



Enter the Story

Hope & Healing

A narrative about Jesus' mission to heal and restore those who have been broken and those who are hurting.

THE BIBLE

Matthew 15; Mark 7; Luke 4, 8, 18

Prepare for the Story

ICEBREAKER

- What's the most inexplicable experience you've ever had, whether supernatural, paranormal, bizarre coincidence, mysterious intuition, prophetic dream, or unexpected lab result?

Rewind the Story

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Birth of Jesus – The birth of the promised King.
- Baptism & Temptation – Jesus in the Wilderness
- Jesus' Followers – The Disciples and the marginalized

Hear the Story

Scene One: Calling

Jesus and His disciples traveled to His hometown of Nazareth. When Jesus entered the synagogue, the Jewish place of worship, He was asked to read a portion of scripture from the prophet Isaiah. So, Jesus stood and read this from the scroll:

God's Spirit is upon me, giving me power to help all those in need. I bring hope to the poor and the prisoners; the blind will now see; the abused, hurting, and forgotten will be set free. This is the year! This is the time of God's blessing!

After reading this, Jesus sat down (as was the custom before commenting about the scripture). The people looked at Jesus, anticipating His response. After a moment, He said, *"This scripture is being fulfilled right in front of you! This is why I have come."*

The people were surprised by what He said. *"How can this be?"* they asked. *"Isn't this Joseph's son?"* They wondered why Jesus wasn't performing miracles in Nazareth like He had elsewhere.

So Jesus told them, *"Prophets are rejected by their own people. If you'll not listen to the truth, I will be just like the prophets before me. I'll go to those who will believe."*

Jesus' response made the people in the synagogue furious. They forced Jesus out the door and tried to push Him off a cliff. But Jesus slipped through the crowd and went on his way.

Scene Two: A Captive Set Free

From there, Jesus and His disciples traveled to a nearby town, where He taught in the synagogue. His teaching amazed people because it was genuine and had real power – *different than most teachers in that day.*

While in the synagogue, a man thought to be controlled by an evil spirit began shouting at Jesus: *"Go away! Why are you bothering us? I know who you are – God's holy one!"*

Jesus interrupted him and commanded, *"Be quiet and come out of him!"*

The man's body convulsed as he fell to the ground. In an instant, the evil spirit left the man, and he got up, unharmed.

Everyone in the synagogue was amazed and said, *"Who is this? The evil spirits even obey him!"*

Scene Three: The Blind Will See

As Jesus and His disciples were traveling, they saw a poor, blind man sitting on the side of the road. In Judea, poverty was common. Many struggled daily to find food, and disease and sickness were widespread.

As Jesus approached, the blind man shouted, *“Jesus, Son of David, show me mercy!”* The man called Him *“Son of David”* to show that he believed Jesus could be the Messiah that the Jews were hoping for.

Jesus’ disciples and people around the man yelled at him to be quiet, but he shouted even louder, *“Jesus, please show me mercy!”*

Jesus heard the man yelling and stopped him to ask him, *“What would you like me to do for you?”*

The man said, *“Teacher, please ... I want to see again!”* So Jesus said, *“All right ... now, you can see again! Your faith has healed you.”*

Instantly, the man could see! He shouted praises to God and followed Jesus down the road. Everyone who was watching joined in celebrating and thanking God!

Scene Four: The Deaf Will Hear

Another time, a man who was deaf and could not speak was brought to Jesus. His friends begged Jesus to heal him.

So, Jesus took him aside and put His fingers in the deaf man’s ears. Then Jesus removed His fingers, spit on them, and touched the man’s tongue.

Jesus looked up to the sky, breathed deeply, and said, *“Be opened!”*

Instantly, the man could hear and speak clearly!

Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone. But the more Jesus told people not to tell anyone, the more they shared about him!

Everyone who saw this was amazed. People said, *“Everything He does is remarkable. Jesus gives hearing to the deaf and voice to those who cannot speak!”*

Scene Five: Hope for the Hurting

Later, while Jesus and His disciples pressed through a large crowd, a woman touched the fringe of His robe. For twelve years, she had been suffering from constant bleeding and could find no cure. The moment she touched Jesus' robe, the bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, said to Him, *“What do you mean? This entire crowd is pressed up against us.”*

Jesus stopped and said to the crowd, *“I felt healing power go out from me to someone here.”* The crowd stood silent. After a moment, the woman fell on her knees in front of Jesus, trembling with fear.

She said, *“You ... you healed me ...”* and then she told Jesus and the crowd about her illness that was now gone after years of suffering.

Jesus listened to her carefully and then said, *“Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”*

Large crowds followed Jesus everywhere He went. People with every kind of illness came to Him, and Jesus healed them. The crippled walked, those who were captive were set free, the sick were made well, and the blind could now see.

Retell the Story

- Where was Jesus when the story began? What was He doing?
- What did the people try to do to Jesus after hearing Him speak?
- What did Jesus do to the man controlled by an evil spirit?
- What did the people come to see Jesus do?

- What happened with the man who was blind?
- What happened to the man who was deaf?
- How did Jesus know the woman touched him?
- Due to His miracles, how did people respond?

Discuss the Story

- What is your first reaction to this story? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?
- What from this story made you wonder?
- Why do you think people were amazed by Jesus' teaching?
- What do you find most interesting or surprising about Jesus' healings? Why?
- How would you describe Jesus from this story?
- Did you hear anything that reminded you of *other* stories?
- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- From this story, what do you notice about God's character or His qualities?

1) HEALING & REJECTION

The scripture Jesus read at the beginning of the story talked about giving hope to the poor, sight to the blind, and freedom to the abused, hurting and forgotten. How do you see this being fulfilled in this story? Upon hearing Jesus' interpretation of the scroll, the people reject Him. Why do you think people continue to reject Him today?

2) HEALING THE HURTING

Sometimes, Jesus healed people by talking with them. Other times, He healed them by sticking His fingers in their ears. And other times, He healed them by having His clothes touched. Why do you think these healings happened in so many ways?

3) MODERN DAY HEALING

Do you believe that God provides miraculous healing today? If He does, why does He heal some and not others? How do you interpret or process a God who has the power to heal and restore but chooses not to for some of His most fervent and devoted followers?

Pray

God,

You could have chosen anything for your mission, but you chose those to serve and help those who needed You the most. Thank You for not just telling us about Your heart but modeling it. May we become Your people who help set captives free, bring sight to the blind, help the deaf hear, and bring hope to all those who are hurting. May how we live and serve them, but the way that they find and follow You. Amen.