

## 07-21-24 FOR THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK

“The ways Jesus reached out to others, and the others to whom he reached out, shocked the righteous people of his day...Our strong human inclination is to associate primarily with those who think like us, dress like us, and act like us. Jesus invites us to go outside our comfort zone and to risk opening our lives to those we might be tempted to think of as ‘unrighteous’ or ‘sinners.’ God’s embrace is wide enough for us all.”

- David Vryhof



Mark 1:40-44

### Questions for Reflection —

- Who are the “lepers” in our society, those avoided or rejected by others for moral or social reasons? Who are the social exiles in your workplace, school, or neighborhood? What does it look like for you to respect the dignity of every human being and to freely offer everyone God’s love and compassion? Is there any discomfort in your doing so? What do you need in order to go beyond your comfort zone and reach out with compassion?
  
- Where/how have you seen Jesus breaking down social boundaries and cultural dividing walls between groups of people? What still-existing walls do you pray for Jesus to tear down in our world? What part can we as a congregation play in bringing people together across various differences? What does it mean for us to promote inclusivity and diversity within our community of faith? What does it look like for us to welcome the stranger and the outcast?
  
- What has been the rhythm of your spiritual life during these summer months? What helps you stay attentive to God’s voice and alert to God’s presence in your daily life? How do you keep God as the central focus of your life? What distractions impede that focus? What can you do during this season to help yourself slow down and pay attention to God?

### Daily Household Prayer

Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ. Amid the cares of our daily lives, make us attentive to your voice and alert to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.