

Introduction:

- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mason-stonehouse-1k-grubhub-order_n_63dd3f95e4b07c0c7e09a98d - Not a good idea to leave a kid alone with a phone. It's dangerous to be alone.
- It's dangerous to be alone - your mind wanders - you start believing the lies of the enemy - "No one cares about you." You feel forgotten, insignificant, etc. Often, in seasons of loneliness, you give in to temptation because you lack accountability.
- You were not created to live alone - you were created for relationships. Primarily, you were created for a relationship with God, and you were created for healthy relationships with other people.
- The problem is that sin has affected the way we relate to God and other people, but Jesus has come to restore our relationship with God and our relationship with others. He has come to bring us out of isolation and into His community.
- Powerful story about a man who was isolated and alone yet restored by Jesus. This is a story of healing, but there's something far more than a healing that takes place in this story. This story is about Jesus healing a man's physical health and bringing him back into community with the people he loved. This is a story of restoration.
- God wants to do a work of restoration in your life and in the life of others. Two powerful reminders from this story: Never forget what Jesus has done for you. AND... Never forget what we must do for others.

Story

- Jesus has performed many miracles around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is far more than a miracle worker, but his miracles validate His message. His miracles show us what He has come to do - obvious in this story.
- We've seen Jesus cast out demons, heal Simon's mother-in-law, and pull up a miraculous catch of fish.
- Now, in an unnamed town around the Sea of Galilee, a man with leprosy approached Jesus. A skin disease known as "walking death." This man had an advanced case of leprosy. His entire body was eaten up with the disease.
- Leprosy caused sores that would overtake your body and would literally cause your body to rot. Likely this man suffered with leprosy for years.
- Leprosy was highly contagious. If you had leprosy you were removed from the community. It was humiliating ([Leviticus 13:45-46](#)). You showed that you were contagious by wearing torn clothes, keeping your hair unkempt, and when people came close, you cried out, "Unclean! Unclean!"
- Lepers often put together in leper colonies - far away from their families and their community. Commiserating in their pain together. The horror of watching your body rot, and the horror of having little to no communication with your family. Maybe this man had a wife and children he had not seen in years because of his leprosy.
- Imagine the looks you got from people as they passed you by. Lepers required to stand at a distance of 50 paces away from healthy people. People passed by trying to keep their distance.
- Not only contagious - but isolated from God. A leper could never go to the temple to worship God, offer sacrifices, etc. He was cut off from the people he loved and cut off from the corporate worship of God.
- **Book of Leviticus describes difference between clean/unclean.** To be unclean doesn't mean you were necessarily sinful. By and large, being ceremonially unclean meant you were unfit to enter the presence of God for a period of time. The idea was in the presence of God you had to be clean. You could be unclean if you touched a dead body, if you had a loss of blood, etc.

- Often, being unclean for a season was unavoidable. (Burying your dead relative, menstrual cycle, etc.) But, a reminder that to be in God's presence you had to be ceremonially pure.
- [Lev. 13](#) - A skin disease not only affected your health, it affected your ability to gather with God's people to worship. The only way to be restored to the community of faith was to be healed of leprosy, go before the priests, and have the priest declare you clean.
- What a miserable existence! The disease was bad enough, but the isolation and humiliation caused by the disease was worse than disease itself. This is NOT the way life is supposed to be...
- On this day, the leper approaches Jesus. He breaks the law and social custom by coming close to Jesus. If this had been any other religious leader, this man would have been quickly condemned.
- Don't know what he knew of Jesus, but he knew Jesus had the ability to heal. Falls to his face and begs Jesus. "If you are willing..." NOT "If you can..." The man knows Jesus can, but will Jesus? Also, not "Heal me..." But, "Clean me..." Man wants complete restoration.
- When Mark retells same story, Jesus was "moved with compassion..." ([Mark 1:41](#)). Jesus looked at the man and cared. The God of all creation cares for His people.
- Jesus reaches out hand and touches man. This is SCANDALOUS! You don't touch a leper. You could get sick, and you would be unclean! BUT, Jesus has no fear of disease. He has power over disease. He has the power to restore. Jesus could have spoken and the disease would have been gone, but he touches the man. "I am willing... be made clean..."
- Surprising instruction vs. 14 - "Tell no one..." Jesus is revealing who He is. Doesn't want people to think of Him as just a miracle worker. He wants people to know who He truly is - doesn't want to create the wrong kind of enthusiasm - who He really is revealed at the cross.
- vs. 14 - "Go show yourself to the priest..." [Leviticus 14](#) - He is clean - He can be restored to his family AND the community of faith. Imagine... it's been years since he's been with his family. Years since he's been at the

temple to worship. He's clean! No longer has to shout, "Unclean..." No longer quarantined, isolated, etc.

- Imagine the reunion with his family... Imagine what it must have been like the first time he stepped foot in the temple... Restoration! He was clean!
- vs. 15-16 - When people saw the man, they connected the dots. Jesus must have done this. The fame of Jesus spread more and more. Once again, Jesus pulls away to pray. Jesus wants to stay focused on the mission.

Never forget what Jesus has done for you.

- Everyone of us were in the same condition as the leprous man: unclean. You were clothed in the stench of death unable to be in the presence of God. You didn't suffer from a physical disease that made you an outcast, but your sin made you an outcast. You were an enemy of God and outside of His family.
- **Jesus was willing to make you clean.** If you are a believer, you came to a point where you saw your spiritual condition. You saw you were outside of a relationship with God and His family. But, there came a day that you cried out to Jesus. You asked Jesus to save you from your sins, and He was willing. Jesus has never told anyone who came to Him by faith desiring to be saved, "No." He turns no one away who comes to Him by faith ([Romans 10:13](#)). Jesus doesn't say, "You're too unclean... you're a lost cause... you're beyond help... Nothing can be done for you..." Jesus always says to the person who cries out for salvation, "I'm willing to save."
- **Jesus wanted you in His family.** Why was Jesus willing to make you clean? Because He wanted you in His family. [Gen. 1-2](#) - God's desire from the beginning has been to have a people who would live in fellowship with Him. This is why Jesus came! To restore us - to bring us into fellowship with God and His family. Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty of your sin, and give you the hope of eternal life with God. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you were adopted

into God's family. You share all the rights/privileges of sonship ([Romans 8:15-17](#)). We are a family. Sons and daughters who are united in Christ for His mission and His glory. You don't ever have to feel alone. God is for you. You have a family.

- **Church hurt.** God has called us into His family, yet some of us know what it's like to be hurt by His family. Maybe you've been a part of a church that made you feel unclean - like you weren't good enough to fellowship with that body. We know what it's like to have brothers and sisters in Christ point the finger at us, gossip about us, ostracize us because we have differences of opinions, etc. It's a sad reality that people have been so hurt by the church that they walk away from the body of Christ. That's not the way it should be. If you have been hurt by the church, I'm sorry. If you have been hurt by Northwood, I'm sorry. That's not what God intends.
- **However, don't let past hurt cause present abandonment of the church.** God has made you clean so that you can be restored to His community. The church should not have hurt you, but you are still called you to love His church and serve His church. The church is still God's plan to reach the nation. The church is still the bride of Christ. Let us take a step of faith and help you reengage in the body of Christ.
- Never forgetting what Jesus has done for you will make you more gracious and understanding of others. AND... that's what we need within the church.

Never forget what we must do for others.

- Jesus is the once and for all sacrifice who has done away with the Old Testament ritual system of worship that labeled people as clean and unclean. Jesus has made the way for us to be pure before God. When we place our faith in Jesus, the righteousness of God is applied to us. While we still sin, positionally, we are pure before God because of Jesus. We are clean.
- Today, no one calls out from the streets, "Unclean! Unclean!" BUT, you are often tempted to label people as unclean. There's people you

consider unclean. People you won't associate with, that you won't show compassion to, that you run from because in your eyes they are unclean. It's the person who has different political views than you, who thinks different than you. Or, the person who is of a different social status or economic status than you. Or, it's that person who lives that lifestyle you don't agree with. Or, that person who you just can't stand being around. Even as followers of Jesus, we are guilty of labeling people as unclean.

- When you never forget what God has done for you, it makes you gracious and kind, because you know what God has done for you, He can do for anybody.
- When you label people someone as “unclean” you fail to see that person as Jesus does, and you also fail to act towards that person as Jesus would.
- Never forget that your call as a follower of Jesus is to extend grace to others. God has extended grace to you so that through you He might extend grace to someone else. This is what you MUST do for others. You MUST extend grace.
- Since this is true:
- **The way you see people matters.** Seeing people as “unclean” vs. seeing people with compassion. Seeing people as sinners who need a Savior who God has called you to run to with grace.
- **The way you treat people matters.** Kindness matters. Compassion matters. Grace matters. May we always be a church that treats people with the kindness of Christ. While we will call sin what it is, we will not tell anyone, “You're not welcome here...” We will not say, “UNCLEAN!” Instead, we'll say, “Jesus wants to restore you.” We will be a church that welcomes sinners so they can hear the good news of a glorious Savior. Let's major on grace and not legalism. Legalism says, “To be a part of our family, you have to do everything exactly like we do it to earn your place.” Grace says, “Come and experience the love of God in spite of who you are so He might change you into who He wants you to be.”
- **The way you speak about people matters.** The way you talk to others about others says a lot about what you believe about the redemptive

work of God. We love to tell others about the flaws of someone else. Some of us have been hurt deeply by the wounds of gossip. When you gossip, put others down to someone else, you're saying, "Unclean! Stay away from that person!" How is that restorative?

- **The way you speak to people matters.** Judgmental words? Are you quick to speak your opinion to somebody about what they should be doing or how they should be living, or are you quick to encourage, to lift up, to use your words to speak of the restoration that comes through the Gospel?
- What must we do for others? Extend the grace of Jesus so that others can experience the cleansing power of Jesus.
- This morning, experience the cleansing power of Jesus. Believe in the One who died and rose again. Turn from your sin and turn to Him.
- If you are a follower of Jesus, who are you labeling unclean? What group of people are you running from instead of running to with the Gospel?