

John 5:2-8 Mark 7:24-30
Transformational encounters with Jesus

Warm Up

It is said, that when we meet a new person, we make a judgement about them within 15 seconds. What do you look at first, what judgments do you make? Be honest!

Background and context

In these two stories involving people Jesus met, lives are transformed by the encounter. In one, a man who was paralysed could not access the healing waters of the pool of Siloam. Then, in the second, a foreign woman, whose life was in turmoil because of her demon possessed daughter. Jesus looks beyond their immediate concerns or their status in life and tackles the root problem in order to transform their lives.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity

READ John 5:2-8 .What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

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1. What was the man's issue and what was stopping him receiving the healing he desired?
 2. The text appears to suggest that Jesus took time to find out about the man and his situation. Why do you think Jesus asked him: "Do you want to get well?"
 3. What do you think sometimes stops people today from seeking help with their problems?
 4. Why do people think that Jesus (or the church) can't help?
 5. How can we as Christians "go the extra mile" and look beyond the person to support those with particular needs like debt, unemployment, mental health issues etc.?

Read Mark 7: 24-30

6. In what way was the status of the woman opposite to that of Jesus?
7. V27. This verse could easily be misconstrued as "charity begins at home." Why do you think Jesus said it? What was His point?
8. What does the woman's response reveal about her attitude?
9. How can Christians/Church avoid the "Charity begins at home" mentality?
10. What is the Church's priority, spreading the Gospel or social action?

Discipleship and Application

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11. What are the ingrained prejudices in your own life that you struggle to overcome?
 12. How can you develop a more Christ-like attitude to those in need, or strangers we meet?

Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.



There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.