

Able to Deliver

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of recognizing one's lostness and the transformative power of Jesus to heal and deliver from sin and spiritual ailments.

Duration: 37:03

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 5:17, Matthew 6:5-18, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:21-23, Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 4:15-16

Topics: "Deliverance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the message that Jesus Christ is alive and capable of doing great things. The sermon focuses on the importance of hearing and obeying the words of Jesus as spoken in the Bible. The preacher highlights the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 as evidence of the transformation that occurs in the hearts of those who are redeemed by Jesus. He also challenges the congregation to reflect on their own experiences of being lost and in need of salvation. The sermon concludes with a call to approach Jesus with humility, confessing sin and seeking forgiveness, cleansing, and strength.

Transcript

How our hearts do rejoice in this message that has brought again to us the fresh testimony that the Lord Jesus Christ is alive, the one of whom I have read, and the one of whom I now speak, is a living Lord. And what we see that he has done, he is able and willing still to do. During the past two months, we've considered again the words of the Lord Jesus, remembering that in Hebrews we heard that God, who had in sundry times in diverse places spoken unto us by the prophets, has now spoken unto us by his Son.

And it behooved us, therefore, to hear his Son, to hear what he would say and to hear what he has said. We saw that in Matthew, the fifth chapter, he presented the description of the heart that he redeems, telling us what it is that he does and giving to us the evidence and proof of the genuineness of regeneration. This we saw in the Beatitudes.

Then we considered the attitude of a redeemed heart toward the law, that the law is to be fulfilled in us by this risen Christ. And we saw the actions of a redeemed heart toward service, in praying, in fasting, in tithing, that these things were done not outwardly, with the strained sense of performance of an unnecessary task or difficult thing, but inwardly, that everything in the redeemed heart springs from within. And lastly, last Sunday, we saw again the fact that in that day, our Lord, with the fan in his hand, will separate the wheat from the chaff, and that you need not fear that any who have not been born of God will

somehow elude his eye of scrutiny, for he knows his own.

And he said then in that day that many will say, Lord, Lord, and I will say away with you, I never knew you. We saw also in that same portion what it is that he does. He brings his own in through the straight gate, and he causes them to bear genuine real fruit.

He leads them to say, Lord, not just as a testimony of a scripture verse, but of a relationship to him. And finally, he enables them to build their house upon the rock. This whole portion is the unfolding of God's new thing.

Isn't it amazing that we should have in this very next event, this miracle of healing the leper. When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. This is Palm Sunday.

Customarily, you would expect a sermon on the event of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. The significant thing about that entrance was the crowd that followed him, crying Hosanna unto the one that comes in the name of the Lord. But may I remind you that the same people that put their coats in his path and spread palm branches in his way were for the large part the company that now had changed in their fickleness and cried out, crucify him.

Our Lord was always frightened of crowds. And may I say this, that anyone that ever received anything from God received it alone. The temper of the crowd is usually wrong.

The judgment of the crowd is invariably faulty. The morals of the crowd are conspicuously contrary to the word of God. And when religion becomes a crowd matter, it's mesmerization and not revelation.

And consequently, when you see this great crowd following him, you behold that which was of the greatest grief to our Lord, the thoughtless, heedless throng, thinking that they're performing God's service. And yet the while, but victims of their own fancy. And a little later, the same individuals induced now by the arguments of the Sanhedrin are crying out, crucify him.

In this case, he was there on the mountain preaching to this vast company of people. Our Lord seated around him, his apostles and disciples beyond that, the crowd extending out until we would anticipate a tremendous company. They heard him as one who spoke with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees.

And when he came down from the mountain, they followed him. Can you see them as they straggle along coming down the little hillside? And the first one that the Lord meets of whom we have record is a leper. And the leper came and worshiped him.

Can you see this man? He's been forbidden to be in the path that well, people would take. Israel is explicit in its laws concerning lepers. There was an area marked out for them at the time he would have a black sash tied or sewn to his coat.

Whenever a clean person would approach him, he would pull the sash over his mouth and would cry, unclean, unclean. But here is a leper who doesn't do that. Somehow he's lost all a sense of fright and all sense of being ostracized.

He's heard that the Jesus is there. He's seen the multitude following him. And he waits, waits for the son of God to come down.

And then he came and worshiped him, bowed low before him, bent with his face to the ground. This is the meaning of the word. And he makes this declaration, Lord, Lord, the crowd said, Hosanna to him that comes in the name of the Lord.

And they received nothing. The leper came and said, Lord, and he received everything. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart, thou shall be saved.

And this now he sees, he understands that the one that has spoken is none other than Jehovah, the long awaited Messiah, for he comes to him as he would come to God. And he worships him as God alone is worthy to be worshiped. And he bows before him as only God is worthy to receive reverence and obeisance.

And so before the Lord Jesus Christ, he kneels, he bows, he bends and says, Jehovah, not that that was the word, but that it was the expression given here to one that was able to do the impossible, the miraculous, the supernatural. Whoever heard of a man cleansing a leper? Do you remember when Nahum and came to the King of Israel and said, I hear that in Israel, there are those that can heal the leper. And Nahum and the King said, am I God that I should make alive? He absolutely disclaimed any such ability, but here is one that has come.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou can make me clean. He never would have come. Had he not believed that this one, the Lord Jesus was able to make him clean.

He would never have come. Had he not believed that the Lord Jesus was willing to make him clean. I read for you from Leviticus.

Do you recall the statement that was made there in the book of Leviticus? Let me refresh your memory. It was stated that if one had a rising in the flesh and raw flesh, that he was unclean. But then it was said, if there is one that has leprosy, where, where so ever the priest shall look.

In other words, if there's leprosy on the head and the shoulders, the face and the body clear to the feet and the soles of the feet, if he's white with leprosy, then he shall be pronounced clean. What does this mean? Doesn't it mean this dear heart, that leprosy, the leper is the picture of the sinner. And the only one that's a candidate for grace and for mercy and for cleansing is the one that has discovered his need.

How many people there are, how many sinners there are that, that are not candidates for grace or for mercy because they feel that they're really not such bad sort after all. You see, God doesn't have any problem saving lost people. His problem is to get people that are lost to realize how hopeless and helpless they are.

He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, but he can only save lost people. You say, well, aren't they lost? Lostness is not a judicial state. Lostness is a state of consciousness.

If you're out in the wilderness and think you know where you're going in your own mind, you're not lost until you discover that you don't know where you're going. And you do not know how to get out of this dangerous situation in which you are. Then you become conscious of your inability to help yourself and find your way, and then you're lost.

Now, previously you were, but you didn't know it. And you were to candidate for guidance until you couldn't find your way back. And he came to seek and to save those that had no way of extricating

themselves from the morass of sin, no way of finding their way out of the wilderness of iniquity, no way of dealing with the corruption that sin had bred in their hearts.

And when they didn't know where to turn or where to go or what to bring or what to do and were hopeless and could simply cry out, I'm lost, then they were candidates for mercy. This is the only kind of people he saves. The first beatitude is, blessed are the poor in spirit, the broken in spirit, the beggarly in spirit, the lost, for theirs and only theirs and none but theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And thus the leper was unclean until he was totally covered with leprosy. When it was behind his ears and in his eyes and his mouth and his whole body, when it was white with leprosy, when there wasn't a place on him as big as the end of your finger where you could touch clean flesh, then and not until then was he to be considered clean. You say, wasn't it leprosy? Of course it was.

Didn't it mean he was well? No, he was sick, hopelessly sick. This is the only kind of people God's ever designed to save. When you find someone that has nothing that they can offer, my dear sinner friend today, as long as you have a part of you that in your own mind is not defiled, a part I say no bigger than your thumb, no larger than the lobe of your ear, if you in your heart of hearts think that this is undefiled, you are not a candidate for grace.

But when you've come to the end of yourself and there's nothing in you that's good, no place to go, nothing to bring, and you've lepers from the top of your head to the sole of your feet, and what is our Lord saying, the first one that meets him, when he comes down from the mountain and he's described this people that he's going to get to himself, this redeemed people, this regenerated people, this recreated people, when he sees the leper, he says to the throng behind him, the same way that I can speak the word and touch the leper and the leprosy departs from him. So when you've seen your sin, that you're defiled and unclean and hopeless and helpless, that leper morally, that leper spiritually, that leper dead in trespasses and sins, when you've come to discover that you become mine, not through what you do, but through what I do, then I can meet you. And to the great throng of people that are pressing down the hillside and have to stop because he stops, this is the object lesson of how men that are by nature lepers are made clean.

How is it? Did he give the man a rigid schedule of spiritual calisthenics? Did he say, pull yourself up by your bootstraps? No. He simply said, recognize your need, realize your hopelessness, recognize your impotence and powerlessness and realize that this thing that has you is sin. That's what it is.

Leprosy is the picture of sin, God's divine object lesson. And so he has testified here when this man full of leprosy comes and bows before him. He says to the throng and he says to the centuries and he says to us today, the only kind of people that I can help are the hopeless.

The only kind of people that I can meet are the lost. And you know something? There are some of you here today that have been professing Christians for years and years, but in the eye of God, in your own eye, you know, you've no life and Christ isn't in you. And you know why? Because you've never been lost.

Never been lost. I asked a company in one of our churches about a hundred. I said, how many of you have ever been lost? And four people raised their hands.

Now I said, how many of you have been saved? And over 90 hands went up. I said, how can it be? He only came to save lost people. Only four of you have ever been lost and aware of your lostness.

And yet 96 of you say you're saved. The lost man is the man that's seen the uncleanness of his heart and the bankruptcy of his spirit. We've gospel hardened a generation of sinners in America by telling them how to be saved before they've discovered how badly they need to be saved.

Have you ever been the leper? You ever been helpless at his feet? Have you ever been aware of this terrible thing of sin from the depths of your broken, helpless heart of Christ the Lord? That's how Will Dawkins make me clean. He only saves lost people and then he does everything, a new heart, a new life, the new nature, a new spirit, and a new creation. And you know, when he does it, you can go right back to the law.

You can go right back to the word. You can go right back to the custodians of the truth. He said to the leper, go and present yourself to these that are the servants of God, of Moses.

Carry yourself over now. Have yourself declared clean. If this man had gone on with leprosy and gone in and said, look, I'm clean, they'd have laughed him away.

When you find people that name the name of Christ that are still habitually infected with the terrifying diseases of sin, they'll never do. Profession isn't enough. It's got to be the possession of new life and to be examined by the Lord, examined by the word.

And so it was. And this is how you get into God's new thing and come broken and stripped and hopeless and helpless and present yourself as a candidate for grace and mercy and the Lord by the touch of his love and by the word of his power. Why? Well, the reason why Jesus Christ can heal you from this terrible thing of the leprosy of sin is because he was made to be sin for you.

In the eyes of God, he stood before God, the leper that you were, that I was. And in the eyes of God, he died under the curse of sin and he satisfied the law on your behalf. This is how you get in.

Have you gotten in? Oh, I plead with you. If you haven't, that you do today and you make sure that if you have been healed of him, if you and incidentally, the word healed and the word saved are the same word in the New Testament, you can only tell from the context, whether it's to the body or the spirit, because what leprosy is to the body, so sin is to the spirit and thus the same word is appropriate. Has he? Oh, I trust so.

Now, what do we find? He goes just a little way and a man comes to him and says, I have a servant that can't serve me because he's palsied. Can you imagine how it would be to be a waiter in this centurion's home if you were palsied and dropping every dish you touched and unable to walk? Can you imagine why the servant was grievously tormented? Here he was a servant and responsible to serve and he couldn't write and he couldn't hold and he couldn't work. He was palsied and he was grievously tormented because of his inability to serve.

I've wondered why it was that the next man after the leper was a palsied man. And you know, I rather feel it's this way because the Lord Jesus discovers that in among his people, after they've been cleansed from leprosy, there are still those that have the palsy of habits and the palsy of attitudes and the palsy of past motives and the palsy of past relationships and they go to serve the Lord and they can't serve them because they're palsied. And I want to ask you today, you say, yes, I have been cleansed from the stain of sin, but have you been cleansed and delivered from the palsy of trait and character and attitude and motive? I think of some that would serve the Lord and they try to do it but they're palsied because they

have to have credit for everything they do and recognition and everything they do has to be, they can't serve him because of that.

There are others that can't serve the Lord because they can't get along with people, they're palsied and every time they do anything it's spilled and spoiled. And there are others that can't serve the Lord because of a timidity and a fear that's as evil as an arrogance and a pride. God has to save you from a false fear and a false timidity as well as from a false pride and a false arrogance.

And they can't serve the Lord because they're still palsied and they've never realized they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. And our Lord, I'm sure, was using this as an illustration of the fact that he not only cleanses from leprosy, saves from the defilement and the corruption of sin, but that very thing in the heart and the life and the experience that makes people powerless to serve God, God can meet and God can answer and God can deliver. And from the grievous tormenting of realizing that your days are being spent and your life is being lived and nothing is being wrought for eternity, God in his sweet and sovereign grace can save you from the palsy of futility, uselessness.

And isn't it interesting, the next thing you have is Peter's wife's mother and she is, the Lord comes into her home and she would serve him. And she can't because she has a fever. Well now of course you understand that I'm going to make an analogy, don't you, to the fever.

And I'm going to say that one of the fevers that burns and sears and destroys is the fever of jealousy. I know of nothing that has so made powerless the church of Christ as the terrible fever of jealousy. Nothing.

Burning like a fire. I wonder if that's ever happened to you. And you'd serve God but you can't serve because of a fever that rages.

Oh would God, the church of God, could see that this wonderful Lord that can heal from leprosy can deliver from palsy and can heal from the fever of jealousy. Then the fever of backbiting and whispering and tongues that wave and burr and cut and injure and sear. I suppose that there's been through the forty years of the history of this church on the basis of what I hear from men that have known and loved God and loved the church.

Nothing that so vitiated the life of the church and destroyed the effectiveness of its testimony as it has been the habitual, constant, ceaseless atmosphere of gossip that God so hated and so broken him and grieved him and oh dear heart this is a fever that gets into the human mind and the human spirit and it burns and surges and it's a hell. It's a fever. Wouldn't get us into the saloon.

Couldn't get us into the places of worldliness but there's still that fever that creeps in. It's got to speak. To hurt by the speaking.

This is a fever and it keeps from service for God. Leprosy, yes, you're not here. You're here and you've never been cleansed from the penalty of sin.

Oh but wait, there's Saint Jesus that can save from the penalty of sin, can save from palsy, and can save from fever. That motive that's wrong for it's inside is the fever. It's a deep inner infection.

Do you know something? The palsied man cared. That's it. He cared.

He cared enough to send the man that he would serve and said go find the master and tell him that I want to be healed because I want to serve. And when you find that you're palsied then the thing to do is to recognize that this wonderful Lord that can heal from leprosy can deliver from the grievous torment of palsy. And should you and I find that we have the fever of malmotive jealousy, wrath, and bitterness, and strife, and whispering, and backbiting, whatever it might be that surges within us.

Perhaps to some it's the fever of an unclean imagination and the other it's the fever of wrath. And to someone else it's a fever of arrogance and pride. It doesn't make any difference.

This wonderful Lord Jesus can speak and touch and caress and fever goes. But you've got to know it. And Peter's wife mother knew it and she called for help.

And then the last, oh how lovely this is. Perhaps your problem isn't palsy. Perhaps your problem isn't a fever.

And so he wanted you to know that there wasn't anything you'd ever experience that he couldn't help. And so that night they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils under satanic oppression and control. And he cast out the spirits and he healed all that were sick.

Doesn't tell us what the sicknesses were, just tells us that he met the need. Perhaps I haven't spoken to your need today. Perhaps somehow you say, well isn't it wonderful he missed me.

Well I don't know if I haven't missed me. I've been pointing my finger right at you, but don't feel badly about it. I've got three pointed right at me.

I hope I haven't, but if I have missed you, don't congratulate yourself and say he didn't find my, because he healed all that were sick of all their diseases. And whatever the thing is that's making your, vitiating your life and making powerless your testimony and keeping you from prayer and from fruitfulness and from usefulness and from serving the Lord, if such there be, he's able to save from that because he healed all that were sick. And should it be that some of you find yourselves that you're oppressed of the enemy and the only way you can explain the problems through which you're passing and the difficulties that you have and the invasion of your mind and the distress of your spirit is saying that the fiery darts of the enemy are coming to me, then I say to you that this wonderful Lord spoke and cast out the spirits with his word and there's nothing that Satan can do to the child of God if we want to put on the whole armor of God and take the provisions of his love.

And so he can heal from leprosy this type and picture of sin, but he not only can do that, he can heal from all the infirmities that would keep us from being what we ought to be. And so, in his new thing, he's made every provision for every need. There's only one thing required.

Recognize your need. The only thing that he requires of you is a need, an honest facing of it. There are some of you that have been tormented for years.

One reason you've never known deliverance is because you've never honestly faced it and verbalized it and put it out before God. But, my dear, he will not always suffer his church to be impoverished and made powerless. He made every provision to cleanse, every provision to purify, every provision to strengthen, every provision to heal, every provision to make us blessable, every provision to bring us to the place where God can use us.

But there comes a time when, if people are not prepared to take the provision, receive the grace, let the Lord meet them, the Lord has to say, I'm either going to transplant the candlestick or I'm going to remove the person. See, it's a fearful thing. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

I leave you no option today. I do not come to you personally and say your need is this and yours is that. You know and God knows.

I say to you that every need that you've ever had is met in Jesus Christ. I care not what it is, whether it's in the imagination or whether it's in the motives or whether it's in your thought life or your word life or your heart life. Whatever it is that I have or you have that stands in the way of our being useful for God, God has made provision to heal us and deliver us and make us whole and strong and well, useful to it.

In other words, that which we've read in the Sermon on the Mount is not attainable by our efforts, but it is by his power and his spirit and his grace. Now, if we come in meekness and humility, asking forgiveness and pardon, he gives it to us and cleanses and purges and delivers. But if we cherish our fever and we nourish our palsy and we hold our sickness and we just lean upon the demons of darkness that assail and assault through us, there comes a time when God says thus far and no further.

Oh, dear heart, may God so deal with us that we come to fear the living God. I suppose our generation more than any other generation of Christians since the time of the Reformation could be called a generation of in whose hearts and minds there's no fear of God. May God give to us that fear so that we hate sin and love holiness and we hate uncleanness and love purity and we hate powerlessness and weakness and love strength and victory and where we're prepared to face the palsy and the fever and the demons of darkness and all sickness as being that from which the Lord would deliver.

May God do it. You see, the Lord showed us what he could do, what he would do, what he will do. Don't you want it today? You don't want to go home with a fever, do you? You don't want to go home with palsy, do you? You don't want to go home with sickness and depressed by Satan, do you? Don't you deep down in your heart want to be saved from yourself and everything that the enemy has used, don't you? I know you do.

And if you're here today without Christ, don't you want to be delivered from leprosy, sin, its power, don't you? This Jesus, he is able to deliver thee. Thou art coming to a king. Great petitions with thee bring, for his grace and power are such none can ever ask too much.

And he came and worshipped him and said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Shall we pray? Our God, we worship thee, we bow before thee today. We're all on the same grounds.

The one that's the oldest Christian today came in just the same way as the youngest child, as lepers, for such were we. And we know that in and of ourself, all we offered to thee was the terrible defilement of sin pictured by this loathsome disease. But this is the only kind of people thou to save as lepers.

And Lord, since all of us have had leprosy and came as such defiled by sin to cast ourselves at the nail pierced feet of thy son, hopeless and helpless, unable to change one spot or cleanse from any defilement, we all understand each other. We know that there's none better than the other. And so, Father, if we as cleansed sinners do recognize palsy, what is palsy next to leprosy? And what is a fever against leprosy? And what are any of these other diseases against leprosy? And if thou can save us from the penalty of sin and the defilement of sin, thou can save us from these debilitating, weakening things of the spirit and the

mind and the heart.

And thou can make us every whit hole. And so we who came to thee, Lord, a mountain of guilt upon us, defiled within and without, to take everything through the precious blood, do not hesitate to make known to thee our palsy, as it weakened us and kept us from serving, or our fevers that we hate and despise because they vitiate, destroy our usefulness to thee. Oh God, make us a broken people.

Make us a people that know that in and through themselves there's no good thing. We pray thee, Lord, that we might be a people that see everything in Christ, all cleansing, all power, all strength, all fruitfulness, all usefulness, everything in Christ. Help us to see it this morning, Lord.

And help us to bow at his feet and take from him all we need, cleansing and forgiveness, deliverance. And show us those nail-pierced hands that are extended to us and help us to hear the voice of the one who said, I am touched with the feelings of thy infirmities. I remember thy frame.

I know that thou art dust. I am a faithful high priest because I've been tempted in all ways, like as you are yet without sin, come boldly to the throne of grace to find grace and power to help in the time of need. We hear again the chorus, he is able to deliver thee.

Grant, Lord, that some weary heart shall slip quietly to the feet of the Lord Jesus. Now bow in brokenness, in confession, take cleansing, forgiveness, and pardon, and strength, and power, and life. Meet us, Lord, as we gather around the feet of the Son of God and bow in his presence and declare that everything is in Jesus, and Jesus is everything.

Our heads still bowed, eyes closed. I suggest if God has spoken particularly to your heart, that you don't go home, that you go into Wilson Chapel quietly, prayerfully, take your place, wait where you are until the choir's had an opportunity to go in, leave, then slip to the front and into Wilson Chapel, make a place of prayer, and meet God. Now is the time, the accepted time.

Mine God, shall we stand for the benediction? Oh, thou God of grace, thou holy dove, brood over us until the light of thy presence and the life that thou art hath brought us to the place that we've taken from Christ everything we need. May thy grace be with us always. May thy grace, mercy, and peace be and abide upon us, bring us back together.

Let those who would seek thee do it confidently, knowing that thou has said, you shall search for me and find me when you shall seek for me with all your heart. Now may thy grace, mercy, and peace be and abide with each of us now and until Jesus comes again. Amen.

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