



Discussion and Prayer Guide September 26, 2021

Read: Matthew 8:1-4, Leviticus 13:45-46

Being “ceremonially unclean” is a difficult concept for modern readers in Western society to grasp. Being unclean is not the same thing as sin, but the two are related. Being unclean is to symbolize the corruption and defilement that sin causes in the world. This calls for a robust and broad understanding of sin. Sin is the wrong things we do, the wrong things that are done to us, and the wrong things done in our presence that defile us. The defilement is the consequence of sin in the world as it corrupts, distorts, and stains God’s good world and every one of us. It’s the reason that, if we are violated in some way, we can feel a sense of shame or even “dirtiness.” “How did I not catch that?” “Why did I not prevent that?”

So the story of Jesus cleansing the leper is a powerful and beautiful teaching moment; he has come to forgive sin, yes, but also much more - he has come to *cleanse* us of sin and its defiling effect, whether it is the sin we have committed, the sin committed against us that violated us, or the sin committed in our world that has defiled us. He does this as we acknowledge our sin or the sin done to us that has violated us, face it with honesty and courage, and ask him to cleanse us.

Ask:

- Do you struggle to make sense of the concept of ceremonial uncleanness?
- Have you ever felt dirty or defiled because of something you did? Because of something done to you? Because of something that you witnessed?
- What do we risk by allowing a wound in us to fester and grow?
- How do you think Jesus cleanses us of the defilement that comes from sin?
- Do you need to confess any sin?
- Do you need to name and acknowledge a sin committed against you and its effect on you?

Pray:

- Praise and thank God that he sent Jesus to forgive us and cleanse us of our sin
- Lament that our world is corrupted, broken and defiled by sin
- Confess that we have all played a part in contributing to the stain and defilement of our world
- Confess that we need Jesus to cleanse us from all sin, from what we have done to what has been done to us to what has been done around us that has defiled us