

“Unclean”

Sermon for Sunday, March 3, 2019, Exodus 34:29-32, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Luke 9:37-43a

In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. "Lord," he said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."

Luke 5:12 NLT

As Jesus came down from the Mount of

Transfiguration he witnessed a pathetic scene. The disciples were unable to cast the unclean, foul, spirit out of a boy. “Your disciples tried, but they failed.”

Immediately the boy went down in convulsions.

Immediately Jesus rebuked the unclean and make him clean.

“O faithless and perverse generation, how long will I be with you and endure you?” This sounds like some harsh words from our Lord. After all, the boy’s father just wanted his son cleansed of an unclean spirit. If we want to understand why Jesus speaks this way, then we first need to make sure we know

what He has said. To accomplish this we need to dig into the definition of two words: “faith”, and “perverse.”

In its fuller meaning “perverse” describes a willingness, or a determination, to go against what is expected or desired. The expectation is that God wanted the boy clean, cured in his right mind. Once we are living in-tune with God, all that is needed is that we like Jesus speak the words, “Be clean.”

in the biblical context faith changes your life – if your life isn’t changed by your belief, then your faith is lifeless. St. James said it this way: “faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (see James 2:17).

The crowd that Jesus encountered, including his disciples, was oblivious to the kind of intimate relationship that God desires. They thought that they could not make the boy clean if Jesus, Peter, James and John were not there. They were waiting on human beings to do something that any human

being can do who trusts in the power and the desire of God to make us clean—to make us whole.

Jesus called them “faithless”. Their belief was perverse, defective, unclean. They were seeking to pursue a relationship with God, determined by their own will, their own failure or success, rather than God’s loving desire for completion and goodness for every human being.

Until we understand that we are God’s and that God seeks us to use our God power to bring God’s kingdom to human reality, our faith is perverse, unclean. So let’s clean it up.

The good news in Luke was proclaimed by the man in advanced stages of leprosy. “No matter how unclean I am, no matter how far gone I am, no matter how hopeless the situation, Lord if you are willing, you can make me clean, you can make me whole.

All that is needed is for you to speak the words of life over me.” God is waiting for us to imitate Christ and in genuine faith, speak those words. God through the faith-example, teaching and mindset of Christ, has already made us and them clean, if we are willing. Amen