

Complete Restoration for All Unclean, Part 3

Luke 5:14-16

Go ahead and turn to Luke Chapter 5. Obviously this is an occasion of great joy as the man is not only cleansed, but restored, properly restored, brought back into the fellowship and communion with God and his people. Now when you think about this man who came to Jesus, when you think about this man who came to Jesus, all that the man sought from Jesus was cleansing from leprosy. This man thought he'd be satisfied with just that, that's what he was after.

Jesus, he knew what this man truly needed. He knew that the cleansing is only the beginning. And like that leper, Jesus didn't only come to just cleanse us from our sin, beloved, he came also to restore us fully to God. You and I, created in God's image. We're not created for any other pleasure but one? The pleasure of God and God alone. And in him, we find all of our joy, all of our contentment, all of our pleasure, all of our

satisfaction, all of our purpose, all of our meaning, everything is found in God and God alone.

So, if we're only satisfied with just getting rid of some impurity and then moving on as if the Gospel was good for that and maybe it opens the door into heaven, but the rest of life? Well, we can be a lot like that leper, can't we? Our vision is so small. It's so limited. We're like little kids. All we can think about is hamburgers, and God wants to introduce us to filet mignon. He wants us to eat steak.

Being so limited in our understanding, so immature in our thinking, we think we'll be satisfied with so very little, with such meager things. God wants us to enjoy his full bounty. Now, don't make the mistake of thinking that I am saying that the Gospel of cleansing from sin is meager. I'm not comparing the Gospel with hamburgers. I just want to be clear. The Gospel, the more you study it, the more you live it and learn it and go deep into its cleansing, it is everything.

People have wondered why Jesus censured this man, why he told him to be quiet, didn't let him go out and evangelize right away. Mark tells us that the man tried to do exactly that, that instead of doing what Jesus said, that he well, he did exactly what Jesus said not to do, and he went out and started talking right away.

Mark 1:45 says, he went out, began talking freely about it, spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter." That man's disobedience had practical ramifications for Jesus' ministry, didn't they? Wasn't good; not just practically, it wasn't good for a deeper reason, for a principle reason. Hadn't he called Jesus, Lord? Where is the commitment to lordship now, now that he's received the cleansing that he came for? Is Jesus truly Lord to him?

There are many who are ready to give this guy a pass, to excuse his enthusiasm to go and talk. I understand that, right? It's hard to be too critical knowing that we could've disobeyed in exactly the same way. In fact, we probably have. We've probably done exactly this kind of thing. But we do need to

recognize that just because Jesus was the subject of his speech, because he's telling everybody about Jesus that that doesn't make this okay. The end here does not justify the means. Jesus is still Lord, and this man, after receiving the cleansing that he came for, he's still required to obey the Lord, to do whatever he commanded immediately upon every command. Sadly, the man was too easily satisfied. He failed to obey Jesus, which means he failed to discover the joy of obeying Jesus, which meant he missed out on the blessing of being fully restored to God.

Again, look at verse 14 a little more closely. Jesus "charged him to tell no one, but," and he gave him this instruction, "go, show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded for a proof to them." Listen, there were very good reasons for Jesus to censure this man. In verse 14, Jesus intended this man's presentation to the, to the priest to be a proof or a testimony to them, not just to the individual priest, but to them, to everyone.

There are reasons, good reasons that Jesus kept this guy quiet, some of which we've hinted at already. I am just going to

run through these reasons quickly. Let me give you six reasons. The reasons are: Social, doxological, biblical, theological, evangelical, and practical. Got them? Jesus had social, doxological, biblical, theological, evangelical, and practical reasons for telling that man to be quiet, go to the priest, obey Moses.

First thing, the social reason. "He charged him," verse 14, "to tell no one, but 'go and show yourself to the priest.'" As we already kinda mentioned here, the social reason was in order to restore this man to society, in a prescribed, publicly acknowledged way. This is for the man's good, ultimately, so that he's, even though he is cleansed from leprosy, he doesn't have the stigma of leprosy as he goes through the community.

So that everybody there knows, yeah, this guy's restored. He's good. I can actually put my arm around him. I can shake his hand. That was for his good, so that no one had a suspicion about where he was, where he stood. A priest had examined him, he's good to go. It's also for the sake of the community, for their, the satisfaction of their concern, to put, to alleviate

any suspicion or concern that they had. As we talked about last time, this is a public health issue. That's the social reason.

Second, the theological reason. Notice the phrase, "make an offering for your cleansing." The theological reason here is in order to instruct this man in theology. Using the symbols of the bird ritual, Jesus wanted to prepare this man to one day understand the significance of a future sacrifice for sins. Like the goats on the Day of Atonement, Jesus would be a proprietary, propitiatory sacrifice, satisfying the wrath of God for sins. He would be an expiatory sacrifice removing all guilt, taking it outside the city being crucified at Golgotha.

Like those birds, Jesus would remove all uncleanness, he'd restore complete communion with God, fellowship with the saints. Jesus wanted this guy to learn theology. He wanted him to meditate on the bird ritual and then all the sacrifices that were, everything that was taught from the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and the fellowship and the grain; all those things Jesus wanted him to learn and to meditate: Theology.

So, there's a social reason, a theological reason. Third, the doxological reason. I love this one. It's that same phrase, "Make an offering for your cleansing." The doxological reason, it's in order to turn this man's attention to doxology, to glorify God in gratitude, in praise. When he thought about himself and thought about everything that these offerings had to teach him, as he meditated on all the depth of that, it redounds to God's praise and glory, it redounds to doxology. Great joy in being restored to the fellowship of the worshipping community, but even greater joy in communion with the God that saved him, cleansed him, set him free, restored him.

Fourth reason, a biblical reason. That's the simple clause there, "As Moses commanded." The biblical reason was in order to submit him to what was written in the Bible, the Law of Moses, the, the unchanging Word of God. As we mentioned earlier, Jesus is not some kind of maverick, setting aside every convention in doing whatever he wanted, doing everything his own way, forging a new path for himself.

His ministry was in fulfillment of the law, not a violation of the law. The man, the priest, the entire community in the

city needed to know that, not only about this man, but about Jesus and his ministry, but also get this, this is very important, Jesus never did anything to turn our attention away from the written Word of God. Everything that Jesus wants us to see is written. That's why when Jesus talked to his enemies, when he talked to people challenging him, he said, "It is written, it is written, it is written, it is written."

Fifth, the evangelical reason. The clause there, "For a proof to him," as I said that word, proof, is actually the word *martyrion*, it's the word, testimony. We get the word, martyr from it; those who testify to the truth of the revelation of God and the Gospel. They're willing to give their lives for it, and that is a testimony to others.

The evangelical reason here for a testimony to them and Jesus here, wanted to send him to do all these things, to keep his mouth shut because at the point of his cleansing, he's a clean man, but he's also an ignorant man. He hasn't really reflected. He hasn't really processed everything. And so if he would spend the time that Jesus wanted him to spend, the week of these procedures and the ritual and all that, and then the time



it took to go and actually offer all those sacrifices, that man would be informed by theology.

His heart would be burning with passion in doxology, and praise, and worship to God. His, his mind would be actually informed by bibliology, by Scripture, by the written Word. And now this man is a prepared instrument to go and evangelize. He knows not only the man who actually did the cleansing, but he knows the truth about him. All the facts about this man Jesus Christ are interpreted by the Bible, by theology, and he's burning with passion to proclaim the truth about him because of the doxology. The fact that people want to go and tell others about the message, that doesn't sanctify all their efforts in that regard.

Paul says in Philipppians Chapter 1 that there are many who preach, maybe even a rudimentary Gospel, an accurate Gospel, rudimentary Gospel, but they do so from ill motives. They're not, it's not okay to do that. Paul thanks the Lord that the Gospel's preached, but he's concerned for those people who proclaim him with wrong motives. We should be concerned for

people who proclaim this Gospel, but not with any depth of understanding. There is no virtue in ignorant, unbridled zeal.

The evangelism that God blesses is that which is in obedience to his Word. God's work done in God's way. And in this case, if that man had obeyed, the effect would be to add to the testimony of the priest who declared him clean. The two of them then would have their testimony of the cleansing that Jesus had granted this man, and this man would go above and beyond to be someone who actually knew this one who had cleansed him.

Final reason, this is the sixth reason. There's a social, theological, doxological, biblical, evangelical reason, sixth just a practical reason. This kind of propels us into the next point, but this, this is more like a result of the man's disobedience here. If this man had obeyed Jesus, it would have allowed some time to pass, right? There's the week, and then there's the time to take to offer all of those other sacrifices. So more than a week would have passed, maybe two weeks, maybe, maybe longer.

Definitely longer, if that man had to travel down to the temple in Jerusalem to offer these prescribed sacrifices, but during that week of the man's purification, during the time of his full restoration, you know what Jesus would have been doing? Fulfilling his ministry. He could have taken the necessary time that he needed to teach that city, to perform other miracles, to accomplish all that he had come there to do.

But as a consequence of this man's disobedience, just practically speaking and, again, we're not divorcing this from the good providence of God who plans all things, brings them to the culmination of his will, but it says in Mark 1:45, it tells us that "Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but," he, "was out in desolate places."

Listen, all that to say, Jesus has very good reasons for commanding us to obey him, doesn't he? He is always wise. He is always good. And we have every reason to obey him always. My wife and I would teach our kids from a very young age that obedience is not just to do what we say, but it's to do it all the way, right away, with a happy heart.

We need to trust Jesus, folks. We need to obey him. Some people I've talked with, they seem to be content with just having their sins forgiven. They believe they have a get-into-heaven-card that will get them into the pearly gates, but they seem relatively uninterested in living their lives in full obedience to all that God commanded. You know what? That's, that's stupid to refuse to obey the Lord, that is cutting ourselves off from the whole purpose of Jesus cleansing us in the first place.

"Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous," 1 Peter 3:18. Why? "That he might bring us to God." Escaping divine wrath, that's only the beginning. There's an introduction into a fellowship, a relationship, a communion with God and Jesus wants us to be fully restored. So when I find people who profess to be Christians, but who seem satisfied with mediocrity in their spiritual lives, who seem satisfied with a marginal Christian life, who seem comfortable with half-hearted obedience, or even worse, who seem kind of comfortable with some disobedience, honestly, there's a loving concern that wells up inside of me that questions the validity of their profession.

Beloved, that's not judgmental, that's looking at fruit and being concerned about what you see, wilted, shriveled up grapes. That's called raisins, no one eats them. You just, I feel compelled by love to help those people question whether or not they've truly come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

This man had been cleansed of his leprosy. No doubt he was excited. Who wouldn't be? But his zeal, his enthusiasm, he failed to obey Jesus. It's not good for his sake. He missed out on the opportunity to prioritize biblical fidelity. And if he had been faithful to Scripture, he would've, it would've produced a deep love of theology, of truth, of God-centered thinking, and that would result then in doxology, which would mean being enraptured with the glory of God, offering biblically informed passionate praise to God for all that he's done.

Obviously, the man is happy about his cleansing, which is why he ran off to tell everybody, but Jesus knew that feeling would wear off eventually. Jesus knew the happiness was momentary, temporal, so he wanted him to stop, meditate, learn,

reflect on the truth because the fuller, longer-term benefit of listening to Scripture, of going deep into theology, of fanning that understanding to a flame of passion for God's glory, Jesus knew that is what would sustain not just temporary words about Jesus, but lifelong evangelism proclaiming his fullness.

The man was cleansed, but he missed out on the full restoration, to enjoy all that Jesus wanted him to enjoy. And that's not only sad for the man, but it had practical ramifications for Jesus' ministry in that region. Jesus' reaction to this turn of events is instructive to us. Notice he didn't hunt the guy down and scold him. He didn't get irritated or upset or discouraged. He just rolled with it. He just rolled with the unfolding of divine providence and made good use of the change in circumstance that God had given him. Because he did that, we get to have one more point in our outline. Isn't that cool? We not only come to Jesus to be completely cleansed, obey him to be fully restored, but also, point three, we learn to pray like Jesus to be spiritually refreshed.

Look at verses 15 and 16. "But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and

to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray." Because of what we learned from Mark's account, we know the role of the, the cleansed leper, that he, played in the acceleration of the report about Jesus. The news went out everywhere. As we see in verse 17, it even caught the attention of the Pharisees and the law professors from everywhere.

Evidently, this cleansed leper was quite a talker. The news caught like brushfire. It spread rapidly; it went far with the crowds gathering, surging in to hear him teach, to get their own healing for themselves. Jesus' message was getting smothered, lost in the clamor. He was in danger of becoming just a popular icon, just a servant to their interests rather than serving the interests of the God who sent him to preach the Gospel.

So Jesus pulled back here. He made a tactical withdrawal. He retreated into the back country, and what we would see as an inconvenient obstacle for ourselves, Jesus turned into an opportunity for worship and communion. No worries whatsoever; I'll just pray more. Those verbs there, withdrew, pray, they're in the imperfect tense, meaning he was regularly, continually

withdrawing and praying. He was getting away. Commentator I. Howard Marshall, he writes, "The main spring of his life was his communion with God, and in such communion, he found both strength and guidance to avoid submitting to temptation. He's unable to," fill, "fulfill here what Jesus has come to do, so he took advantage of the time. He used it for spiritual refreshment."

It's instructive to us, isn't it? All of those inconveniences that come into your life and interrupt your day, you can turn that into an opportunity to pray, to praise, to worship, to think. Don't use it as an opportunity to clear your email inbox. Don't use it as an opportunity to text with a friend, to reach out in some kind of superficial communication. Don't use it as an opportunity to surf the net, or do anything else that just distracts your mind. Use it as an opportunity to pray. See it as divine interruption.

We're not told here why Jesus spent all of his time in prayer. We do know his refreshment was all and only found in his communion with God. He didn't fret when the temporal demands of the crowd drowned out his attempts to teach them eternal truths.



He simply, calmly adjusted his expectations to what providence revealed and pulled back from catering to people's fleshly demands. He took advantage of an opportunity to spend time with his father in prayer.

J. C. Ryle said, "Few professing Christians strive to imitate Christ in the matter of private devotions. There's plenty of hearing, reading, talking, visiting, teaching, but is there a correct proportion of private prayer? Are believing men and women sufficiently careful to be frequently alone with God? These are humbling and heart-searching questions, but we will find it useful to give them an answer. The most successful workmen in the Lord's vineyard are those who, like their master, are often and much upon their knees." That's well said.

If you find that you're just having a hard time, at the, just struggling, working, and it's just tearing you apart, take some time to stop, sharpen the axe before you go down to chop that tree down again. Sharpening the axe means get alone with God. Get down on your knees. Maybe the frustration is with divine purpose, so you will stop striving and you'll be spiritually refreshed in God. Because, like Jesus, for us, God

is our great reward. There is only spiritual refreshment found in God, not in any other thing. God is the source of all of his satisfaction, contentment, energy, strength, joy. The same thing with us, we're found in him, right?

He went forth from prayer energized from that time alone with his Father. And, beloved, that's what he has given to us as well. That is the very essence of his gift of eternal life. John 17:3, "that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you've sent." Look, ours is the enjoyment of that gift. When we come to Jesus for complete cleansing, when we obey Jesus for full restoration to God the Father in his way, in his time, we have the privilege then of finding spiritual refreshment just like Jesus did with God alone in prayer. Let us, like Jesus did, "draw with confidence near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need." That's our spiritual birthright.