

Numbers 5

Conscientiously Maintaining God's Dwelling Place

Friday, March 15, 2024 • Read Numbers 5

Questions from the Who spoke to whom in v1? Whom was he to command? What were they to do to what three kinds of people (cf. Lev 11–15)? Which ones (v3)? In order that they would not do what to the camps? Because Who dwells there? How does Israel respond to this command (v4)? Who speaks to whom in v5? To whom is he supposed to speak (v6)? What might a person do? Against Whom? What does that make that person? What must the sinner say to God (v7)? What must he do to what persons? And Whom does he pay, if neither that person, nor their kinsman redeemer, is available to pay that restitution (v8)? Whose rights (to what particular property) do v9–10 protect? Who speaks to whom in v11? To whom is he to speak (v12)? About what situation? What do she and the adulterer do (v13)? But then what happens with the husband (v14)? When might he also be suspicious and jealous? To whom is he to bring her in either case (v15)? And what is he to bring for the priest on her behalf? What is not to be put upon this offering? Why? What is this drawing near (“offering,” NKJ) supposed to accomplish? To Whom does the priest then bring her near and set her (v16)? What is he to combine in what (v17)? Where does the priest stand her (v18)? What does he uncover? What does he put in her hands? And what does he have in his own hands? What does he say, when he makes her to swear (“puts her under oath”) in v19–20? What curse does the priest warn against the woman in (21–22)? And what does the woman swear (v22)? What does the priest do with the curses (v23)? Then what does he do with the ink? And what does he do with the water (v24)? Then what does the priest take (v25)? Where does he bring it? What does he take from it (v26)? And what does he do with that handful? What will the result be, with the woman, in which case (v27)? And what will the result be in the other case (v28)? What cases do v29–30 cover? What does v31a imply about a husband who feels jealous but doesn't deal with it? What does v31b ensure about a wife who has been unfaithful (v31b)?

How do the instructions in this chapter fit together? Numbers 5 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these thirty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that, **as those among whom God dwells, Christians must conscientiously maintain their holiness, relationships, and hearts.**

A Holy People, v1–4. One of the main features of the last several chapters has been the Levites' functioning as a holy buffer between the tabernacle and the rest of the camp. But God's dwelling among His people requires that the entire camp be holy: “that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell” (v3).

The uncleanness referred to in v2 are representative of the whole of Lev 11–15. Those who were ritually defiled had to be put out of the camp. Both they and the ritually clean would be reminded that God looks upon the heart. The one who approaches the Lord must have a pure heart (cf. Ps 15, 24:3–4). This they knew already from the atonements and offerings by which they had to come near. But it was driven home all the more by the enforcement of the cleanliness code.

How happy the expelled person would be when they were clean again and were able to follow the regulations for reentry! It would be plain to them that this was a reentry into the camp where God Himself had made His glory to dwell. And it was a reminder that, even after we have been redeemed by God, we must be made perfectly holy if we are to enter His eternal rest (cf. Mt 5:8, Heb 9:14).

No Unresolved Sin Against One Another, v5–10. Again, we have something that was covered in Lev 5–6, but in this context it is important for us to notice *the reason* for restitution. Sin against others is, first and foremost, “committing unfaithfulness against YHWH” (v6, cf. Ps 51:4)! This was why they still had to make restitution even if they couldn't pay back the one who was wronged, or even find a near relative to pay back. Part of maintaining holiness as those who are gathered to God for His worship is to keep short accounts and not allow sin against one another to go unresolved.

No Harboring Jealousy, v11–31. The third, and longest, section is one that we might easily misunderstand, if we don't catch the implication in the first half of v31: “then the man shall be free from iniquity.” God was forbidding the man to live with a jealous heart. Instead, the husband was taught by this procedure to give up any jealous suspicions to God, and let Him deal with it. While the ceremonial law has passed, the principle remains. Those among whom God dwells, and who come to Him for worship, must not live with a jealous heart.

The dreadfulness of the ordeal would both serve to encourage a wife to make every effort not to give reason for jealousy, as well as encouraging the husband to come to the Lord to be released of the jealousy of in his spirit. In both of their cases, the prospective curse on childbearing was a reminder that their marriage wasn't only for themselves. It was first and foremost for the Lord, for honoring Him both in their own generation, and in raising up godly seed unto Him (cf. Mal 2:15).

But the primary point here is the jealousy of the heart. Those who are gathered unto God in His church, and who gather to Him to worship Him, must be careful of the inner life of the heart before Him!

What hope do you have that you will have that holiness that is necessary to see the Lord? What application are you making of that principle in living a holy life now, as someone who comes weekly to worship Him? Against whom have you committed unresolved sin? How are you going to resolve it ASAP, and before you come to worship? How are you exercising care over the inner life of your heart?

Sample prayer: Lord, we are amazed that You have been pleased to tabernacle among us and to take us as Your temple. Grant that we would be holy, that we would conduct ourselves in a holy manner with one another, and that we would be careful of the inner life of our hearts. For, we ask it through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP 15 “Within Your Tent Who Will Reside?” or TPH24B “The Earth and Its Riches”

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers Chapter five. These are God's words. And Yahoo spoke to Moses saying, command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp, every leper? Everyone who has a discharge and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. You should put out both male and female. You shall put them outside the camp.

That they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell.

And the children of Israel did. So and put them outside the camp. As he always spoke to Moses. So, the children of Israel dead. Then Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel. When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit an unfaithfulness against Yahweh and that person is guilty.

Then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution. For his trespass and full plus one-fifth of it. And give it to the one. He is wronged. But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, The restitution for the wrong must go to Yahweh for the priest.

In addition to the realm of the atonement. With which atonement is made for him. Every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, Which they bring to the priest shall be his. And every man's holy thing shall be his. Whatever any man gives the priest shall be his.

And Yahoo spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say, to them. If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him and a man lies with her carnally, And it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed. That she has defiled herself and there was no witness against her, nor was she caught if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself?

Or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she is not. Defiled herself. Then the man shall bring his wife to the priest, he shall bring the offering required of her. Required for her.

He shall bring the offering required for her one tenth of an EFA of barley meal. Here's some pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it because it is a grain offering of jealousy. An offering for remembering for bringing iniquity to remembrance. And the priest will bring her near and set her before.

Yahweh, the priest will take holy water and an Earthen vessel and some of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle and put it into the water. And then the priest shall stand the woman before y'all. I uncover the woman's head and put the offering for remembering in her hands.

Which is the green offering of jealousy. Then the priest shall have in his hand. The bitter water that brings the curse. And the priest shall put her under oath and say to the woman. If no man has Lane with you and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness, while you're under your husband's Authority, be free from this bitter, water that brings the curse.

But if you have gone astray while under your husband's Authority, and if you have defiled yourself and Some men other than your husband is laying with you. Then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse and you should say to the woman. Y'all may make you a curse and an oath among your people.

When you always makes your thigh rot and your belly swell. And may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach. And make your belly swell and your thigh rot. Then the woman shall say, amen. So be it. Then the priest shall write these curses in a book and do so scrape them off into the vitter water.

And these shall make the woman drink, the bitter water, that brings the curse and the water that brings curse, I'll enter her to become bitter. And the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy, from the woman's hand, shall wave the offering before. Yahweh And bring it to the altar, then the priest shall take a handful of the offering.

As its Memorial portion, burn it on the altar. And afterward make the woman. Drink the water. When he has made her drink, the water, then it shall be. If she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her and become bitter, bitter.

And her belly will swell her thigh will rot on the women woman will become The curse among her people, but if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean. Then she shall be free and may conceive children. This is the law of jealousy, when a wife under her husband's Authority, Ghost is trying defiles herself for when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, And he becomes jealous of his wife, then he shall stand the woman before.

Yahweh And the priest will execute all this law upon her, then the man shall be free from iniquity. But that woman shall bear her guilt.

So, for the reading of gods inspired and And Aaron twerked.

The key to understanding this chapter is really in verse 3. You shall put out, Male and females will put them outside the camp that they may not defile their camps. In the midst of which I dwell. Now, we've just had two chapters and since it says of the Levites.

who not only performed, all the service of the Tabernacle, Demonstrated, the greatness of the Priestly work, but the first census of Of the Levites. Remember, Included where they would camp and so forth. And as the ones who were Taken in the place of the rest of his room, they made a buffer zone around the around the Tabernacle.

But now, we learn that while it is necessary. In God's design under God's Providence, that there would be this buffer zone around the Tabernacle of the Levites. This is not all of the duty of the Israelites since God, dwells among them since they are holy people. And you too, are all holy people.

First Corinthians 5, First Corinthians 6. And of course, other places in the New Testament, Remind us that we are. all holy people. And that sin is not on repentance. Sin is not to be tolerated or maintained among the people of God, for God, dwells in the midst of them as it were.

So God, dwells in the midst of them. Now, as the camp is putting out. And those who have the The various conditions of uncleanness from Leviticus 13 through 15, that section really beginning chapter 11 in Leviticus, but the The particular defilements that are mentioned here are especially from chapters 13 through 15 as they are doing that.

They of course, remember That there is or they are to learn. And remember that there is a defilement that is internal as well, that that which is pictured externally formally among the people of God must be something that each individual Israelite takes to heart for himself. Because I've got because of course, God sees the secret place of the heart.

And so, when the Saw masks, who may dwell in the tent of the Lord, it doesn't say, you know He who has been cleared because the hair was the right color and it didn't turn out to be a leprosy. no, that is the way that God is communicating the necessity of Holiness to dwell among him.

Here in numbers. Five, and back in Leviticus chapters 13 through 15. But the but the great spiritual reality is that the one who dwells in the courts of Yahweh must have Clean Hands and a pure heart. Of course we don't have either of those. Which is why they needed the offering by which to come near the substitute, which of course, looked forward to the Lord.

Jesus, who is our substitute and not only then, does he atone for our sin? And is he our formal righteousness? Our legal righteousness before God, but he also cleanses us from all unrighteousness. As in God's Providence, we heard just yesterday in first, John Does both or the Lord hasn't done either?

he either both forgives us in Christ. And if we have been forgiven in Christ, he is cleansing us from all unrighteousness. And we are at war with our sin, a war that we will win. Or if we are not a war with our sin, and if we are not being cleansed from our sin, Than we may be sure that we do not have fellowship with God in Jesus Christ, and we are not forgiven.

So they knew that they could come near to God only through sacrifice, they knew. that these external uncleannesses. For the church as a whole, the church corporately covenantally to be properly related to God. Had to put its uncleannesses outside the camp and someone who was a leper or had been defiled by a corpse or a discharge.

Etc. They would be remembering that this is not. the ultimate thing for them. That while the camp had to be cleaned for the presence of Yahweh within the camp. The people had to be cleaned for the presence of Yahweh. With the people. There is that Eternal cleanness that forgiveness and that cleansing from for their sin that God had provided And so even if they spent their entire life outside the camp, it is after all in this world, a short life.

Like grass that grows up in the morning and Withers in the evening and it is cut and it is gone. And so they perhaps might be more helped spiritually than those who were in the camp. Because they would be thinking about being cut off from God offering that had been provided by God atonement that had been provided by God through which they could come near, they would dwell much more upon If by the help of the spirit they dwelt upon it by Grace, it would be a great help to their soul.

If they dwelt upon it in bitterness and fleshliness of course. they would perish in their But ordinarily, they wouldn't even spend their whole life out of the camp. You remember, back in those chapters in Leviticus, it included instructions by which They could be cleared. It was a temporary thing.

There was expectation and the Providence of God, that they wouldn't remain unclean that way. Perpetually, there was ritual to be made when they when whatever it was, that was causing their uncleanness had been resolved and then they could come back inside the camp. And then they would have picture, not only of the defilement that separates us from God.

But also of the grace of God that heals us and cleans us and brings us near to himself. So that was the, that's the first, big thing in in the chapter God's dwelling, in the midst of his people and not just the need for keeping unclean persons outside the camp.

But our ultimate need for cleanness of heart for righteousness. Before God and is even adding to that righteousness, that is before him, the righteousness that he works out in us, the second thing is there must not be Unresolved sin against one another because sin against one. Another is notice in verse six.

Unfaithfulness against Yahweh. And so this takes us back to I think chapter six or so. Of Leviticus where we had the sin offering and the trespass offering. And this is a specific case in which the sin or the trespass of of which the man has become aware. Is one that was Not just against the Lord, although all sin is primarily greatly against the Lord.

but also against another person. And so the restitution would have to be made and with one-fifth added on top of it. but all sins against other people are first sin against God. He is the Holy One. He is the righteous one. He is the Creator. And so we sing and pray famously with David against you, you only I have In a context in which there was almost no one against tomb, David hadn't sinned.

and yet. Sin is so directly against God. So defined by its being against God that he was able to say against you. And you only, I have sinned. And this is something that we need to remember when we have sinned against another or in conflict with one another.

And we can feel in our heart, whatever else we are telling ourselves as we as we are dealing with whatever else is going on, interpersonally relationally with others. We must remember that the portion of our sin that is against then is first and foremost against God and infinitely.

So, And this will help us. Humble us, because then we come to God through Christ for forgiveness. And we are those who are forgiven, much and God bringing us to himself that way. Realizing that our sin and the matter has been against him, he will soften who have been forgiven much to forgive our brother?

Who is indebted to? A little. So all sin is first and foremost against God first, it must be confessed. Note that the confession precedes, the restitution here we must acknowledge our sin before, God, it's not enough to deal with it with someone else. We can't ignore the relationship that we have with God.

The debt that we create between us and God and our sin, we must deal with that first even before we make restitution with another so that when you're making up with someone, when you're making things right with someone what you're doing is a further expression of already having confessed your sin to God and so There is this vertical Dimension so much.

So, That if the person has died. And if the person doesn't have a near kin to whom you can give the restitution so you go to give restitution to the person or the person is maybe moved away, maybe not died. Or his diet or whatever. But for whatever reason, you can't give it to him, you're supposed to look for his Kinsmen.

His Kinsmen, Redeemer to whom you can. Now you can pay it instead. Incidentally. this word relative in verse 8 is the word goale again for Redeemer, so that helps you reflect on our Isaiah readings, all the places where God calls himself over and over again, Our Redeemer, our Redeemer, our Redeemer, the idea of his near relation to us, Has having bound himself to us and made himself our near relation.

Is behind those things. Well, if even, even if, if even a Kinsman can't be found and your relative can't be found, To whom to make the restitution, restitution still must be made. Among the people of God. Sin cannot go unrepented. Or unresolved? Because he dwells. And the Mets to the camp.

And so, that's that's the second, big lesson here. The third big lesson is That we must not just have unresolved. Must just not have. We mustn't only not have. Unresolved sin. Between people, but even in our heart, and then in this case, in verses 11, through 30, 31, the great problem is that this husband has jealousy in his heart.

And verse 31 in the conclusion, and it's if it's in the case that she was in fact guilty. This wife of the husband who became jealous and he doesn't know because there was no evidence and she wasn't caught and and so forth. But he became jealous. He has to deal with his jealousy before God.

And of course, The. The best way to deal with his jealousy before God, is by the grace of God, to be released of it. Without having to go through all this, he goes through all this, he, brings shame upon his household. It may turn out that he was wronged and he is humiliated which, which he wouldn't want.

It may turn out that he was right. But by going through this ordeal, The curse comes upon his wife. and thigh and belly here are Our biological anatomical terms. that relate to the woman's reproductive system. not, you know, the upper leg and the The, the stomach.

Yeah, and if it turns out that he was, right, And she does end up with this curse than he will, be deprived of of Offspring as well. Yeah. And so the best thing to do would would be, to look to the Lord by Grace. To be relieved of his jealousy from within by the grace of God.

But if he can't do that, he is not permitted. Just to live with a jealous Spirit towards his wife. Did you notice that implication in verse 31? Then the man shall be free from iniquity. In other words, if he doesn't go through with this, this procedure if He is unable.

to give up his jealousy. and it doesn't go through with this ritual, he will be guilty. For maintaining jealousy in his heart. One of the things that it means for God to dwell in the midst of his people, Is that he does not permit. His people to live with jealous or bitter or spiteful Hearts.

and so You know, this entire procedure is created and and if he doesn't do it, he's guilty. But when he does Bring her. And, and they have this ordeal and it's not It's not a dangerous ordeal. But what it does is it's very solemn and it's very serious and you have this swearing of an oath and the curse also is very serious and it reminds us That.

Although man may not know. God always knows we are. Before the face of God. And, And on the As you see, on the other hand, in addition, to the knowledge then that we are before the face of God the wife. want since she knows that that they should go through this procedure and especially if she has a Godly husband Whom she knows deals with things seriously before God, and and acts in integrity.

And that if he feels jealous, and he can't get rid of it, he will definitely go through this procedure because he's conscientious before the Lord. Now, if the wife knows that about her husband, she will be all the more careful. Not just to not commit adultery. But to keep herself succeeded and so modest, and so devoted to her

husband that she avoids any appearance.

Of connection with other men. in order to safeguard her marriage and not provoke a jealousy, and bring an ordeal. bring this ordeal upon. Her marriage and her household. So there's great incentive here. harmonious devoted. affectionate marriage. From both sides. But again, like with the leper.

And the other unclean unclean ones in the beginning of the chapter. There is the great lesson that we are before the face of God and he doesn't only demand of us. Our external behaviors, he demands of us. The condition of our heart. That we would be clear-hearted towards him with a clear conscience that we would be clear-hearted towards one another reconciled.

I mean, keeping short accounts, not just with God, but with one another because these are the things that would defile the people of God not just having Leppers, and people who are unclean by discharge or contact with a dead body. But those who leave. Unresolved. offenses against one another and those who leave unresolved jealousy in their hearts towards one.

Another, we must take seriously. That we live. Before the face of God. And as his people whom he is redeemed. We must take seriously. That we live in. Relationship to God as those who draw near to him. In his worship at his Tabernacle which now is much greater not less.

Because Christ is our Tabernacle. So may he help us to live conscientiously and keep short accounts with God and keep short accounts with one another and enjoy this life of reconciliation and cleanness, and Readiness to draw near to him. Who has come and made his dwelling Among Us. Amen, let's pray.

Thank you Father for making your darling with us in your son. Our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us, our sins, Lord, our sins against one another, which we have just read and heard are an unfaithfulness towards you. Our sin in internalizing. That jealousy and bitterness. Rather than dealing with it rightly before you.

Entrusting to you, what comes from our circumstances and in our relationships. Help us Lord for we read a chapter like this and we are so arrogant and foolish that we start to think. Oh how primitive that is. And then we realize That you are teaching us.

About the right way of maintaining our hearts. And we discover that we are the ones who are fools. We are the ones who are unspiritual. And so, we thank you for your song, our Lord Jesus. We thank you for Bringing us into a shared life with you, through faith in him.

We thank you that. if we confess our sins, Not only O Lord are you faithful and just to forgive us. But also to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness. That we have Fellowship with you and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins. And so we ask that you would keep cleansing us persist with us.

Grow Us in him Grant to us to live in a way that glorifies you. We ask So that At the last, we will be perfectly holy and perfectly happy in you and with you in fellowship with you forever. So Grant, we pray that the part of that work. Of yours and our lives that belongs to this day.

We ask it in Jesus name, amen.