

God's Perfect Way

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Leviticus 13:1—17

“² When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest. ³ The priest is to examine the sore on his skin...”
(NIV)

Introduction:

- These are unprecedented times.
- None of us could have imagined we would spend more than one year behind closed doors and away from our loved ones to curtail the inexorable advance of this deadly COVID-19 disease.
- We stayed socially distant, donned a mask, prayed for a way out, and hoped for a cure for COVID-19.
- But something else happened. When the vaccine was ready, we saw the slow but sure progression of doubt, hesitancy, and even rejection of this solution.
- Yes, even among Christian evangelical circles.
- God's perfect way is delineated in the pages of Scripture, and it shines brightly in stark contrast to what may be some of our darkest days.
- Let me share God's perfect way with you.

I. He Endows Us with the Knowledge

- Preaching out of the Book of Leviticus is not a common occurrence. We tend to stay away from it.
- However, this passage contains a wealth of important, relevant information for us today.
- You see, buried on these ceremonial instructions aimed at dealing with a dreadful, deadly infectious disease, we find how God himself provides us with the tools we need to deal with our modern-day pandemic.

- If you look closely, you will see that God gave the priests the capacity to understand the disease they were dealing with.
- And you will see how He endowed them with the knowledge to establish public health policies to isolate those suffering from this contagious disease as a clear way to protect the rest of the population.
- If anyone was suspected of being infected with leprosy, God established a process:
 - There were tests: “*he/she must be brought to Aaron the priest...*” (v. 2)
 - There was physical distancing: “*the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days*” (v. 14)
 - There were more tests, both for declaring a person clean and unclean.
 - Moreover, there were processes to integrate them into the rest of society or ban them entirely until they were declared clean and safe to resume normal activities.
- Of course, there were no vaccines available at that time, but if there was an available medical way to deal with leprosy, I am sure we would see it reflected here.
- What I am trying to say is that today, God has endowed us with the knowledge to deal with COVID-19, this dreadful, deadly contagious disease that is affecting us.
- He has endowed us with the knowledge to develop vaccines as a way to keep us and the rest of society safe from this scourge.
- So, we should seriously consider taking advantage of this knowledge God has granted to us.
- After all, “*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows*” (James 1:17, NIV).

II. He Gives Us the Capacity for Action

- So, as we continue our journey through the Bible, we see that God has not only given us the knowledge to deal with these types of situations, but He has also given us the capacity for action (i.e., to do something about it).

- In the Book of Leviticus, we just saw how knowledge was tied with a course of action: Isolation in case of infectious disease and reintegration into society when the disease cleared up.
- This capacity for action is definitively highlighted in the Story of Naaman, the commander of the armies of the King of Aram in 2 Kings 5.
- To recap the story, we know that Naaman had leprosy and that they had taken a young Israelite girl as a servant.
- This servant girl told Naaman's wife that there was something he could do about his condition: "***If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy***" (2 Kings 5:3).
- The king of Aram sends him to the king of Israel with a letter, a lot of money, and other gifts as inducements for this miracle.
- After a bit of misunderstanding, Naaman is finally sent to see Elisha, the prophet, and it is here that things get a bit interesting.
- Elisha would not even come out to greet this great man. Instead, he sent his messenger, "***Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed***" (2 Kings 5:10b).
- Naaman did not like the solution given by God's prophet. He did not want to go swim in a dirty, smelly river; he wanted something else – a magic trick, some sort of solemn ceremony, something more "miraculous."
- But God's ways do not always align with what we think should happen. Sometimes, God calls us to take actions that go against our grain.
- So, after Naaman's servant reasoned with him, Naaman decided to "act" according to the instructions given by the prophet.
- You may know the rest of the story, Naaman goes down to the river "***and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy***" (2 Kings 5:14).
- This same concept is true for us today. I know that there are many dissenting voices: "the COVID-19 vaccine is not God's way; there must be a different thing."
- That was Naaman's argument, but as he moved in the direction of this solution he did not like, he came to understand that it was God's way to deal with his most pressing problems.

- I know there are doubts, questions, even hesitancy around the vaccine. But, perhaps, we should take action and move towards the path God has opened for us, and in doing so, we will come to trust in Him and understand that this is God's way of dealing with our current situation.

III. He Challenges Us to Trust (in his provision)

- You see, this is God's perfect way for us: He endows us with the knowledge to deal with our present circumstances; He gives us the capacity for action; and, lastly, He challenges us to trust in His provision.
- In Luke 17:11–19, we find the story of the ten lepers.
- As Jesus entered into a nameless village on his way to Jerusalem, he was approached by ten lepers.
- They called out for Jesus' help in their time of need: "***Jesus, Master, have pity on us!***" (v. 13).
- The Bible tells us that Jesus healed people through various methods: declaring it with His voice, touching them, and some other extraordinary, miraculous ways.
- Here, Jesus did not use any of his typical methods for healing. He just told them to follow, to trust the system already established by God: "***Go, show yourselves to the priests***" (v. 14b).
- You see, Jesus is underscoring God's perfect way: He gives us the knowledge, He gives us the capacity, and He challenges us to trust His provision.
- What happened here? These ten lepers embraced what Jesus said and, "***as they went, they were cleansed***" (v. 14c).
- As they trusted in God's perfect way, they found the solution to their problems.
- As they moved in God's perfect way, the dreadful, deadly, infectious disease they were burdened with vanished completely.
- As they moved in God's perfect way, they were made whole.
- I know we like to dwell on the fact that only one returned in gratitude (i.e., the Samaritan, the foreigner, the less likely candidate): "***Rise and go; your faith has made you well***" (v. 19).
- But the point is that all ten trusted Jesus, trusted God's perfect way, completed the actions Jesus commanded of them, and in doing so, they were healed.

- Why do I say these things? Because, today, we are challenged to do likewise.
- We are dealing with a deadly pandemic that has decimated a significant number of our brothers and sisters, neighbors and strangers alike. The disease has not discriminated.
- God has provided a way to deal with it, and He is challenging us to take action.
- So, as we roll up our sleeves and take the shot, we will show our trust in His provision.

Conclusion:

- I know that some say that the Bible declares that “God works in mysterious ways” (Dios obra por caminos misteriosos). But this is not a Bible verse.
- What I can truly say is that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts and that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8).
- What I can say is that God’s ways are perfect and always address our needs and our problems.
- What I can say is that God’s perfect way includes endowing us with the knowledge to deal with our present circumstances.
- What I can say is that God’s perfect way gives us the capacity to take those actions that will benefit our brothers and sisters and us personally.
- What I can say is that God’s perfect way involves trusting Him, even when His way is different from what we thought it should be.
- What I can say is that, as we take the COVID-19 vaccine, we will protect our loved ones, our neighbors, and our world.