

1,2,3 STORY TIME!

WILL THIS MAN DARE TO COME TO JESUS?

Today, we're going to talk about friends; do you have any friends? Certainly! It's important to have friends and even more important to have good friends. If not. You feel lonely and it's sad. You can count on your friends; share your games with them, your joys and your worries. It makes us feel good. Are you a good friend, a friend who can be counted on? Friendship is important ... but do you know what compassion is, and how to show compassion? No! Not really! Well, you will know what it is by listening to the story we are going to tell you. You can read it in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark and then you can answer my question: what is compassion?

WHAT WILL JESUS DO WHEN HE SEES THIS SITUATION?



Imagine a man all alone, without work, without money, without a future, without a friend, a man who is totally rejected by everyone. It's hot or it's cold ... it's the same! He lives in a kind of wooden hut, on a piece of waste land, in summer there's dust and in winter mud and he lives outside the village. Yes! He is forbidden to enter the village and even more so, the temple. There's no way that he can go to pray or listen to the Word of God, no way that he can hear words that could give

him courage or hope.

Why is he in this situation? Why was he forced to leave his friends and his family? Did he do something wrong? No! He is simply sick! He has a very serious illness.

He is disfigured by nasty wounds, his hands, his feet, and his whole body causes him constant pain. Do you know what this disease is? It's called leprosy. At that time, there was no treatment for this disease. No-one wanted to be in contact with a leper because they were afraid of catching this illness. When people brought food to a leper, they put the food in his hut and left in haste. If a leper walked even a short distance, he would have to shout: - Leper! Leper! Unclean! As soon as he saw people.



People would immediately lower their heads, and walk away as fast as they could to avoid the leper. They didn't want to see the leper and they certainly didn't want to touch him, nor to be touched by him. He bothered people; he would scare them and even disgust them, for he was different. Would we go so far as to be mean to him? Perhaps it happened to him! Alone, in pain, with no hope of ever getting better, his life is terribly sad.

It is not known how he heard about Jesus but one day he learned that He was in the region. People were getting ready to go and listen to Him and take their sick to be healed.

What is he going to do? What can he do? He cannot get close to anyone! He is rejected by everyone? Will he dare to get close Jesus? What will Jesus do when He sees



him? Ill he steps aside? Look away? He decides to try, and painfully tries to get close to Him.

When people saw him approaching, they would shout:

- A leper! and would move away as quickly as possible.

But he threw himself down at Jesus feet and begged Him:

- Lord, if you want, you can heal me, and make me pure.

Jesus looked at him and was moved with compassion. It's as if he himself felt the immense suffering and despair of this man.

He laid his hand on the leper and said to him:

- Yes, I do want to heal you, be healed, be pure now!

Immediately, the miracle occurred and the leprosy completely disappeared right there in front of everyone. It was done! The skin of this man became soft and pure like that of a young child .The wounds and the pains disappeared completely.

- Thank you, thank you Jesus, he cried. Glory to God! I am healed, you healed me, my life will never be the same again. Now, I can go home and live with my family again! Glory to God!



He returned to his family and, as you can imagine, he told everyone of what Jesus had done for him. So what happened next?

Well, as soon as Jesus arrived in another city, people ran to him, listened to him and were healed.

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



The leper was rejected by everyone, but dared to come to Jesus.

And would you dare to come to Jesus? You can. He will welcome you with open arms.

Do you understand what compassion is? This is the question that we asked you.

Seeing the leper, Jesus was moved with compassion. He was greatly saddened and He understood all his suffering, his sadness and his unhappiness.

He understood it so much and felt it so much that He not only brought a word of consolation, and encouragement, but he acted, he did something mighty. He healed the man and cleansed him. This is what compassion is.

Perhaps you have a friend who is alone, sad and in pain. Do you have compassion for him? What could you do.....think about it. Even the little things are important when you are alone.

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



This story moves us. We see Jesus moved with compassion when faced with the dramatic situation of this man. It was because of His great compassion for us and for our children that he came to earth. He saw our spiritual misery and our sinful situation before God. He came and gave his life to cleanse us not from leprosy, but from our sins. His compassion is limitless.

We are sometimes led to use compassion towards our children but compassion is not weakness. When they see us moved by compassion for our neighbor, their sick friend, for a frail and sickly grandmother, they understand the inner depth of this feeling that makes us act.