



Devotion Week 22: Numbers 5-6 August 27, 2020

Bible Reference: [Numbers 5 & 6](#)

The Blessing in the Wilderness

Numbers 5 and 6 take us on quite a journey. They start off talking about those who are leprous, then go to those who are adulterous, those who are working at living holy lives, and then ends with the blessing that we hear at the end of each church service, which many of us have grown to know and love. That is quite a spread, so how do we connect our wilderness season with the reading from Numbers 5 and 6?

Our first connection is with leprosy, which might seem pretty obvious during this COVID pandemic. Leprous people were not allowed in the camp and had to be separated, much like those with COVID need to be quarantined. While having COVID may not be as physically obvious as having leprosy, it certainly is just as contagious. One person could make a massive group of people sick, whether COVID or leprosy, and requires us to avoid one another and to put ourselves “out of camp” when we have it. However, when Jesus came, He came in the midst of sick people, so what does that teach us? Let’s save that for now.

The next part of our reading deals with all these obscure rules about adulterous women. Why all the rules, and what is going on with drinking waters of bitterness and shunning people? (Don’t worry—I had similar feelings about this being unfair wondering where the man’s responsibility is in all this.) Adultery is one of God’s go-to metaphors on how His people fall in love with idols and other partners, separating themselves from Him rather than falling in love with Him. Let’s put this aside momentarily as well.

Following that comes the Nazarite calling. This is a vow made to God to be set apart and holy. Those that took this vow had to follow certain rules—not eating certain things, not cutting their hair, not being around dead people, etc. (Remember Samson? He was a Nazarite.) We could relate it to the vows a monk or a nun make and the lifestyle they lead. To the common person, the vow and the rules seem odd and make us wonder why anyone would put themselves through that, especially when we know being perfect is a lost cause.

What do all these things have in common? The need for Jesus. I know, Jesus is always the answer, but truly *He is always the answer!* Sick people who are cast out from their loved ones need Jesus.

Those who sin need Jesus. Those who can never be holy enough on their own need Jesus. We all need Jesus!

All of that talk about holiness, or the lack of it, brings us to what we do need from Jesus—we need His blessing in the wilderness. Our reading ends with those beautiful words we hear at the end of every service... that He would bless us and keep us, that His face would shine on us and be gracious to us, and that He would give us His peace.

Broken people need Jesus. None of us are following the COVID rules perfectly; we choose not to put Jesus first and are unfaithful to Him; we all fail. But Jesus came to be our sacrifice and bring us the blessing and peace that we need. And all of us need peace, that is for sure. No matter if you feel sick, Jesus blesses you; or you're cast out, Jesus blesses you; or you've been unfaithful, Jesus blesses you; or even if you feel that your attempts at goodness are ignored, Jesus blesses you. I pray you know Jesus' blessing for you today and receive His peace!

God's Peace,
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