**Freedom from Human Limitations**

***40****And a lepercame to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.”****41****Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.”****42****And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.****43****And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once,****44****and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”****45****But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter. (Mark 1:40-45, ESV)*

 Jesus ministers to us by freeing us from our human limitations – however, it is up to us to use that freedom in the right way. Today we are speaking about freedom from human limitations, and as such we are continuing the topic of emancipation from our broken state of being in this fallen world. My hope is that this message will give you more hope in Jesus’ power to free us from the bondage of sickness, which the Bible connects with sin, and that you would be able to see how that resulting freedom adds to our responsibility as Christ-followers.

 So, let’s talk about this specific scenario and what it can say to us as the Body of Christ. The context of the account is one of ministry – Jesus has been going around performing healings, exorcisms/deliverance, and preaching in and around the area in which he lived. His purpose was to expand his sphere of ministry, and so he wanted to preach in more surrounding towns. While he is doing this, he encounters this leper – and he speaks an eternal truth which is that he, as the Messiah, is willing to make the leper clean – Jesus is a willing Messiah, who wills that God’s people be clean.

 Now, the limitations of leprosy (which may have also covered other skin diseases) were significant for the one who had it. The person would be declared unclean by the priest and if he recovered from the leprous sore and 2 weeks passed (with a checkup on the 7th and 14th days), the man would be freed from his obligations and isolation. In the meantime, he would have to self-isolate and stay far away from all people in the camp, and later in the town/city. Remember that the law itself was written while Moses and Aaron were still alive. Wherever that leprous sore was, the man or woman was condemned to a minimum of two weeks of medical isolation – this is according to Leviticus chapter 13. The person would always have to have their clothes torn, their head shaved, and their mouth covered, alerting everybody by loudly calling out, “Unclean! Unclean!” about themselves. As long as they had the leprous sore, they had to stay away from other human beings – they had to live alone. Jesus freed this one man from all of that with a single statement.

 This is like someone who is limited by how long they can walk, by the fact that perhaps they cannot bend forward at the waist, or that they cannot sit normally or be in an airplane because of some illness. What would happen to them if the Lord Jesus suddenly healed them from all of those limitations? What would they do in that newfound freedom? What would they do as they walked and began to travel and enjoy life more fully?

 As for you, my dear brother or sister, what has the Lord done for you in this regard? What limitations have you been freed from? What have you done with that freedom? Have you heeded God’s word, or have you been driven by your emotions? How does your spiritual life progress? Do you feelings run it, or is it guided by the Holy Spirit?

 I pray that you get excited about Jesus’ power to free us and also feel the great responsibility of such a freedom. God bless you all. Amen.