

LEVITICUS 13-15

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Leviticus chapter 13 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

I think I can pretty much guarantee that the chapters we will be looking at tonight are not part of your daily devotion.

They are not easy chapters because they are dealing with the law regarding leprosy and the ritual for cleansing a leper who was healed and then we will look at bodily discharges!

I know what you are thinking, ***“What in the world am I doing here tonight!”***

Now, believe it or not, there are spiritual truths we can glean from this, and these practices were really put in place for the health of the nation, to stop the spread of these diseases and to show the holiness of God!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this. He wrote,

“The beginning of health is to know the disease,” wrote the Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes, and every physician would agree with him. After all, how can you prescribe effectively if you don’t diagnose accurately?

These three chapters in Leviticus deal with bodily infirmities of one kind or another, because God was concerned about His people’s physical welfare. He cared for their needs during their wilderness march (Deut 29:5) and, if they obeyed Him, He promised to shield them from the diseases they’d seen in Egypt (Ex 15:26; Deut 7:12-15).

While it’s true that our greatest needs are spiritual, God still has the physical well-being of His people at heart.

So with that said, let's begin reading in Leviticus chapter 13, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

LEVITICUS 13

VERSES 1-8

First of all, *“The Hebrew word does not exactly correspond to what we call ‘leprosy’ today. It is rather a very general term that perhaps includes ringworm, psoriasis, leucoderma, as well as ‘Hansen’s disease’ (the modern medical terminology used to refer to what is commonly called ‘leprosy’ today).”* (Peter-Contesse)

But I do believe the main focus here is that of leprosy because leprosy needed to be dealt with very seriously because it was such a horrible disease. But again, it included other diseases as well.

Keep in mind that the 2 to 3 million people that made up the camp of Israel lived in close proximity to each other. Thus, you could see how a disease could easily spread from one family to another and possibly wipe out the entire nation.

Thus, the priests were not acting like doctors for they were not treating the disease but they were diagnosing it and then quarantining those that were infected to help stop the spread. I guess you could say that the priests were like public health officials.

Also, leprosy is a type of sin.

It began under the skin, usually in the extremities, working its way to the core of the body. It started out small until it affected the entire body, like sin. It also affected the sensation; you would lose feeling as this disease destroyed the nerve endings.

Sin is like that as you become dull, insensitive to it over time.

Leprosy was incurable just as sin is incurable.

And leprosy caused a separation from loved ones because you had to live outside the camp of Israel if you had this disease.

Today leprosy is called Hansen's disease but when the Bible speaks of leprosy, as I have said, it may be speaking of a broader group of diseases that also affected the skin.

Thus, this isolation for seven days could help decide if this was an incurable disease or just a short-term illness, something like measles or chickenpox today. They were to err on the side of safety if they were unsure to protect the people.

So the person whose skin is swollen, has a scab, or a bright spot that begins to change, they were to be brought to the priests to be examined.

If the sore turns white and the sore appears to be deeper than the surface of the skin, then he is unclean and was to be isolated for seven days.

If they are not sure, then they will isolate this person for another seven days and then re-examine the sore.

If it fades and it is not spreading, he is clean.

But if it starts to spread again, he is unclean, it is leprosy!

As we go through these chapters it might be overwhelming when you see all the details that God lays out, but He is trying to protect His people.

And folks, in our society we do the same.

Look at all the immunizations that children are required to have to protect them from certain diseases. In fact, without these immunizations they can't get into the school system.

When I worked at the hospital, I was required to have certain immunizations and I would be checked yearly for TB so that if any of the staff had TB they would be treated and quarantined so the disease would not spread.

God does love us and thus, He warns His people to protect them, maybe not against leprosy today but of *SIN!*

And you know what, the only immunization you might say to stop this disease is Jesus Christ and we will deal more with that as we move into chapter 14 of Leviticus tonight.

VERSES 9-44

I know, that was a lot of verses we just covered but keep in mind that this was for Israel.

Yes, there are spiritual lessons, and we will try to cover them, but I don't want to slow down so much we lose sight of the point or speed up too much that we miss the point.

God gave these instructions to the priests to hopefully take the guesswork out of making a diagnosis. If they focused on these guidelines, with careful examination of the person, they would have a clear picture of what was to be done.

Yes, erring on the side of safety by re-examining them because you don't want the disease to spread, nor do you want to isolate someone from their loved ones the rest of their life if they did not have the disease!

I don't know if you picked up on this, but as you read Leviticus 13:12-13 it seems to be counter-productive. As you read this you would think that this person should be isolated and yet, the opposite is spoken of. If the leprosy covers the entire body, he shall be considered clean!

What is up with that?

Some feel that at this stage of the disease there was hope for recovery. One writer put it like this, *“White skin indicated that a healing of the disease had taken place since the white skin would be new skin that had grown over the raw flesh.”* (Rooker)

We also see here in Leviticus 13:40-41 that, **“As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean. He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean.”**

So if you are bald, completely bald, bald in front or bald in the back, you don't have leprosy, you would not have to be isolated.

Now let me also say this. In our society we may lose the perspective of how deadly this disease was, even though it is still around today and around 15 million people have it, mostly in third world countries.

And it was as if you were dead when you were still alive!

According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, we are told,

This disease *“begins with specks on the eyelids and on the palms, gradually spreading over the body, bleaching the hair white wherever they appear, crusting the affected parts with white scales, and causing terrible sores and swellings. From the skin the disease eats inward to the bones, rotting the whole body piecemeal.”*

“In Christ's day no leper could live in a walled town, though he might in an open village. But wherever he was he was required to have his outer garment rent as a sign of deep grief, to go bareheaded, and to cover his beard with his mantle, as if in lamentation at his own virtual death. He had further to warn passers-by to keep away from him, by calling out, ‘Unclean! unclean!’ nor could he speak to anyone, or receive or return a salutation, since in the East this involves an embrace.”

Keep in mind that leprosy is a disease that eats away at the flesh.

Yes, it starts out looking very benign, but it is not benign, not at all!

Maybe it starts with a small red spot. But then it begins to grow, turn white, maybe it will have a scaly appearance to the skin and then it spreads throughout the body.

Your hair falls out, even your eyebrows!

Your fingernails and toenails begin to become loose; they rot and eventually fall off!

It also affects the joints of your fingers and toes and as they begin to rot, rodents at night may eat them and you don't even feel it, and they just fall off piece by piece.

Your teeth fall out because your gums shrink.

And this disease will keep eating away at the flesh, your nose will rot away, and the soft palate, even your eyes! And you will just rot away until you are dead!

You see, a diagnosis with this disease was a death sentence; you would become part of the walking dead.

It is as Trench wrote, ***“Leprosy was indeed nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humours of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away.”***

Now, in knowing that about leprosy, Paul makes that same point in Ephesians 2:1-9 about those who are not in Christ, that they are like the walking dead.

He wrote, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

And listen to how Taylor sums this up for us. He wrote,

These precautions were taken not merely for sanitary reasons, or to guard against contagion, for it is not certain that leprosy was contagious, but in order that the people might be taught through the parable of leprosy, what a fearful and loathsome thing sin is in the sight of God.

- Taylor

VERSES 45-46

Talk about a life-changing experience! You not only had to dress the part of a leper, with torn clothes. You not only had to isolate yourself from everyone you loved, but then the leper had to cry out, **“Unclean! Unclean!”** and the reason for that was to let everyone know of his incurable disease so they would not get close to him.

As horrible as this was, it got even worse for them as the Jewish people excluded lepers from society.

In fact, during the time of Jesus the people saw you as the walking dead and that you deserve this punishment from God against you! It has to be your fault, or you would not have received this deadly disease. How sad to feel that way and how sad for the person with the disease who is already struggling and now being blamed for what they have!

In fact, Jewish custom said that you should not even greet a leper, and you had to stay six feet (two meters) away from them.

One rabbi bragged that he would not even buy an egg on a street where he saw a leper, and another boasted that he threw rocks at lepers to keep them from coming close.

But we see something vastly different with Jesus. He loved lepers. He touched lepers and gave them hope. He brought healing to their bodies! (Matthew 8:1-4, Luke 17:11-19)

What is my point?

My point is this. The world around us is dying in sin, they in a sense have spiritual leprosy. And because of that they have no hope. I know, you may feel like the world has their hope, but they really don't.

Think about it. Why is there so much depression? Why are people so dissatisfied with life? Why do they feel there is truly no hope?

Because apart from Christ, there truly isn't! They may say that they are good, that they are doing okay, but they truly are not! They are the walking dead you might say!

And how do we respond to them?

Do we ignore them?

Do we stay away from them, keep our distance?

Do we say that they are only getting what they deserve?

Or do we love them and reach out to them as Jesus did, bringing a healing into their lives that can only come from Jesus?

May we do as Jesus did and reach out to these untouchables or what the church many times sees as the untouchables!

VERSES 47-59

Here we see the priests being instructed on how to determine if a garment has a contagious disease or if it was safe to wear.

Keep in mind that they did not just toss their clothes away and go to the store to buy new ones. They made their clothes and thus, it was important to know if the garment had this condition on it, if it was safe to wear it or that it needed to be destroyed!

Now what is the *warp* and the *woof* all about?

It is difficult to know for sure, but Matthew Poole put it like this, and I think he might be correct here. He wrote, *“In the warp, or woof; a learned man renders it, in the outside, or in the inside of it.”*

Now as we read all of this, how does that even relate to us today?

God wants us to walk in purity, thus, what are you wearing?

What do I mean by that?

There are a few things that I think apply here and you can add to the list on your own.

First of all, are the clothes that you are wearing honoring to God, would you approach God that way because you are!

What about the music you listen to, are they honoring to God or are they an abomination before Him?

How about the television shows you watch; you may not do the sin but by watching them you are condoning the sin and that too is just as wrong as doing it. That is what Paul tells us in Romans chapter 1!

You see, what are you wearing, is it holy or is it diseased?

Listen to what Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 4:7-8, **“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”**

You have to decide if you will obey the Lord or your flesh in regard to wearing that which is holy or that which is unholy!

But the bottom line is this as Peter tells us in I Peter 1:13-16, **“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”**

In other words, God’s desire for us is that we would conduct our lives in holiness, what we are wearing should be honoring to God and not diseased!

Now as we have seen, Leviticus chapter 13 is kind of a depressing chapter. Not much hope for the leper.

But, as we move into Leviticus chapter 14, we will see that there is hope for the leper, he can be cleansed! Let’s see what that is all about.

LEVITICUS 14VERSES 1-9

Interestingly enough there is no cure for leprosy and yet God made a provision for him to be cleansed.

Also, we do not see anywhere in the Old Testament where a leper, who was Jewish was cleansed, and this ceremony was performed.

Yes, Miriam had leprosy for her sin and God did heal her, but we do not see the ceremony performed. (Numbers 12:1-10).

Naaman, who was not Jewish but a commander in the Syrian army, he was cleansed of his leprosy. (II Kings 5:1-19).

I do not believe for the Jewish people we see a cleansing of leprosy in the Old Testament and my support for that comes from Jesus in Luke 4:27, “**And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.**”

Now, in saying that, can you imagine for some almost 1,500 years or so these priests were taught this ritual that was to take place when a leper was cleansed, and they never got to use it!

Then, in Matthew 8:14 we are told, “**When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’**”

Here we see this man cleansed of his leprosy, something that was not seen in Israel, and Jesus tells this man to go to the priests and offer the gift that Moses commanded.

I can just picture the scene that was taking place as this man who once had leprosy and is now cleansed, is before these priests.

I see it like this, what they might have said,

“Hey, we have a Leviticus 14 over here!”

“A what?”

“A cleansing of a leper!”

“Do you remember what we need to do for this, no one has ever done it!”

“Go to the Book and try to pry open those pages that deal with this so we can perform this ritual for this man!”

Now, why did Jesus tell this man to go to the priests in the first place?

Yes, it was in the Law but also, we are told that he was to do it as **“a testimony to them.”**

In other words, this cleansing was not seen in the land even though God provided a provision for it in His Law, and now, all of a sudden, they saw it!

That provision was there to let the people know, to let the priests know that Jesus is the Messiah, but sadly, many missed it!

Today God has also given to us a provision in His Word to be cleansed of our sin and that is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

And folk’s, our salvation is a testimony to the world of what God has done and sadly, some are not proclaiming their testimony and others today don’t want to hear it and they will miss out!

Before we move on, let's look at this cleansing ritual because I believe it points us to Jesus.

One bird was taken and was killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

Then, some of the blood was applied to a living bird, some of it to cedar wood, some to scarlet fabric, and some to hyssop.

Then, using those things the blood was sprinkled on the one who was cleansed from the leprosy and this second bird was then set free!

How does this give us a picture of Jesus?

First of all, the bird flies in the sky, in the heavens you might say.

Thus, Jesus came down from heaven, God became flesh and dwelt among us.

In this earthen vessel He shed His blood, but He was clean, there was no sin in His life, the running water.

Just as this bird died for another, so too our Lord died for our sins.

Then this blood was applied to the living bird just as the shed blood of Jesus spoke of His death, it also speaks of the new life we have in Him just as this blood was sprinkled on the living bird and then he was set free!

And it was on the eighth day this cleansed leper started his new life, so too Jesus rose from the dead on the eighth day, and we have that new life in Him, we are born again!

One other point here and that is the cedar wood. This wood was extremely resistant to insects and decay, rotting and it is very possible that the Romans made crosses for crucifixion out of cedar wood.

Thus, the blood on this cedar wood was a picture of another shedding His blood on the cross of Calvary and staining that wood for our sins!

VERSES 10-20

So now we see the cleansed leper sanctified.

We see that blood was placed on his right ear so that he can hear the voice of God.

Blood was placed on his right thumb so that he can do the work of God.

And blood was placed on his right big toe so that he can walk in the path of God.

Interestingly enough, this was the same as for the priests as he was consecrated before the Lord.

I believe the idea here is that if you have a position of leadership, a pastor or whatever, or you are just a member in the body of Christ, we all are to hear the voice of God, we are all to do the work of God and we all are to walk down the path that God has for us!

But how can we accomplish that?

Let me show you how this can and is accomplished in our lives.

We are also told that the oil was also placed upon this person, and I think the idea here is that to hear God, to work for God, to walk where God wants you to walk, you need the Holy Spirit to empower you for service!

We can't accomplish these things on our own. Well, I guess we can, but it will never bring forth the fruit that God wants to bring forth in our lives. We must surrender our lives to Him and allow His Spirit to give us the strength that we need to accomplish the work that He has for us!

VERSES 21-32

God is so gracious here. If you could not afford the offering God made provisions for you, and when you think about this, it does make sense.

A leper was cast out of the community, he lived isolated from family and friends and thus, he had no source of income.

Yes, if he was cleansed hopefully his family and friends would help him out, but it might not be the case.

And if he was the man of the house, the income was gone so the family most likely would not be able to help out.

But God provided a way just as He does today.

What do I mean by that?

I am not talking about paying your way to get into heaven but think about this. The rich and the poor, Kings and the common person, the popular and the unpopular have all been provided a way to God the Father and that is through Jesus Christ!

It is a free gift of salvation that is extended to all!

VERSES 33-42

This is interesting to me because this leprous house spoken of here is when they are in the Promise Land. The other point that I want you to see, the second point is that this is the Lord who is putting this plague on this house.

So the big question is, *“Why?”*

It is very possible that some of the houses the children of Israel occupied when they came into the land were pagan homes and they just moved in.

And in some of those homes they would take their sacrificed children and place them in the walls and often they would just sacrifice their live children by placing them in the walls and God would not allow them to live there with that tragic remnant in their home!

That is a possibility, and it does seem to fit what God is saying here.

Also, it was to help keep the spread of diseases because as people went into different homes and then back to their own home, they may take the disease with them and spread it to their family.

Just as with the instructions regarding leprosy in garments in Leviticus 13, the idea of the leprous plague or simply plague in this context covers a broad range of things. In that broad range we see that things like mold, mildew, and fungus can be included, which can be very harmful to people.

VERSES 43-53

If the house is infected and minor repairs are done to it and it doesn't remove the infection, it was to be torn down.

And, after it has been repaired and it is clean, then the ritual of cleansing would be performed on the house.

Folks, have you removed the infectious things in your home because if you don't, it will not only fill your home, but your life!

VERSES 54-57

As this chapter concludes, what we have here is just a summation of the laws of leprosy! One writer summed it up like this for us. He wrote,

The reading of this whole section (chapters 13, 14) impresses the mind with the strictness of the law of God concerning such things.

It reveals the interest of God in the physical wellbeing of His people and His unceasing antagonism to everything likely to harm them.

In our own day and land the purely Eastern qualities of these laws may seem to have no application, but their permanent values speak with no uncertain sound, teaching us among other things that it is impossible for men to be loyal to God and careless in any measure concerning the laws of sanitation.

For example, it is ungodly for a community claiming to be in any sense Christian to tolerate the existence of dwellings which are infected in the slightest degree with what may be harmful to the highest physical condition of the people.

- G. Campbell Morgan

I want you to see that these things that God instructed the children of Israel have application for us today. We just need to be open to what God is showing us.

LEVITICUS 15

VERSES 1-15

What we see here in these verses is the male who has a discharge. And this is obviously some abnormal genital discharge, some disease like syphilis or gonorrhea, something like that!

And when this would occur, that man was to be isolated from being in contact with others in order not to pass on the infection to another.

What a great practice to help stop the spread of STD's! But that is not what we see in this country and because of all the sexual promiscuity, STD's are on the rise. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are surging in the United States, with notable increases seen in case counts of syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Overall, STIs grew by 7% in 2021, reaching 2.5 million cases, according to the latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“The U.S. STI epidemic shows no signs of slowing,” Dr. Leandro Mena, director of the CDC’s Division of STD Prevention, told CNN.

Syphilis cases jumped sharply, with a 32% increase seen in just one year. This included a rise in cases passed between pregnant mothers and their babies, a scenario that can be deadly: Congenital syphilis caused 220 stillbirths and infant deaths in 2021.

“I am alarmed to see a rise in preventable syphilis and congenital syphilis cases in our nation,” Dr. Anne Zink, president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers, said in a statement. “When I was training to be a physician years ago, I did not encounter syphilis cases. I now see them regularly. I encourage all physicians to test for this disease, which is easily treatable with penicillin. . . . By including this step in routine appointments, we can save adults and unborn babies from unnecessary pain, harm, or even death.”

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All these STD's can be done away with if we would obey the Lord and practice what God has said in His Word. One man married to one woman in a monogamous relationship and that would end all those diseases!

Today we talk about safe sex and this protection and that and the reality is, like I have said, safe sex is a monogamous relationship between a husband and wife!

VERSES 16-18

When a man has a discharge of semen, be it accidental or in sex, it is not a sin, he is just ceremonially unclean for a time and both he and his wife needed to observe this brief time of ceremonial impurity.

VERSES 19-24

Here we see God instruct them on the impurity of a woman during her menstrual cycle, when she has her menstrual period.

VERSES 25-30

Here we see that if a woman has a discharge of blood that goes beyond her normal menstrual period, she is unclean.

And what that meant was that she could not sleep with her husband, touch her family, she would be the loneliest person among many people that are around her because she could not have contact with any of them.

We see this played out for us in Matthew 9:20-22, and as you will see, this is an amazing story as we see this woman with an issue of blood, she was unclean and the faith that she had!

We are told, **“And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour.”**

Here was a woman who tried everything to be healed. She spent all her money on doctors and still she had this issue of blood. She must have been weak, after losing all this blood over the years and now she takes the biggest chance of her life, but what else can she do?

And we see here that as Jesus is traveling to the home of this man named Jairus, and he came to Jesus because his daughter was close to death, that this woman with this issue of blood comes in contact with Jesus!

Again, this woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, unable to touch anyone. Not her husband or children, *ANYONE!* And what does she do? She touches the hem of His garment expecting to be healed.

Again, this woman spent all of her resources seeking medical attention without success. She was unclean and should not have been in the crowd because if she touched someone, they would be unclean.

And when you think about the crowds that were around Jesus, she probably touched a lot of people!

But think about this. For twelve years she was unclean, she was untouchable. But she touches Jesus, the hem of His garment as I have said.

Now some say that she was superstitious, and Jesus honored her faith, even though it was wrong. But that does not sound right.

Why did she touch the hem of His garment?

I think she acted in tremendous faith and not superstition. I think she knew the Scriptures and acted upon them.

I believe she knew what the prophet Malachi said, “**But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.**” Malachi 4:2.

The Hebrew word for “**wings**” can speak of the hem or edge of a garment and I believe that is how this woman saw it!

You see, Malachi is saying that the Messiah will bring healing in the hem of His garment and thus, she understood what the prophet had said, and she now believes that Jesus is the Messiah and touches the hem of His garment and she is instantly healed!

It was a step of faith on her part.

How can I be so sure?

Because of what Jesus told her in mark 5:34. He said, “**. . . ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. God in peace, and be healed of your affliction.’**” That is faith!

We too, by faith, obey what the prophets and the apostles have said and there is healing in Jesus, and we are instantly healed of our sins as we come and touch Him, as His blood cleanses us!

VERSES 31-33

Keep in mind that none of these discharges were a sin but they did make a person ceremonially unclean!

And when you look at *menstruation – the blood*, and *semen – the seed*, you see the two symbols that are connected to redemption and life!

As I close this evening let me leave you with this to think about.

In I John 1:5-9 John tells us, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

We need to abide in Him for as we are in Him, as we surrender to the Holy Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, we will be clean in a practical sense and positionally speaking we are already clean!

May we walk in the light as He is in the light!