

CHAPTER 16: A SOCIETY OF RESTORATION

GOSPEL READINGS: Matthew 23:8-12, Mark 5:24-34, Luke 5:12-16

McKnight points out that many of us read the gospels and miss a crucial point of seeing how Jesus' physical healings (miracles) restored people back to God...AND back to their society. This latter consequence *enables* those who are restored to once again experience true communion with God *in community*.

1. Generally speaking, what did the law (of Moses) dictate over those who were sick or "unclean"?
2. Why do you think the people of Israel took these statements and misapplied them?
3. How did Jesus introduce God's true intention behind the *Torah's* obligations for "the unclean"?
4. Imagine you were the sick woman in Mark 5 (a *zavah*) or the leprous man (a *metsora'*) in Luke 5.
 - a. What have you lost as a result of your condition?
 - b. What does Jesus' healing mean for you in terms of your relationships with God *and* your community? (Consider McKnight's descriptions of the "walls" that come down as a result of Jesus' actions.)

When Jesus takes someone who is broken and makes them whole again, he establishes their confidence to *be part of the family of God*. With each healing, Jesus foreshadows the greater healing to come. But instead of waiting for that glorious reunification, we obtain something *on this side of eternity*. This blessing is described in the Westminster Larger Catechism (Q65) as "union and communion with Christ in grace and glory."

5. How are the words "union" and "communion" with Christ meant to describe our physical, spiritual, and social restoration?
6. Are there ways we "miss the point" in recognizing the restoration we have in Christ?
7. How can we better recognize Christ's restoration in others' lives? What are some changes we might need to make to better embody such a kingdom society?
8. Is there someone in your life who needs to be restored back into community? How can you reach out to them today?

Next week » Chapter 17: A Society of Joy