

11th May 2008

KINGDOM OF INCLUSION

Mark 1:40-45

- (1) What hints are there in these verses of the pain of this man's exclusion that were part and parcel of his leprosy? Listen to the people in the group who have stories of feeling excluded e.g. bullying, being made to feel the odd one out, being mocked or looked down on etc.
- (2) Glance briefly at the Lev 13 & 14 to see the seriousness with which this condition was treated. Notice the exclusive role of priests. In the light of this what is unusual about this man asking Jesus for 'cleansing', and Jesus taking this priestly role on himself?
- (3) Jesus touches the man. How does Jesus' action undermine the general fear of contamination?
- (4) It mentions that Jesus was stirred by anger (more likely in the original than 'compassion'). Why? How do we respond when exclusion tactics are used? Are there any stories of people's experiences of seeing someone or group excluded?
- (5) When the man with leprosy was healed it says Jesus a) warned him sternly (literally 'snorted with indignation' b) sent the man away (strong word again, literally, 'threw him out') c) told him to go through the Jerusalem rituals for cleansing as a 'witness to (or 'against') them' (the priests). What is this very strong language about?
- (6) How have group members found that knowing Jesus has helped them to feel they belong? How have attitudes and opinions been changed by belonging?
- (7) What prejudices might be challenged by this story? When does a strong conviction become a prejudice? Does the gospel help us with our strong convictions and prejudices? How?
- (8) Spend time praying about excluded individuals or groups of people. Reflect personally in a time of quiet about attitudes that might be considered prejudices.