

Jesus Authority to Forgive Sin

Luke 5:12-16

BIG IDEA:

Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. When we see ourselves in the leper, and cry out for God's mercy in Jesus, our relationship with God and men is restored.

1. _____ OF THE LEPER

Luke 5:2 (ESV) — 12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”

In many cases, **there was no treatment for leprosy**. Therefore, many with leprosy were forced into permanent quarantine.

Leviticus 13:1–3 (ESV) — 1 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 “When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a case of leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests, 3 and the priest shall examine the diseased area on the skin of his body. And if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a case of leprous disease. When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him unclean.

Leviticus 13:45–46 (ESV) — 45 “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ 46 He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.

Leprosy is an ugly but accurate illustration of our spiritual condition before we are healed by the gospel. At the time of Christ, people generally assumed that leprosy was God's curse against sin. This was not necessarily true, but leprosy still serves as a symbol of our sin—what R. C. Trench has called an “outward and visible sign of innermost spiritual corruption.” Sin makes us unclean. Our depravity is a disfiguring disease that distorts the person God created us to be. Indeed, it is a kind of living death, because the Bible says that apart from Christ, we are “dead in our trespasses” (Eph. 2:5). This leads us to ask a question the apostle Paul once asked, and that the leper in Luke's Gospel knew how to answer: “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24). The answer is Jesus, so the man went and “fell on his face and begged him, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean’ ” (Luke 5:12).¹

The cry for cleansing here is intended to communicate our need for full spiritual restoration from sin.

1 Peter 5:7 (ESV) — 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

...Jesus touched the man, firmly resting his hand on the dreadful disease. In that electric moment, as the high voltage of divine power coursed through the strong arm of Jesus, the leper was healed. Ordinarily, when something clean touches something unclean, it becomes unclean as well. But here, for the first time in history, things ran in the other direction, as the cleanliness of Jesus healed the unclean leper. It was a total cure. The man's cleansing was complete. He had brand new skin from head to toe.²

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) — 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2. _____ TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Luke 5:14 (ESV) — 14 And he charged him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

Lev. 14:1-9, 20

When Jesus cleanses us of our sin, we are restored again to fellowship with God and with men and we begin to live out God's purpose for mankind.

You no longer live outside the camp. You are no longer alienated from God and man. You are freed to conduct all of your business within the King's walls. (Col. 1:9-14)

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

- What does it look like to live in the walls of Christ's Kingdom?
 - Are you ever tempted, like the leper, to return to the leper's colony? How do we counter this?
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¹ Ryken, P. G. (2009). *Luke* (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; Vol. 1, p. 217). P&R Publishing.

² Ryken, P. G. (2009). *Luke* (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; Vol. 1, p. 218). P&R Publishing.