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David

DAY by day, Saul became more dark and depressed. It was as if he were suffering from a serious illness. In the meantime, Samuel traveled to Bethlehem as God had commanded him, for it was there that he would find a man worthy to be anointed as the king of Israel. In Bethlehem, Samuel found a red-haired young boy. He was handsome and strong. He asked, "Who is that boy?"

A man named Jesse answered, "He is David, my son."

Samuel then knew what he had to do. He called the boy over and anointed him with holy oil, secretly proclaiming him to be the king of Israel. And so God's plan was fulfilled. A short time later, Saul wished to find someone who could play the lyre because its music would comfort him when he felt depressed and overwhelmed. David was quite good at playing the lyre, so he was brought to the royal court. He played for Saul. Saul felt better when he listened to the music, and sometimes

he even broke into a smile. He loved David and took him under his protection.

But there was always another war to fight. The Philistines invaded Israel again, and this time they brought with them a great giant named Goliath. He wore iron armor and carried a huge spear. Goliath stood in front of the Israelites and cried out, "Why have you all gone to all this trouble? Let one of your men come out and fight me. If he wins, the Philistines will be your slaves. But if he loses, you will be our slaves."

No one was brave enough to go out and fight the giant. Day after day he shouted out his challenge.

Then, one day, David said to Saul, "I can't stand it that this Philistine animal keeps insulting the people of God. O king, I will go out to fight him."

"You?" asked the shocked king, "You're nothing but a boy!"

"No, I am God's soldier."

"At least put on some armor, David, or Goliath will tear you apart."

David put on the armor, but couldn't even move in it. He said, "O king, I want to go fight Goliath dressed as I am."

He grabbed five stones from the riverbed, and he confidently marched toward the camp of the Philistines, carrying only his staff and a sling.

Goliath saw him coming out, and as he marched out to meet him he cried out, "What do you want, boy?"

"I am going to fight you, because you have been insulting the people of God for far too long."

Goliath roared with laughter. "Is that so? It won't be too long before the dogs

Jesus Cures

PEOPLE hated and were afraid of lepers, and this is why they were kept as far away as possible from other people. A poor leper dragged himself over to Jesus. Jesus, unlike the others, did not run away from him. He stood still, awaiting him. The leper threw himself at His feet and said, "Lord, if You wish, You can heal me." Jesus reached out His hand and touched him saying, "I do wish it, be healed." All of the wounds that had been caused by the leprosy disappeared.

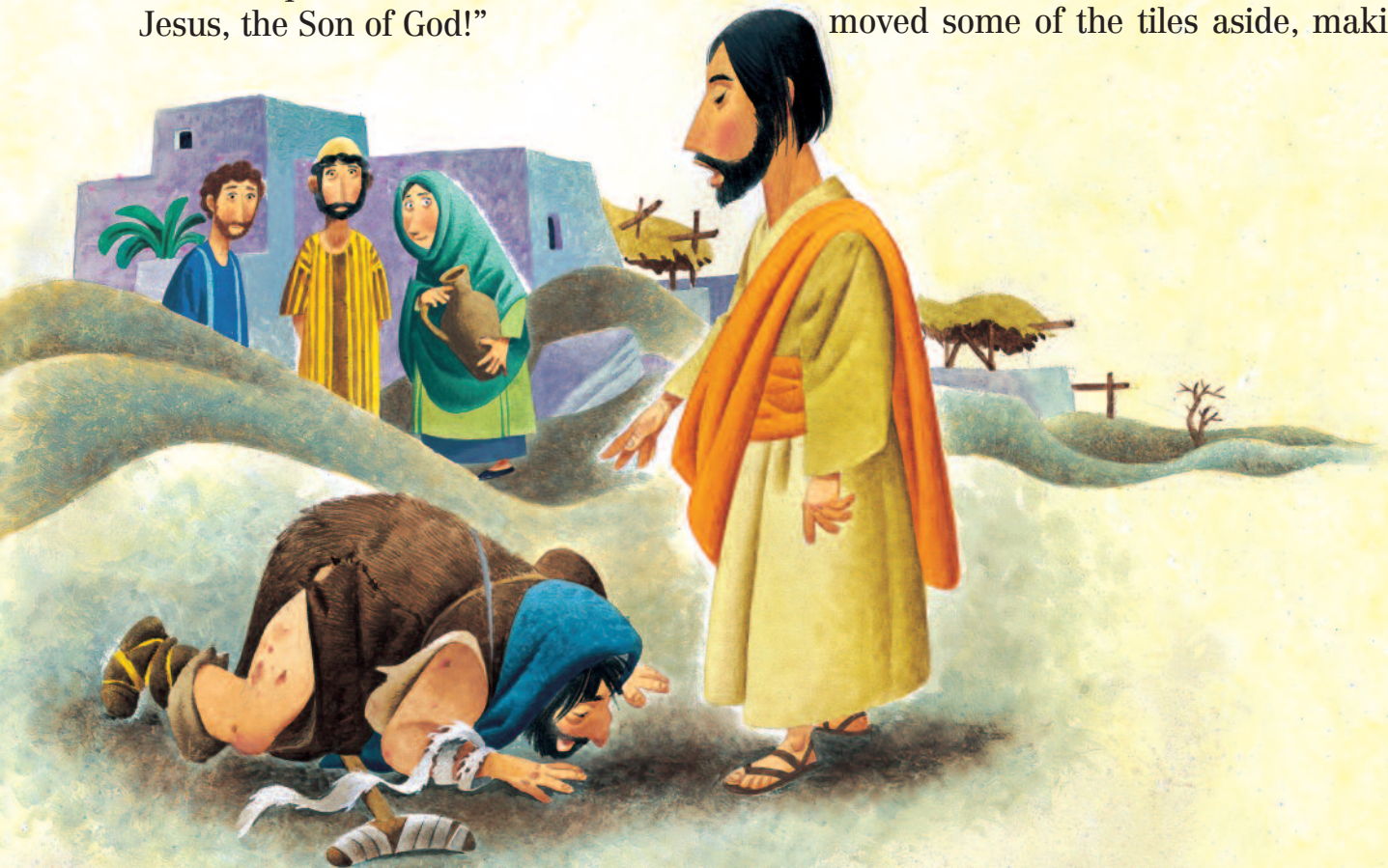
The leper who had been healed cried out for joy, and he wanted to show everyone that he had been cured of his leprosy. Jesus, however, said, "No! Do not tell anyone! Go to the priests and offer a sacrifice to God."

The leper made this promise to Jesus, but he couldn't keep his word. He cried out, "Look at me! It's me. Don't you recognize me? I'm healed!" Awestruck, they asked him, "Who healed you?" The healed leper answered, "Jesus, it was Jesus, the Son of God!"

He then joyously ran to show himself to everyone whom he could. Jesus became quite famous because of this. Many people came out to see Him and to listen to His preaching. Many of these were poor or they were ill and wanted to be healed. The wise men, priests, and doctors of the law also came out to see Him. Jesus went from district to district, from city to city.

One day He came to Capernaum. He arrived with a large crowd of His followers. He went into one of His friends' houses. There were so many people gathered around the house that no one could get in or leave through the door. Among the people in the crowd were four men who were carrying a stretcher that held a paralyzed man.

They cried out, "Make way! Make way! Let us through, we've got to go in to see Jesus!" But the crowd was too dense and they couldn't get through. They climbed up to the roof of the house and they moved some of the tiles aside, making





an opening. They then let down the stretcher with ropes. Jesus was moved with compassion. These men truly had faith in Him. He looked down at the paralyzed man who was looking up at Him with eyes filled with hope. He said to him, "My son, your sins are forgiven you."

Among those in the house were some priests who were scandalized by what He had said. They said to one another,

"Did you hear what He said? Blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!" As soon as they had said this, Jesus, Who had overheard them, turned to them and said, "Which is easier to say, that your sins are forgiven or that you are to get up, take your stretcher and walk?" Then He said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your stretcher and go on your way!" The paralytic got up, took his stretcher and left, praising God the whole way out.