

The Cleansing of the Uncleanable

The proverbial expression, “cleanliness is next to godliness” places cleanliness and personal hygiene at high esteem. Generally, when our bodies are covered with sweat or grime, we will make every effort to wash ourselves clean with a good shower...

There is a story of a woman in the Bible who was not physically unclean but ceremonially unclean. She was suffering an incurable disease which caused her to bleed constantly. She had been suffering from this disease for 12 long years. She was ostracized by the community as any contact with her would make them ceremonially uncleaned too. Although she had sought medical help, it was futile. Her savings were depleted, her health deteriorated and she was deserted by her loved ones and friends.

She had heard of Jesus who could miraculously heal the infirmed. She desperately desired him to heal her. When Jesus was walking with a crowd nearby, she told herself if only she could just touch Him, even His garment, she would be healed.

She set off resolutely knowing of the crowd and her own unclean status. Trying her very best to be unnoticeable but close enough to Jesus, she reached out her hand and managed to touch Jesus' garment. Immediately, her bleeding miraculously stopped and she was healed of her disease.

This story causes one to think that if a person believes in a god, the underlying assumption is that the god he believes in must be more powerful than him. Thus, when the woman received Jesus' healing power, we took note that her ceremonial uncleanness did not defile Him. Instead, it is Jesus' power that healed her. Jesus who is God Himself, cannot be defiled by any uncleanness or sin. Therefore, He is the only One who is able to deliver anyone from his spiritual uncleanness.

Sin permeates the total being of man. The Bible says that man is sinful. We are sinners not because we commit sin in our deeds or thoughts but because we are born a sinner, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).

Man is created with a soul, and upon death, sinful man will be condemned to hell. Hell is a place of eternal suffering, and also the place of eternal regret. For here, the souls would fully understand the reality of God, yet have no means of returning to Him for all eternity. This is surely one place one should avoid!

Through the ages, man has in one way or another, attempted to reconcile with God. But sinful man on his own accord, is never able to reconcile with Him. For the Bible says “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). As sinners, we are not able to meet the standards of Holy God. We are not able to stand in His Holy presence one day. In other words, there is no hope for us sinners to return to God on our own accord.

Although men have thought of many ways to return to God, such as trying to do good works, abstaining themselves from certain pleasures in life or offering sacrifices to appease the gods, in all these, there is no way they can return to God.

The Bible has said that no number of good works will bring us nearer to God. For the Bible has said “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.... (Isaiah 64:6)

God knows our miserable state. Therefore, only He is able to rescue and bring us back to Himself. He so loved us that He sent Jesus from heaven's glory to earth, to be born of a virgin called Mary, lived a sinless perfect life as a man and eventually died on the cross, bearing the sins of all man and rose again on the third day. He became the perfect unblemished sacrifice

to appease the wrath of God against sins and to bear the punishment for the sins of man. Through His death and the shedding of His blood, once and for all, anyone who believes in Jesus, can now be near to God. This wonderful promise is recorded for us *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* (John 3:17).

For those of us who are still seeking a way to be near God and at peace with Him, be like the woman with the issue of blood who touched Jesus with faith. For Jesus said to her *“your faith has made you whole,”* we too can “touch” Him with our heart of faith. We must believe Jesus is the Son of God, who died on the cross for us. As we are plagued with the vileness of sin, like the woman, Jesus can heal us of this dreaded spiritual disease with His precious blood that was shed on the cross.

For twelve long years, the woman realized no man nor any amount of her money or efforts can deliver her from her misery. It was only when she believed in Jesus was she saved and delivered from her hopeless situation. Have you been trying to reach out to God by your own strength? To do good works, to earn merit from God to solve your sin problem and to assuage your guilty conscience?

The only solution is to believe in God’s only way of reconciling man to Him and that is through His Son Jesus. For the Bible says *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16). Believe in Jesus Christ today. Admit that you are a sinner. Confess your sins before Him and plead with Him to save you from your sin. God’s promise is that He will forgive you, save you and give you everlasting life with Him. You will find rest and peace in Him alone.