who maybe don't get much love. That is what Jesus modelled for his disciples. If we are his disciples, we will do the same thing.*

What is so wonderful and humbling is that **HE** uses normal people like you and I to continue **HIS** ministry of mending hands and feet, to help cure people affected by leprosy. With your help, we can spread the truth about leprosy. We can make sure that no person ever feels the rejection and pain that Shabnam felt.

*As we pray together with people around the world this World Leprosy Sunday we are connected through Gods love with people affected by leprosy. Spreading the message that leprosy can be cured and all people are loved in Gods sight.*

*Will you partner with others all around the world to ensure that in our lifetime we end leprosy? Jesus cured people with leprosy in his lifetime. He is calling us to end leprosy in ours.*

Pray

Please find slides and video link on [www.leprosymission.org.nz/wls](http://www.leprosymission.org.nz/wls)