

February 19 — Not on Your Terms

READ

Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Leviticus 10:1-2, *“Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to His command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.”*

THINK

Your first reaction to today’s reading is likely, “Yikes!” If it seems God killed Aaron’s sons for a small infraction, it’s understandable. But God had been explicitly clear in His instructions for burnt offerings. He would be worshiped according to His standards — not theirs.

Was it pride or false ambition that led Nadab and Abihu to try to approach the Lord in an unauthorized way? We can’t know their exact motives, but God is adamant that we don’t set the terms in our relationship with Him. We don’t have the right to decide which of God’s commands we obey and which we ignore. When we try to do life our way instead of His, we won’t flourish, and we’ll find ourselves “in the fires” of consequence.

When we recognize God’s holiness and His right to rule our lives, we will approach Him with humility, reverence, and awe. Then, and only then, will we be ready to fulfill the amazing purposes He has for us.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I approach You today with reverence, in awe of Your almighty power. Your ways are higher than my own, and I seek to do life Your way to fulfill Your purpose. Amen.

February 20 — Cleansed

READ

Leviticus 12:1-14:32

Leviticus 14:1-2, 8, *“And the Lord said to Moses, The following instructions are for those seeking ceremonial purification from a skin disease. Those who have been healed must be brought to the priest ... The persons being purified must then wash their clothes, shave off all their hair, and bathe themselves in water. Then they will be ceremonially clean and may return to the camp...”*

THINK

Unhealthy skin is most often an outward sign of what’s happening below the surface. And that’s exactly what’s going on in today’s reading! On a superficial level, we read about cleansing for the deadly and painfully isolating disease, leprosy. But if we dig deeper, we discover God showing us something much more profound — how to cleanse our hearts.

In Old Testament times, lepers were considered unclean and had to live separately from everyone else. Because leprosy had no known cure, anyone who was healed was considered an anomaly, and they were believed to have a special calling. So, they were given a special anointing that was not only for outward, physical cleansing but also for inward, spiritual cleansing. Only then were they allowed to reenter the Israelite community.

Like those with leprosy, we are also alone and isolated from God when we are sick with sin. But the moment we surrender our lives to Christ and declare Him Lord, we are healed from the inside out. We are cleansed from our past and made new; our ability to enter God’s presence is restored.

Do you currently have any sin festering in your life? Although you may be eternally cleansed, are you allowing a habit or certain lifestyle choices to separate you from hearing God’s voice and fulfilling your “special calling?” If so, present yourself to the ultimate High Priest — Jesus — and allow His restorative power to make your life healthy and whole.

PRAY

Dear Lord, Only You can bring true healing into my life. Forgive me for the following sins I’ve allowed to fester _____ and cleanse my heart that I may fulfill my purpose. Amen.

February 21 — Atonement Day

READ

Leviticus 14:33-16:34

Leviticus 16:30, *“On that day offerings of purification will be made for you, and you will be purified in the LORD’s presence from all your sins.”*

THINK

When trust is broken in a relationship, it can sever even the strongest bond. If there’s any hope of reconciliation and healing, amends must be made. One, or both parties, has to be willing to admit they’re wrong and work to make it right. In very simple terms, this is what atonement is meant to do between ourselves and God.

For the Israelites, The Day of Atonement was very solemn. It was a day that they repented of their sins so they could be reconciled to God. Two goats were chosen. One, the “scapegoat,” would symbolically have the Israelite community’s sins placed on it by the High Priest and it would then be sent into the wilderness. The other would be sacrificed as an offering to God, the cost of sin. These two actions “cleaned the slate,” righting the people’s wrongs for the year to follow.

As Christ-followers, we have an everlasting atonement. Through Jesus ’sacrifice, we have been reconciled with God. Our sin was put on Him and He also paid our sin debt, once and for all. All we have to do is believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that He is Lord, and our severed relationship with God can be restored. If you have yet to accept His free gift of atonement, do it now by praying the simple prayer below!

PRAY

God, I admit I've messed up, that my sin has separated me from You. I'm sorry and turn from that sin today. I believe You sent Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the grave to atone for my sins. Today, I ask Jesus into my heart, and I choose to follow Him. Amen.

February 22 — He is LORD

READ

Leviticus 17:1-19:37

Leviticus 19:4b, *"I am the Lord your God."*

THINK

In Leviticus 19, God declares that He is the LORD — fifteen times! Why would God declare that He is Lord repeatedly? Surely the Israelites got the picture after the first five times! If you have young children, you already know the answer to that question: He knew they would get distracted! God knows we are often tempted to listen to the world instead of Him, so He is emphasizing the fact that He is God, and God alone, the One who we should follow and obey.

God gave the Israelites instructions on how He wanted them to live, and He expected them to respect and obey His commands. He expects His followers to do the same today. He knows how we can experience the best from our lives, and His insistence on us doing things His way is a demonstration of how much He cares for us.

Has God lost your attention? Is He repetitively saying, "I am the Lord" through everyday things, but you fail to recognize and follow His instructions for your life? Take a moment today and stop. Ask God to open your eyes to what He wants for You! As His child, set apart for holy living, He wants your respect and trust. And you demonstrate this by obeying Him and living according to His Word.

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for giving instructions on how You desire for me to live. Help me to recognize all You are doing in my life each day. Thank You for loving and caring about me! Amen.

February 23 — Punishment Deserved vs. Holiness Given

READ

Leviticus 20:1-22:33

Leviticus 20:22, 26, *“Keep all My decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. ... You are to be holy to Me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be My own.”*

THINK

Today’s reading lists sin after sin and punishment after punishment. The old covenant was full of rules and obligations. It was a system that required punishments and sacrifices for the payment of sin. Death, consequences, blood sacrifices — we read the requirements and rules, and it’s overwhelming to imagine trying to follow each of the laws! You can almost picture the priests covered in blood at the altar with a never-ceasing line of sacrifices.

When Jesus came, He (because He is God!!) lived a perfect life and willingly sacrificed Himself on the cross. His sacrifice covered not just one sin but also the sin of every person who believes in faith, turns from their sin, and makes Jesus Lord of their life.

In Hebrews 10:12-14, we read that Jesus “offered for all time one sacrifice for sins...For by one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

Our sins deserve punishment, but through Christ, we will one day stand before God, perfect and complete. Until then, let us live lives that honor His sacrifice and bring glory to His name.

PRAY

Lord, Thank You for paying the ultimate price so that I can live in eternity with You. What a great gift to know You! I am thankful to be free from sin and a system of sacrifices. I rejoice in Your forgiveness. Let me walk into each new moment joyfully, with my eyes set on You. Amen.

February 24 — Justice for All

READ

Leviticus 23:1-25:23

Leviticus 24:20, *"Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury."*

THINK

It's in our DNA. We want justice. If someone wrongs another, we want them to pay. We are infuriated if someone hurts us and then gets off scot-free. We want to avenge wrongdoers, to make it right.

Why do we feel this need for justice? It's because God is just. He created us in His own image, so we yearn for righteousness. But as much as we want others to pay for their sins, we, too, need to pay for our own. In God's economy, the payment for sin is death.

Romans 3:23 says, *"We all fall short of the glory of God."* Whether we see others' sins as greater or less than our own, all of us are sentenced to death. The only way to wipe the slate clean is for a perfect sacrifice to die in our place — and that's what Jesus did for us. By doing so, He paid the penalty of death for us in full. Once we accept Him as our personal Lord and Savior, His righteousness becomes ours. God no longer sees us in our natural sin-natured state — He sees us the way He sees Jesus — sin-free.

God will bring justice to our broken world. But, today, He offers us mercy. Receive His gift and let Jesus set you free.

PRAY

Lord, May all the injustice that I see in this world remind me of the righteousness that only You can give through Your Son. Thank you for setting me free, Amen!

February 25 — Blessings for Obedience

READ

Leviticus 25:24-26:46

Leviticus 26:3, 12, *"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands ... I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people."*

THINK

We may not think of it often, but every area of our lives is impacted by our obedience or disobedience to God. Actions have consequences, and some of the most severe come from deciding to do things our way instead of God's way.

God wants to bless us, to walk with us, to be our God. It's simply a matter of laying everything at His feet. Even if we're already living in the consequences of our sin, all we have to do is turn and we will find Him there, waiting. Don't waste another day. Turn to God, obey and receive His blessings, honor Him and live in His light.

What will you choose today? Will you submit to His guidance and discover the blessings He has for you?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I surrender to Your will and Your way. Transform my heart of disobedience into a heart wholly devoted to You. Amen.