



NUMBERS 5:1-10

BIBLE STUDY

MT. ZION FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

105 LANKFORD AVENUE

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902

VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



Numbers 5:1-10

Dealing With Our Sin

GOD gave Moses some good laws to deal with wrongdoing in society. These laws never favored the wrongdoer as some of our laws do. Neither did the laws ignore the innocent as some of our laws also do. In God's laws, evil was evil and treated as evil. His laws never called evil good or good evil. Furthermore, His laws never encouraged evil. In these verses from today's reading, we note two requirements for the person who had sinned and done evil in society. They were *repentance* and *restitution*.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

There are a number of titles you can give this sermon: A Conscience Cleansed; The Unclean; Defiled; A Clean House; Defiled and Cleansed.

Notice in verses 1-11 that one phrase is repeated three times: 1, 5, 11: *“Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying...”*



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

At first, does this seem harsh? If you have a physical impurity, you're excluded from the camp. You are part of God's covenant people, you're a true blue-blood Israelite, and yet you are sent out of the camp. What's the message here? The message here is about defilement and how it excludes us from the enjoyment of communion with God and with his people.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

The passage goes on in verses 5-10 to address moral offenses, and there we learn that unlike some of our preconceptions, the Old Testament is not merely concerned with the external, ceremonial, or ritual. No, God is concerned with our hearts, our lives, and our behavior. Moral offenses are just as defiling as ritual offenses, as defilements that are occasioned because of ceremonial impurity brought on by physical infirmities. God cares about our character. He cares about our lives, our actions, our deeds, and our words, which we'll learn in verses 5-10.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

What lessons do we learn from these actions? These diseases could have easily been spread in the heat of the wilderness because of contact with people with leprosy, people with hemorrhages or discharges, or even from a dead body, which could have ravaged the people of God. There's an obvious physical provision of God for the well-being of his people by removing those who could spread the disease in the camp.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

There is theological significance to this passage. The people of God are meant to learn something about God. Let me suggest there are at least three things we can learn about God. First, it is meant for us to learn that God is holy; second, it is meant for us to learn that God is present; third, it is meant for us to learn that God has spoken.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

They're meant to learn that God is holy. The point here is that God is in the camp and therefore the defiled cannot be there. Look at verse 3: *"You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst."* God is holy and does not dwell with that which is defiled.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

Secondly, though, we learn that God is present. This is the flip side of God's dwelling in the midst of the camp. It is a blessing that God is present, but His presence requires purity on the part of those with whom He dwells.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

When you are in a state of defilement, even physical impurity constituting defilement, you may not dwell in that place where God manifests His presence. And so, you learn that God is holy and that the defiled cannot dwell with him.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

It's frankly a pain to have to live in the camp; you have to take extra care because God is in the house. The Israelites learn that along with the blessing of his presence, there are very important obligations and responsibilities that have to be fulfilled. It requires purity on the part of those with whom he dwells because he is



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

It's a pain to have to live in the camp; you have to take extra care because God is in the house. The Israelites learn that along with the blessing of His presence, there are very important obligations and responsibilities that have to be fulfilled. It requires purity on the part of those with whom He dwells because He is present.



Numbers 5:1-10
Dealing With Our Sin

Also, we learn that God has spoken. His command rules the community. He has said that this is how it's going to be, and Moses goes out of his way to remind us of this—that everything God had spoken to Israel, the sons of Israel did. Look at verse 4: *"The People of Israel did this, banning them from the camp. They did exactly what GOD had commanded through Moses."*



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from moral offenses

Then look at verses 5-10. These verses are harder on us because they speak to the various kinds of moral offenses. Verse 6: “GOD spoke to Moses: *‘Tell the People of Israel, When a man or woman commits any sin, the person has broken trust with GOD, is guilty, and must confess the sin.’*” All kinds of sins are included under this. All manner of breaking the Law especially sins against our brothers and sisters, are



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from moral offenses

All kinds of sins are included especially sins against our brothers and sisters. Notice how sin is defined, and how its effects are described in this passage: *"When a man or a woman commits any of the sins of mankind*

...."



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from moral offenses

Look at how Numbers states it: *“the person has broken trust with GOD, is guilty, and must confess the sin.”* Does that remind you of anyone?



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

There is also a personal dimension to sin. What is the last phrase? *"That person is guilty."* Not just by the declaration of a court of law, but according to his heart. And so, there's a horizontal and a vertical and a personal dimension of sin. We learn that from this passage.



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

We also learn how we're supposed to respond to this because one of the things that God makes so clear in this passage is that there is a need for here that goes way beyond simply saying ***repentance*** "I'm sorry."



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

I don't know how it is when you're teaching your children to repent, but I know a couple of children who have a tendency, when confronted especially with their sins towards one another, to say to one another with great sorrow and meaning welling up in their eyes, "I'm sorry!" and turn away.



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

We have to turn them back around and say, "I'm sorry for *what*? And do you need to ask for forgiveness?" But we adults are sometimes no different from our children in our dealings with one another (except that maybe we're a little more hard-hearted), and very often our reaction, when we have been caught red-handed, is "I'm sorry!"



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

There is also a personal dimension to sin. What is the last phrase? *"That person is guilty."* Not just by the declaration of a court of law, but according to his heart. And so, there's a horizontal and a vertical and a personal dimension of sin. We learn that from this passage.



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

In this passage God says that that's not how ***repentance*** works in His household. Here is what ***repentance*** looks like:

We must recognize our sin.

We must admit that what we did was unloving toward our neighbor, unfaithful to him, and brought personal guilt upon us.



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

Secondly, we are told from this passage that *we must confess the sin*. We're not just to say, "I'm sorry," but, "*This is what I've done against you, God, and it's wrong. It's horrible. It's inexcusable.*"



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

But then it doesn't stop there, does it? The passage then speaks of ***restitution*** and notice how this ***restitution*** works. If the person whom you have defrauded is not alive, ***restitution*** must still be made to a family member. If a family member can't be found, that ***restitution*** goes to the house of the Lord.



Numbers 5:1-10

Lessons learned from personal dimension

And what do priests do? They make atonement. That's their business. An atonement offering is the last step. Atonement must be made by the priest for the guilty party. Do you see the fullness of this ***repentance***? There's recognition of sin, confession of sin, ***restitution*** for sin, and atonement for sin.



Tabernacle Offerings

Next week Numbers 7:1-12

