

# Preparatory Service - Our Spiritual Leprosy

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, with the Lord's help, you can turn back to Luke chapter 5 there, and just reading in verse 12 again. While we see there Jesus, he was in one of the cities.

Verse 12, there came a man full of leprosy. Now, very often traditionally, as part of our communion season, we would begin the weekend really thinking about sin in particular.

Thinking about the theme of our sinfulness. And there's good reason for that as well. It's not just that we do it necessarily out of tradition, or because of certain days we have to look at certain things.

But rather, it's a helpful thing to do. It's helpful to look at the reality of our sin and understand something of the weight of our sin.

Because the more we understand of the weight of our sinfulness, then the more we see something of the beauty and wonder of our Savior. The two things are linked.

[ 1 : 0 9 ] If people have a low view of sin, they have a very low view of what Christ has done. And the wonder of the salvation that we have in Christ as well. And I fear that's becoming more the case nowadays as well.

That people have a lower view of sin. Less of a view. Not thinking sin being that serious. And the repercussion of that is then we do end up with this lower view of Christ. A lower view of salvation. A lower view of all that it is that the Lord has done. But if we have a high view of sin, and when I say a high view, I mean understand something of the weight of our sinfulness. Understanding the gravity of our sinfulness.

And what sin does. The more we understand that, then the greater our comprehension of the wonder of who our Savior is. And the wonder of the atonement. And all that.

Not only that he has done. But all that our Lord and Savior continues to do for us. So, we look in and we see our sin. And then we look up.

[ 2 : 0 7 ] And we marvel at the wonder of Christ. And what it is that our Lord has done for us. And that's what I want to do this evening. Really thinking about this theme of sin.

And I want to do that by looking at this narrative that we have here. Where you see Jesus healing the leper. Because, interestingly, in Scripture, you get various illustrations of sin.

Things that become pictures to us of sin. And there's lots of things that you can maybe think of in that way of thinking. Things that remind us of sin. But one of them is leprosy.

Very often you see a parallel in Scripture between leprosy as a disease and sin itself. Now, I want to qualify that for a moment.

I don't mean by that that everybody who was leprous got their leprosy disease because of the fact that they'd committed some kind of a sin. That's not the case.

[ 3 : 0 6 ] At least not always. Sometimes it is. Think of Gehazi and others who the Lord judged them for certain sins and disobedience. And they became leprous. But that's not ordinarily the case.

So, I'm not saying that people get leprosy because of certain sins that they commit. I'm not saying that's the connection between sin and leprosy. Rather, what I'm trying to say is that the nature of the disease, the nature of the disease of leprosy is something that can actually teach us something about sin.

Almost like a picture, like a visual picture, a visual illustration of sin itself. So, what I wanted to think about this evening is not so much this specific narrative that we have here.

Although, I will, towards the end of the sermon, I will touch on the actual narrative that we're looking at here in Luke chapter 5. But that's not really what I want to focus on this evening.

Rather, I want to focus on just looking at leprosy itself as a disease and linking it or using it as a way for us to think more about sin and to learn more about sin.

[ 4 : 15 ] Understand more about the sin that we have within us and what that sin is actually doing to us. So, before we get to that, before we look at the links between leprosy and sin, first of all, just to ask the question, what is leprosy?

What is it? What is this condition? And that's actually quite a hard question to answer, actually. It's not an easy one because we're not 100% sure exactly, in terms of, you know, medically, we're not 100% sure exactly what it is that leprosy was, in terms of the biblical time frame.

It's likely that it covered a whole host of different conditions. So, we might want to think of it as one specific one. But it's likely that it covered quite a few different kind of skin diseases and infections and things of that nature.

Now, when we refer to leprosy today, we tend to link it more to Hansen's disease. That's, I suppose, the medical name for it today. And Hansen's disease, which almost certainly was part of what the biblical leprosy was as well, that disease is a disease that was caused by, well, it's a very infectious disease, but caused by bacteria, certain bacteria that come in.

And the bacteria affect the nerve endings and affect the body at the extremities. So, the body gets affected at the extremities. It deadens the nerve endings, and that can cause all sorts of damage to the body, deformities and things like that.

[ 5 : 47 ] So, that's what Hansen's disease is. And when you look at the biblical evidence in terms of leprosy and look at what leprosy is in the Bible, it does seem to correlate to that kind of a thing.

Leprosy seems to be something that affected the extremities. It affected the body clearly in a very visual way. More than likely causing that deadening of the nerve endings in the extremities.

And even, perhaps, in extreme cases, even things, bits of the body literally dying, and bits of the body actually falling off as well. So, it's not a nice disease. That's not a nice disease.

Clearly, it was very infectious. You can tell that by how scripture talks about it. It was a highly infectious disease. And also, sadly, very often it was fatal as well.

So, a very serious condition. Even though we don't know a lot of detail about exactly what it is that the disease was. But what I want to think about is really how this biblical leprosy, this disease that existed in that time frame, how that reminds us of sin or how we can use that really to learn something and illustrate something of sin in our lives.

[ 7 : 01 ] And I've noted three things down here. Three parallels or three similarities between leprosy and sin. Now, the first one that I have here is that leprosy resulted in shame.

So, shame, that's the first of your three words. The first one is shame. Leprosy resulted in shame. And you see this in the passage we read just a few moments ago in Leviticus.

So, in Leviticus, there's a number of very specific laws in terms of what was to happen if somebody became leprous. So, we're told there specifically what they were meant to do.

And in Leviticus 13 and verse 45 that we read a few moments ago, we read there, The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes, let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, Unclean, unclean.

So, you literally had to go around and shout unclean. You know, if you were in the presence of others who didn't have that disease, if you saw people coming, you were to cry out.

[ 8 : 08 ] You were to say those words, unclean, unclean, I'm unclean. And can you imagine the sense of shame that that would bring? I think it's hard for us, really, to imagine the sense of shame that that would bring.

There's maybe some conditions and diseases that we have around us in our own day that we might link to shame. But I don't think anything is like what we have here, where you have this condition where you actually have to shout out unclean when you enter into the presence of people who don't actually have the disease.

And not only would it have given you this tremendous sense of shame, a sense of shame I think that's hard for us to comprehend, but also, I think, connected with that, you would also have had this sense of worthlessness, the sense of worthlessness that that must have left people feeling if they had this condition.

So not just shame, but a worthlessness alongside it. And as we think about our spiritual leprosy, our condition of sin, sin can have that same effect as well.

Sin can leave us feeling a tremendous sense of shame, a tremendous weight of shame. And it can leave us as well feeling worthless.

[ 9 : 25 ] Again, a great sense of worthlessness as a result of our sin. We can experience that at different levels as well. Fundamentally, we can experience that before God himself.

So we come before God. God knows, like I was saying earlier on in the introduction to the first Psalm, God knows everything about us. He knows everything. He knows all the different parts of our soul, the little hidden parts that nobody else knows, nobody else sees, sins that we commit that nobody else is aware of.

The Lord knows all that. The Lord knows absolutely everything about us. And then as we come before him, as we gather together in worship, that in one sense, it can, I think, leave us feeling a tremendous sense of shame.

When we realize that God sees everything, you know, things that perhaps, like I say, we're able to hide from others. God knows. God knows all these things.

It can give you that sense of shame and that sense of worthlessness, almost that sense of wanting to hide from the Lord himself. But this is something that's also experienced when we think about other people knowing our sin as well.

[ 10 : 34 ] So it's not just that we have a sense of shame before God, that sin can produce this sense of shame in us as we approach the Lord himself. Also, when we think of the fact that some of our sin is known by others, because yes, God knows it all, but the nature of sin is, some of it's visible, isn't it?

Some sin is public. That's just the nature of how sin is. And that awareness of other people knowing our sin, that can, again, that can cause a sense of shame too.

And probably, probably, sadly, I think as well, sadly, very often, that's the shame that we're most bothered about, our sin before others, rather than our sin before God.

I think that's indicative of the fact that we fear man more than we fear God, very often, wrongly so, that we have a tremendous sense of shame in particular, not just before God, before others.

If others know, other people know about the sin and the things that I've done. So, there's very much shame connected to sin. And that's a very heavy weight to live under, very heavy.

[ 11 : 39 ] But the wonder of the gospel, the good news, that we have in Christ, and the wonder of the salvation that we have in Christ, is that the Lord, the Lord comes, and He offers to take that shame away.

Just like He's going to cleanse, the Lord's going to cleanse the leper here, take this disease away. He's not just going to take his disease, He's going to take his shame away as well. He no longer has to go around, shouting out, unclean, unclean.

And for us, spiritually, the Lord comes, and He offers to take our shame, to lift our sin, to cleanse us, to take away our guilt. And we no longer have to have that sense of worthlessness either, because what He says to His people in the gospel is, you're far from worthless.

In the gospel, He comes to those who are His own, and He says, you get a child of God, a child of God, made, made in the image of the Lord Himself, made in the image of God, loved, loved by the Lord, loved to the extent that God would send His Son into this world, for Himself to take shame, and to take all sorts of suffering, in order that we might be healed and cleansed, in order that our shame might be taken away.

And when we come to faith in Christ, it's no longer the case that this voice is going out saying, unclean, unclean. It's very different. Instead, instead, we come, and this voice is crying out, righteous, righteous, justified, cleansed, loved, loved by the Lord Himself.

[ 13 : 13 ] And that's a wonderful, a wonderful reality. If you've gone from that place of shame, unclean, sense of worthlessness, then to experiencing that cleansing of the Lord, and realizing that that shame has been taken away, and that we are declared righteous, justified before the Lord Himself.

And no matter how much that disease of sin has affected our lives before then, no matter what depths it has taken us into, and we know that sin can take us into terrible depths, and can be the ruin of many a life, well, Christ is able and willing to cleanse.

Christ is able and willing to lift that shame, to give us full healing from it. So, that's the first thing I have here. So, leprosy, it resulted in shame.

So, shame, just like sin does, but we see the Lord able to remove that shame from us. So, shame, first of all. Secondly, leprosy results in separation.

So, separation. So, again, if you look at that passage in Leviticus, in chapter 13, and in verse 46 this time, so the next verse, after the verse we just mentioned a few moments ago, we read there, he shall remain, so this is the leprous man, he shall remain unclean, as long as he has the disease, he is unclean.

[ 14 : 33 ] He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp. So, if you ended up with this disease, then you were literally an outcast in society.

You weren't allowed to be around people. You were only outside, and very often the lepers would, club together, and stay together in a leprous camp of some kind, maybe outside the city, or perhaps on the outskirts, or in some part near the edge of the city, but they would come together in that way. So, it's not just, this disease didn't just result in shame, it also quite literally resulted in separation. You were cut off. You had to live away from others.

You had very little interaction with those, perhaps you've known all your life, your family, your friends, colleagues, whoever it was that the leprous person interacted with on a daily basis. They had to be taken away. There was a separation, a very clear separation that came in. And again, when we think about our condition of sin, sin has that effect as well.

[ 15 : 46 ] And again, we know all about that. Sin results in separation. And again, that's true on different levels too. We can experience that when it comes even to our relationship with our fellow man.

There's so much broken relationships in this world. I mean, when you look at the world, it is evidence. It is evidence.

When you see the brokenness in relationships and bonds in this world, that is evidence itself of the fallenness, the fallenness of this world that we live in, the way in which sin affects lots of relationships within families, within friends, nations even, warring.

We've seen all about that these days. Nations actually warring against each other. Colleagues, perhaps, breakdowns, breakdowns of relationships all over the place. Even in the church, sadly, we see these breakdowns.

We see these separations. We see different divisions and different breakdowns. And all, you can trace it all back to the existence of sin. The existence of sin, the existence of the fact that we live in a fallen, world.

[ 16 : 58 ] So, our relationships with one another, you can see separation there. You can see the way in which sin comes in and pulls, pulls people, pulls families, pulls all sorts of groups apart.

So, that's one aspect of it. But, what I've got primarily in mind here is how our disease affects our relationship with God himself.

That's the main issue here, when we're thinking of this issue of separation. The fact that we have this disease of sin means that we have absolutely no right, no right at all, to actually find ourselves in the presence of the Lord.

We could know, right? And that's what the banishment in Eden is all about. You know, an unholy people, a sinful people, cannot dwell with a God who is holy.

There has to be separation there. And in the garden, in the garden of Eden, that's exactly what happens. This disease comes in. This infectious disease, you could say, this disease of sin comes in, the spiritual leprosy comes in, Adam and Eve, they're cursed at that point.

[ 18 : 06 ] And at that point, when that disease comes in, straight away, they're removed. Access to the garden is actually taken away. They're cast out of the garden. Before then, they had intimate fellowship with the Lord.

Walking with the Lord in the garden, but after that disease comes in, there's this separation that takes place. And when we think about ourselves today, that remains true.

Today, we are cut off from God. We are separated from the Lord because of our sin. There's that separation there. Now, we're going to actually come back to look at this a wee bit tomorrow evening.

We're going to be looking at, God willing, the veil of the temple, and the veil of the temple, very much communicates that sort of thing as well. There's this idea of separation. There's this divide between ourselves and the Lord.

So, there's a separation there. But, again, when we see this healing here, we see that when Jesus comes to us in the gospel to provide healing, He heals that breach. So, the breach is there.

[ 19 : 08 ] The separation is there. But the Lord has come to bring us sinful people such as we are, and He's come to bring us back into fellowship of God's presence. So, He has come to heal that broken relationship caused by our sin.

He has come to cleanse. And when you think of that picture of the separation, you can see like ourselves, and then this great chasm between ourselves and God. So, causing this great chasm. And you can try and fix that chasm all you like, but we cannot. But the wonder of the gospel is that Christ has come to bridge that chasm. So, through His death, and through the whole work of redemption, He's bridged that chasm.

So, now we have access there again. We have access into the very presence of God. But, crucially, through Christ. He's the bridge. He's the door.

He's the way of access. It's through Christ. Our works is not the bridge. Our baptism is not the bridge. Our church attendance is not the bridge. Only Christ. Christ is the way in which we, who had the separation with the Lord, are able to enter back into the presence of God.

[ 20 : 20 ] And when we receive that healing and that cleansing, what a joy that is. What a joy that is. And for those of us who've experienced that here tonight, you remember that, that joy of going from that place, of being separated from God, and aware of it, to being brought into the presence of the Lord, into His kingdom, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's not just that we had this fellowship with God Himself, but also, and importantly, fellowship with His people as well. You know, we enter into a family, a family of God's people, a family of others who were separated, and who've had this spiritual disease of leprosy healed.

And again, that's a big part of the communion weekend as well. We stress our communion with the Lord, of course, our fellowship with the Lord, but also a big part of it is our fellowship with one another. So, you see, sin separates people, and separates people from God, and the cleansing that we receive brings people together, brings the Lord's people together, and brings us, of course, ultimately into fellowship with the Lord Himself.

So, that's leprosy resulting in shame, first of all. Leprosy as well resulting in separation, secondly. But the third thing that I've got here is that leprosy can result in our senses being deadened. Now, that's maybe a little bit confusing as to what I mean by that, our senses being deadened.

[ 21 : 50 ] And what I mean by that is that, as I mentioned just a few moments ago in the introduction, the nature of at least some forms of leprosy is that, as I was saying, it deadens the nerve endings.

So, it actually stops you from feeling, stops you from feeling, and particularly at the extremities of the body. So, that means that people don't feel pain at the extremities.

And if people don't feel pain at the extremities, they can do great damage to themselves. They can do great things that will put themselves in great danger.

I mean, that makes sense. I mean, if you put your hand on a hot plate or a hob or something like that, straight away, you're going to feel the heat. It's going to hurt you. And the first thing you're going to do is going to pull your hand away because you're realizing, well, something hot is there. Pull your hand away. If you can't feel, if you're not able to feel pain, you put your hand there, and it'll do all sorts of damage to your hand, and you're not actually realizing what it is that's going on.

[ 22 : 53 ] Pain is something that's there to alert us of damage that we're doing to ourselves. We very often think of pain as a negative thing, as a bad thing, and pain is, but it's necessary in a fallen world.

Pain is necessary in a fallen world. Pain is the indicator that tells us we're doing damage. We're doing all sorts of damage to our bodies. And here, for someone who had leprosy, they couldn't feel, so they were doing all sorts of damage to themselves.

And the link here is, sin can act like that as well. Sin has that effect. It has that effect of deadening our senses.

And what I mean by that is deadening our spiritual senses. It stops us from feeling, spiritually I mean, it stops us from realizing the danger of what we're actually doing to ourselves, and the danger of what our sin is doing to ourselves.

It stops us from realizing that the damage that sin is actually doing to our bodies. And for those of us who are the Lord's and here this evening, those of us who've experienced the cleansing of the Lord, those of us who've experienced the salvation of the Lord, we can look back now, and we can see, now that we've been awakened, and now that we're able to feel, we can look back now, and

we can see the way in which our sin was deadening our senses before we were converted.

[ 24 : 23 ] And maybe we were engaged in patterns of behavior that we now know was not healthy, wasn't good for us, wasn't good for our bodies, maybe, wasn't good for our minds, certainly, wasn't good for our souls.

And that deadening effect of sin, it also stopped us from hearing the Word of God. The warnings were there from the Word of God. It's like we didn't hear them. We maybe physically hear them. We didn't really hear them. But now, now, if we're the Lord's, if we've come to faith in Christ, now we clearly hear the Word of God. Now, now we're very much aware of the warnings of God's Word. But back then, we didn't pay attention. We didn't pay attention, therefore, we didn't realize the damage we were doing to ourselves. We were numb to these things. And when you're numb, you don't know, you do not know the extent of the damage that you're doing to yourself.

And maybe for some of us in here, I don't know all of you, maybe for some of us in here, maybe you're still in that situation. Maybe you're still numb. Maybe sin is still having this numbing effect on you.

[ 25 : 30 ] So you're hearing the Word of God. You hear the Gospel. You hear the call. You hear the invitation. You hear the warnings that are inherent in the Word of the Lord. But it's like you're numb to it.

You don't feel it. You don't sense any kind of reality of conviction or any of these things. You don't feel these things. You don't realize sin's a big deal. You don't think of your sin as really damaging or having any big impact on our lives at all.

But make no mistake, it is. Sin is. Sin always has that damaging effect. And it damages us in more ways than we can imagine.

It has an effect on us that's wider, sadly, than they can actually comprehend. And just like leprosy here, leprosy spread. It's spread through the body. That's what sin does.

It spreads through every aspect of our lives. It affects every aspect of our lives. And ultimately, when we have that spiritual disease, if left untreated, it leads to death.

[ 26 : 32 ] Spiritual death, I mean. Eternal death. That's a very solemn truth and a solemn reality. But again, as we think about the healing that Christ brings this man here, Christ comes to us in the Gospel and He provides a healing.

So yes, sin has that deadening effect. But when the Lord comes and when the Lord brings healing, it's a healing that results in our spiritual sense and being awakened, becoming alive, so that before we couldn't feel.

And then when the Lord comes and heals, we're able to feel. We're able to understand. We're able to hear all of a sudden. We're able to hear what God is saying. It might be the same Gospel we've always heard, but it's like we're hearing it for the first time.

You know, we become aware of the power of conviction of sin. We didn't feel that before. And all of a sudden, we feel these things. We hear the warnings that the Word of the Lord gives us as well. And praise God that for many of us in here this evening, that's been our experience. You know the spiritual reality of this. You know that spiritual reality of having your senses awakened, your senses becoming alive, so that you were at one time dead.

[ 27 : 44 ] You would hear this at one time and be numb to it. You wouldn't be touched in any way, but the Lord came. The Lord worked on your heart. The Lord enabled you to fall on your knees and to cry out for that healing and that cleansing.

And you received it. You received that cleansing. You received that healing. So there's some ways in which leprosy teaches us about sin.

So three parallels. Leprosy bringing shame. Leprosy bringing separation. Leprosy as well affecting the senses, the senses being deadened.

And we see the way in which that links to sin, the way in which the Lord cleanses us of these things. But what I want to, just in the last few minutes, what I want to just touch on, because we read the narrative, I want to actually look just briefly at the specific narrative here.

So see in Luke 5 and in verse 12 there, just briefly covering the narrative. So you see this man here, he falls on his face. So he's got this condition and he falls on his face.

[ 28 : 47 ] And he says there, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. So you see something very important there. This man, he knew his condition was bad.

And he sought to do something about it. He doesn't just stay where he was. He didn't just stay where the other lepers were, in the camp of the lepers, or wherever he might have been. He wants to get healing.

And in this context, what is it that he can do? He approaches Jesus. He approaches the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is a bold move. Again, when you're not aware of the specific culture of what's going on here, you don't really realize the magnitude of what he's doing here, approaching the Lord Jesus Christ here.

Lepers, they weren't meant to come near, people who were well. He shouldn't have been near Jesus, but he steps out here. There's this element of him stepping out, stepping out of the shadows, making that move forward, and he approaches Jesus himself.

And for ourselves, that's exactly what we need to do. And certainly, if we've never done that before, absolutely, that's what we need to do.

[ 29 : 57 ] You know, when you think of a physical disease, if a physical disease is ravaging your body and causing all sorts of pain and suffering, and if there's a healing available, you seek it out. You go towards that healing.

You seek out that healing. And spiritually speaking, that's something we have to absolutely do. If we're aware of a spiritual leprosy, if we're aware of this spiritual illness that we have, and there's a healing available, we must seek it out.

We must seek it out by seeking Christ himself, just like this man does here, coming to Christ. How do we do that? Well, we come to him in his word. We come to him when his people gather together in worship, like we do this evening.

We come. We come under the sound of the word. We come into the fellowship of the Lord's people. Even in privacy of our own homes, we come before the Lord lifting our voices in prayer.

And we come before the Lord in reading his word and asking for that cleansing, asking for that washing. And the Lord heals. So we come asking.

[ 30 : 58 ] You see that there, the willingness of the Lord. Jesus says, I'm willing. He's asking if you're willing, Lord. And the Lord says, yes, I am willing. The Lord is willing to save.

2 Peter 3, verse 9, reminds us that the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The question in that sense is not, is the Lord willing?

We believe in the sovereignty of God. Of course we do. But sometimes we lean on that to the extent of utterly ignoring our responsibility. God is sovereign. Yes, he is. God brings his people to himself. Absolutely. God chooses his people. All that is absolutely true. But we cannot forget that element of our responsibility as well. And far too often the question we ask is, are you willing? Are you going to save?

Are you going to do this, God? Really, the question ought to be, am I willing? Am I willing to come? Am I willing to come to Christ? Am I willing to lay hold of the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ offers me?

[ 31 : 58 ] And notice as well, the method of the healing there in verse 13. Jesus puts his hand on this man. Again, that's striking.

This is someone who everybody else would have avoided. Nobody else. Nobody else would have gone near a leprous man. But here you have Jesus. And he's not just drawing near. He's actually touching.

He's actually touching, placing his hand on one who other people would not go near at all. And there's a lot in that scene. But one of the things that's in that scene is tremendous compassion. You know, an amazing sense of care and compassion that's been shown by the Lord here. Drawing near and touching those who nobody else.

Nobody else was going to go near. But that's what Christ is about. No matter how outcast someone is. No matter how defiled someone is. No matter what it is that they're going through, what condition they have, like this man here.

[ 32 : 59 ] He does not turn away those who come to him. Those who come seeking that healing, seeking that cleansing. He does not turn them away. And then when this man is cleansed, just the end there, Jesus is saying to him there, go to the priest.

In other words, fulfill the commands of the Old Testament. You know, go to the priest. Give the sacrifice. That was what the Old Testament makes clear was to happen. Go show yourself to the leaders.

Show yourself to the leaders of the church, as it were, on that day, and show the healing that you've received. And of course, that's still true today as well. When we receive that healing, that cleansing from our spiritual disease, of our spiritual leprosy, our sin, we, in terms of membership anyway, we do that.

We go to the leaders of the church and we explain the way in which we've been healed, the way in which we've received received this wonderful healing from the Lord himself.

So, when healing comes our way, as the Lord heals here, it's very, very often, and here, followed by this call for obedience. Do something. You've been healed.

[ 34 : 06 ] Therefore, do this. Live according to my word. Live according to my law. And that is an important principle as well when it comes to the healing that we receive.

We receive a healing and then we respond to that in obedience. Obedience to the Lord. And you can imagine this man, when he gets his healing, gets cleansed from his leprosy, you can imagine him skipping along to the priest to explain what's happened and to give a sacrifice and all these things.

He's not going to be doing this grudgingly, is he? He's not going to be grudgingly, oh, do I have to go to the priest? Do I have to give a sacrifice? Not at all. He's going to be full of joy in doing so after all that he's received from the Lord.

And so it should be with us as well. When we're healed, when we experience that salvation, that healing of soul, the response should be for us to have the sense of delight in living in obedience to God.

Not thinking, oh, now I'm a Christian. I have to live in this way. I have to live in that way. The response should be full of rejoicing, rejoicing as we seek to obey the Lord. Doesn't mean we'll do it perfectly.

[ 35 : 11 ] We definitely don't do it perfectly. But yet, that ought to be our spirit as we seek to delight in actually living the way that the Lord has called upon us to live. So, this disease of leprosy, then a disease that brings shame, a disease that brings separation, a disease that causes the senses to be deadened.

And we see how all that is true of sin as well. But yet we see the amazing way in which the Lord is able to wash and cleanse all those who put their faith and trust in Him.

And a healing that is to be responded to as well and to be responded to in obedience. And our prayer is that we would be enabled to do just that this weekend, God willing, in a couple of days' time, as we respond to that in obedience, as we come to sit at the Lord's table and as we proclaim the death of the Lord and as we profess that amazing healing that we have received from His hand. Amen. We pray that the Lord would bless these few thoughts to us. So, bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, oh, we give thanks for Your goodness to us in so many ways.

We do come as those who, spiritually speaking, are born with this great disease of our sin. A disease that affects us, as we mentioned earlier on, in more ways than we can actually articulate.

[ 36 : 42 ] And the longer we go on in the life of faith, perhaps the more we're learning about the different ways in which sin has impacted us in the past and the different aspects of our lives that it has affected us well.

But we give thanks that as we come to Christ in the gospel, we come to one who is able to wash and cleanse, one who is able to heal and one who is not just able to, but who does so.

And as we come, as a people who are made willing, as we come seeking that cleansing, calling for that washing, we receive it. And it is a wonder that we do, that our shame is lifted away, our guilt taken away, that element of separation removed and we're brought into Your fellowship and into the family of God as we share in these things with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We also have our senses, senses that were deadened as a result of our sin. These senses are made alive again and we're able to feel and we're able to see.

We even see the world in a completely different way now when we walk around and we look at creation, we see the beauty of it. It's like our senses are open in a way in which they never were before.

[ 37 : 58 ] So we give thanks for that. And we do pray that if there are any for whom that is not yet the case, if there are any for whom they're still struggling with the reality of sin, this disease that we are all born with, we ask, O Lord, that You would work in their hearts, that You would make them able to seek out that washing, to seek out that cleansing, knowing, O Lord, that You are willing to

save all those who will come to You asking for it.

And we pray, O Lord, that You would go before us now as we part this evening and, God willing, as we come together tomorrow and on the Lord's Day as well, do us good, prepare us.

And we ask it all for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing in the Scottish Psalter and in Psalm 51.

The Scottish Psalter and in Psalm 51, so that's page 281, page 281, and verse 7 to 12 there, Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed, so ye wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow of gladness and of joyfulness.

Make me to hear the voice that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. We'll sing verse 7 down to the verse 12 there, so page 281, Psalm 51 from verse 7.

[ 39 : 36 ] Let's sing to God's praise. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed, so ye wash of me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow.

Of gladness and of joyfulness, make me to hear the voice that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

O mine iniquities, Lord, my faith's high from my sin.

Create a clean heart, Lord, Lord, renew, arise, fear, be with Him.

Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

[ 41 : 28 ] restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy grace and be saved.

Amen. And now, may the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, continue with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.