

## DAY 4 MIDDAY/EVENING OFFICE

### *Silence and Stillness before God (1-2 minutes)*

#### Scripture Reading

On a day of rest—a holy day, Jesus went to eat at the home of a prominent Pharisee. The guests were watching Jesus very closely. A man whose body was swollen with fluid was there. Jesus reacted by asking the Pharisees and the experts in Moses' Teachings, "Is it right to heal on the day of rest—a holy day, or not?" But they didn't say a thing. So Jesus **took hold of the man**, healed him, and sent him away. (Luke 14:1-4)

#### Devotional

Jesus is under the critical eye of the religious leaders. This was not without reason. In Luke 12, Jesus had drawn a line in the sand, calling them "phonies" and "religious bullies." In Luke 13, Jesus broke all the rules and healed on the Sabbath. So, it's no surprise that in Luke 14, they have a plan to get rid of Jesus.

So, they've invited Jesus to the home of a "prominent Pharisee." And in verse 2, Jesus looks up to see a man standing in front of him, his body suffering from dropsy. One translation says the man had "abnormal swelling of his body" (NASB). This man is not where he should be, and was certainly not an invited guest. He's simply bait, brought there to entrap Jesus. He was an outsider, he didn't belong there – and because of his disease he would have been an outcast, shunned, untouchable, and lived a very lonely life on the periphery of society.

You see, the religious leaders knew that Jesus would be Jesus. They knew that Jesus would have mercy and heal the man on the Sabbath, and thereby indict himself. And in verse 4, it says that Jesus "**took hold of the man.**" That is, Jesus **embraced** him.

Years ago, I came across the story of a doctor who took leave of his practice in order to go and serve for a period of time on the mission field. In his travel, he found himself on the outskirts of a leper colony. They brought to this doctor a man who was severely plagued with the late stages of leprosy.

The doctor **gently and with great care**, began to examine the patient – and the patient began to cry. The doctor stopped and pulled back and through an interpreter apologized to the man for causing him such pain. With that, the man began to weep. And through his tears he said:

**"I cry not because you hurt me – I cry, because it has been so very long since someone touched me."**

#### Questions

Who might Jesus want you to "embrace" during this pandemic?

#### Prayer

Ask God to open your eyes to the needs around you.

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