

Immerse Day 34 :: March 18

In the land of COVID, we are getting pretty sick of talking about the concept of “contagiousness”. But bear with me today as we consider this as a theological reality.

In the context of the bible, people had to be extremely careful of disease. Without modern medicine, even easily curable diseases could easily be fatal. So, to limit the scope of a disease, they had strict rules about how to limit contagion. The most obvious example is leprosy, a disease of the nerves that caused a numbness wherever it effected skin. Because of the contagious nature of leprosy, anyone diagnosed with it were immediately forced outside the community, an early version of “social distancing”. For a week they had to live outside the protection and supply of the community, wearing a veil over their faces, and shouting “UNCLEAN!” whenever another person got within a certain distance.

This medical truth soon became a religious truth as well. Soon it was not just disease that was contagious, it was clean-ness before God. Anything considered or declared Unclean was equally contagious and needed to be separated from other things. Pots were smashed, houses were torn down, all to stop the spread of Uncleaness. Why? Because nothing Unclean could be in God’s presence. This included blood, death, and a host of other things. So, the basic rule was “when something clean and something unclean interact, everything becomes unclean.”

Jesus turned this whole line of thought around of course, but in today’s reading we find something similar but opposite. God is, of course, incapable of being Unclean, and so anything God touches becomes Clean. And so, He declares, does God’s house. Once the temple, it’s furnishings, and even the incense and oil used to dedicate it are blessed and dedicated, “anything that touches it will become holy.” God and His house are Holy and that Holiness is contagious!

Now, what if we apply this to Paul’s teaching that our bodies are temples of God! What if we understand that Jesus was the source of “Living Water”, the only thing that God’s people could use to make an Unclean thing Clean again? And what if we lived out the truth that Jesus spoke, that we as His followers have become sources of Living Water, Temples of God? We are Clean! We are Holy! And we are contagious! Whatever we touch in God’s name, WHOever we touch in God’s name, becomes Holy, becomes Clean.

Didn’t know you had it in you, did you?