

LUKE 4-6

LIBERTY FOR THE CAPTIVES



The Coal and the Bird—Romans 8:33-34

June 7, 2026

In Luke 5:12–16, Jesus encounters a man suffering from leprosy—a disease that had left him isolated, excluded, and declared unclean. Desperate and out of options, the man throws himself at Jesus’ feet and pleads for mercy.

What follows is one of the most beautiful pictures of the gospel in Luke’s Gospel. Jesus reaches out and touches the untouchable. He doesn’t simply heal the man; he restores him. In doing so, Jesus reveals himself as the one who can deal with our deepest uncleanness—not just the things wrong around us, but the sin within us.

This sermon, Lewis Roderick explores the leper’s desperate plea, Jesus’ healing touch, and how this encounter points us to the cross, where Christ takes our place so that we can be welcomed into God’s presence. Whatever shame, failure, or guilt we carry, Jesus is able to make us clean.

For personal reflection/community discussion

- **Take a pen and paper, and note the 3 things that struck you most during this message.**
- **Spend a moment reflecting on the exchange at the heart of this story:** *the leper ends up restored to the city while Jesus withdraws to the lonely place. How does this point you to the cross, where Christ took your place so that you could be welcomed into God’s presence? What specific sins, failures, or stories of shame has Jesus carried away for you? Take time together to worship him for his atoning work and thank him for making you clean.*
- **Where are you still living as though the word “unclean” has the final say over your**

life? What labels, accusations, regrets, or past experiences continue to shape how you see yourself? How does the gospel challenge those narratives, and what would it look like to live this week from Christ's verdict rather than your own?

• James 5 reads, 'Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up'.

Our God continues to heal to this day. If you're in a group, share stories of how God has delivered you or others from sickness, and pray for those who are sick today. Remember the lessons of the leper: worship, in faith, humbly.

• The leper's desperation drove him to Jesus. What is your response to need? When you become aware of weakness, disappointment, suffering, or sin in your life, do you tend to hide, strive, distract yourself, or bring it honestly before God? What would it look like to pray with the leper's combination of faith, humility, and trust: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean"?

• What Jesus moved toward someone everyone else avoided. Where is he calling you to do the same? Who in your world might feel overlooked, isolated, excluded, or defined by their struggles? What practical step could you take this week to embody the welcoming, restoring love of Christ and help someone experience the dignity he gives?