



# Cleansed

The Church that meets on Livingston Ave

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AM Assembly

## Introduction:

One of the most shocking aspects of Jesus' ministry is how silent He wanted folks to be. In **Mark 1:44**, Jesus told the cleansed leper to tell no one. In **Mark 5:43**, He told Jairus to say nothing. In **Mark 7:36**, Jesus told the deaf man to say nothing. However, people didn't listen. In **Mark 1:45**, the cleansed leper talked freely. According to **Matthew 9:26**, the report about Jairus' daughter went all over the district. **Mark 7:36** says the more Jesus charged people not to say anything, the more they talked. Why? Why couldn't they keep quiet and what can we learn from that?

## Discussion:

- I. Jesus wants to cleanse people.
  - A. The leper's story in **Mark 1:40-45** catches my attention. **Leviticus 13** explains the laws on leprosy. Lepers were officially unclean (**Leviticus 13:3**). The leper had to live alone outside the camp (**Leviticus 13:45-46**). Wherever lepers went they had to broadcast their uncleanness by wearing torn clothes, letting their hair hang loose, covering their upper lip and shouting, "Unclean, unclean." How do you think the lepers felt? How would you feel?
  - B. How do you think that made other people feel? Do you think lepers were accepted with open arms? Did people want lepers in their homes, hugging or touching them? Of course not. When **Mark 1:40** says the leper came kneeling and imploring, I'm not sure we can imagine the desperate begging. What did this man expect from Jesus? Would Jesus do anything for him? Or would Jesus, like all others, turn him away as unclean?
  - C. Jesus not only pronounced Him clean, the text says Jesus *touched* him (**Mark 1:41**). Think of how shocking this is in the context of 1500 years of shunning lepers. Jesus did not cleanse this man grudgingly or for show. The man had said "If you are willing..."; Jesus was willing. Jesus wants to cleanse people.
- II. Jesus wants to cleanse people of sin.
  - A. I believe every account of healing is an illustration of what Jesus does for His children and their sins, especially the account of cleansing the uncleanness of leprosy.
  - B. Christ's law has not proscribed that I tear my clothes, let my hair hang loose, cover my lips and shout, "Unclean, unclean," when I sin. But, to be honest, I have felt like I was carrying a neon sign that said, "Look at me, I'm a sinner." I have feared talking to people because they might know my sin. Or maybe something will accidentally slip to declare how unclean I am. How will they react when they find out? Will they turn on me? Will they abandon me? Will they proclaim me unworthy? Will they be like the older brother in the story of the prodigal in **Luke 15**? I have felt like that leper. Have you?
  - C. There is no telling how people will react, but I do know how Jesus will. People may shun, look down, ridicule, malign, and slander. Jesus, however, when I say, "If You will, You can make me clean," will reach out and touch me, embracing me and say, "I will; be clean." Praise God, brethren, Jesus wants to cleanse us from our sins.
- III. Jesus wants us to tell everyone.
  - A. None of the healed obeyed Jesus' direction to say nothing. They couldn't; they were overjoyed. They couldn't keep quiet. If you had been cleansed of leprosy, could you hush it up? If your daughter or neighbor had been raised from the dead, could you put a lid on it? If you had been mute, blind, or deaf and could now speak, see and hear, could you hide it from people? I don't think any of us could; we might try, but it would bubble out.
  - B. Here is what has impacted me personally. Jesus told these people to say nothing to anyone and for joy they said something to everyone. Jesus has told me to say something to everyone and for fear, apathy, procrastination, distraction, or whatever reason, I don't say much to anyone. Jesus told His disciples to go into the whole world and preach the gospel (**Mark 16:15**). In **Acts 8:4**, the scattered disciples went everywhere preaching the word. Yet, I often neglect that charge. I have to remember Jesus wants me to tell people what He has done for me.
- IV. If we can mourn our sins and have joy over our cleansing, telling others will come naturally.
  - A. What these stories have most convinced me of is that I don't need another class on evangelism. I don't need another sermon to make me feel guilty. I don't need another tool to make it easier. I don't need opportunities dropped in my lap. I need to be like these people cleansed by Jesus.
  - B. I need to mourn my uncleanness. I need to recognize how bad I am compared to Jesus. I am a rotten awful sinner (**Romans 3:23**). This is part of the poverty of spirit Jesus taught in **Matthew 5:3**. When I can recognize that, I

won't compare myself to others because in God's eyes, I am in the same boat as everyone. I am an unclean leper, who ought to be shunned and put outside the camp. I need to mourn that.

- C. I also need to feel the joy of cleansing. Why do you think the leper told everyone? JOY. His cup overflowed and he shared it with everyone. If I mourn my sins, then I can feel the joy of cleansing and I won't be able to contain the lid on it and I will talk to people. The fact is, I know that I am not really motivated by the sterile approach of thinking I'm right on things and others are wrong. But if I can see my cleansing through the true gospel, then I will want to share that true gospel with everyone so they can be cleansed like me. Let me ask you this, when that leper started talking to people about what had happened to him, who do you think he talked to first? I am betting it was the people he knew, the only people who had been close to him before—the lepers outside the camp. He couldn't help himself. These people had to know there was someone who could cleanse them.
- D. However, I know there is something that keeps me from wanting to go down this path. If I am going to share the joy of being cleansed with others, I will have to admit of what I was cleansed. And I don't really want anyone to know. But that is something I must overcome. Therefore, I want to share with you the leprosy of which I have been cleansed. I want to share with you the sins for which I have been forgiven. I hope this is beneficial to you, but to be honest, I'm sharing because of what I hope this will do for me. As I share this, I want you to know that I am a growing Christian. Like Paul, in **Philippians 3:12-13**, I am not perfect. As Peter taught in **II Peter 1:5-8**, I am growing in knowledge, virtue and self-control, which means I still have some ignorance, some non-virtue and some lack of self-control. I still struggle with some of the sins on this list. I am not perfect, but I am forgiven. Jesus has not only forgiven me, but He is also setting me free from my body of death. Sometimes it is slow and painful, sometimes less so. But He is doing it. What that means is I was forgiven of some of these sins when I came into Christ and for some of them as I confessed to God after becoming a Christian. Secondly, I want you to know that I do not share any of these sins with you out of a sense of joy over my sins themselves. I have nights without sleep because of my sins. I have joy that I am forgiven, but absolute sadness that I needed forgiveness. Third, my biggest fear in sharing in this context is for the young who are making their first choices about sin who may see this as permission to dabble in sin and repent later, trying to have, as it were, the "best of both worlds." To you who are young, let me say that while my sins provided moments of pleasure, they have provided years of anguish, guilt and shame. While they provided instances of fun, they have taken me further than I ever thought I would go, taking control of my mind, my life, my relationships and causing me more problems than I ever imagined. With those caveats in mind, I want to share with you why I am overjoyed to be a child of God and a disciple of Christ. I have written these without thought to order, but simply in a chain of thought session trying to remember sins I've committed and therefore why I have needed forgiveness and why I ought to be overjoyed.
- E. Jesus has forgiven me and cleansed me from the spiritual leprosy of lying, disobedience to my parents, rebellion against my parents, striking my father, unkindness to my brothers, arrogance, pride, covetousness, breaking and entering, drinking alcohol, stealing, lust, use of pornography, sexual immorality, hatred, slander, gossip, gluttony, materialism, greed, lack of discipline and self-control, cussing, telling dirty jokes, listening to dirty jokes, laughing at dirty jokes, not standing up for the gospel truth, selfishness, self-centeredness, outbursts of anger, verbally mistreating my wife and children, not seeking my wife's needs and desires, holding grudges, bitterness, resentment, strife, dissension, divisiveness among brethren, malice, boastfulness, self-indulgence, laziness, providing for the lusts of the flesh, jealousy, envy, impurity, sensuality, gambling, being quarrelsome, being a lover of self, being a lover of money, being a lover of pleasure, despising authority, being willful, stubbornness, blasphemy, forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, being entangled again in the world after having come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, trampling under foot the Son of God and profaning the blood of His covenant.
- F. I am certain, if I could remember every day of my life clearly, I could double this list. As Paul said in **Ephesians 2:1-3**, I was dead in trespasses and sins, I had become by nature a child of wrath. But as Paul wrote to the Corinthians in **I Corinthians 6:11**, "I have been washed, I have been sanctified and I have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Praise the Lord. How can I not share that with people?

### Conclusion:

This sermon has been all about me. If it has been about you as well, I hope it was helpful. I hope we can increase one another's joy and help one another bring others into the fold. As the song says, "Redeemed how I love to proclaim it." When I mourn for my sins and rejoice over my redemption, I will love to proclaim it. I hope we all will proclaim it.