**HOMILY REFLECTION GUIDE**

**WEEK 3 of 5**

**Preaching Series: Unbound — Freedom in Christ**

**Second Sunday of Lent: God’s Dream for You**

**The Five Keys of Unbound Ministry**



1. **Repentance and Faith** – acknowledging our sinfulness and need for Jesus’ forgiveness and help;

2. **Forgiveness** of ourselves and others;

3. **Renunciation** of any evil influence in our lives;

4. **Authority**—taking the Authority we have in Jesus to overcome evil and break its power in our lives;

5. **The Father’s Blessing** — receiving the love and affirmation God wants to give us as his beloved children.

**Main Points of Today’s Homily**

# Eight centuries ago, St. Thomas Aquinas taught that every human being wants to find happiness because God created us to desire and to seek happiness in our lives. Unfortunately, people too often look for happiness in the wrong places.

# For example, the Samaritan woman in the Gospel seems to have been looking for the right relationship in her life to make her happy, and, after going through five husbands and now with a live-in boyfriend, she is still looking for that elusive happiness.

# She meets Jesus, and, at a certain point in that conversation she takes the leap of faith to believing that Jesus is the Messiah. As a result of her encounter, conversation and relationship with Jesus, she comes to see that the only thing that will satisfy her deepest thirst is drinking the “living water” Jesus offers. In other words, her true and lasting happiness is going to come from opening her heart to Jesus. Jesus frees her from the burden of her past, from all the rejection and baggage she had been carrying in her heart. In other words, he has “unbound her.”

* Jesus wants to unbind and free us in the same way. That is what this Lenten preaching series is about: being unbound and finding freedom in Jesus’ living water. In this third week of our series, I am focusing on the First Key of the Unbound process: Repentance and Faith. This first key is a critical step we must take in order to begin our journey to freedom. It means that, like the Samaritan woman, we have to have an encounter and an honest conversation with Jesus where we acknowledge our need for a savior, admit to our failures and wrongdoing, and surrender our lives in faith to the Lord. Our sincere repentance leads us to faith in Jesus and to freedom.
* So, where are you in your faith journey? What kind of relationship do you have with Jesus? Only if you have truly come before Jesus, admitted that you need his forgiveness and help in your life, and have a meaningful, personal relationship with him can you be a true, committed and mature Catholic. Only then can you drink Jesus’ living water, be free of the burdens and baggage of your past, and find peace and happiness in your life.

**Prayer at the End of the Homily**

*(from Neal Lozano’s book “Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance, p. 69):*

“Lord, I am a sinner; I come before You to tell You I am sorry for all my sins. Thank You for giving Your life for me, that I might be forgiven and come home to You. Please come and be Lord of my life; I want to live in Your kingdom with the freedom of a child of God. Lead me to the deeper freedom that is found in knowing Your love.”

**Key Scriptures This Week**

**John 15:11**

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

**Psalm 37: 4**

Find your delight in the LORD who will give you your heart’s desire.

**Psalm 16:11**

You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever.

**John 4:10**

Jesus answered and said to [the Samaritan woman], “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

**Isaiah 55:1**

All you who are thirsty, come to the water!

**John 7: 37-38**

Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever

believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’”

**Catechism of the Catholic Church #1718**

**The Desire for Happiness**

“The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw [humans] to the One who alone can fulfill it: We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated. (*St. Augustine, De moribus eccl. 1, 3, 4: PL 32, 1312*).

“How is it, then, that I seek you, Lord? Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you. (*St. Augustine, Conf. 10, 20: PL 32, 791*).

“God alone satisfies.” (*St. Thomas Aquinas, Expos. in symb. apost. I*).

**Pertinent Quotes**

* “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” (*St. Augustine*)
* “The time has come,” Jesus said. “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (see Mark 1:15). The Good News invitation is not simply to leave behind the world and the kingdom of darkness, but to enter into our inheritance, the Kingdom of the beloved Son. We do that by faith. What good is it to repent from all your sins and renounce the works of the devil, yet remain in the prison that has held you captive? If Jesus has unlocked the prison door, is it not time to push it open and come out to a new life?" (*Neal Lozano, Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance from Evil Spirits, p. 101*)

**Questions to Think About**

1. Are you happy? If so, what makes you happy? If not, what do you think keeps you from happiness?

2. Have you sincerely and humbly come before Jesus, acknowledged your sins and your need for him to be your savior?

3. When you consider Jesus’ death and resurrection, do you take it personally, i.e., that he died and rose for your liberation?

4. Where would you put your relationship with Jesus right now on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “almost non-existent” and 10 being “couldn’t be better?” What can you do to make your relationship with him stronger?

5. How do you view the suffering in your life? Do you see it as a path to maturity, or as God’s abandonment of you?

**Testimony from Unbound Ministry**

“For the past two years I have been literally battling for my life due to a lie that I have believed since my husband left me two years ago for a woman that we had met on a vacation we were on. The devastation from this affair and the ensuing rejection left me, more often than not, begging God to take my life…

“...But Praise God! I see! I see! And what now has been revealed to me is that none of my husband's decisions were about me. He bought the lie [from the devil] and in turn I bought the lie. The oppressing spirit of rejection that has oppressed me for the past two years was commanded to leave and I truly feel that it is gone. I now know who I am, the precious, precious daughter of Almighty God. He created me and everything he created is GOOD and I am VERY GOOD and I am WORTHY OF LOVE, I am WORTHY OF FIDELITY, I am WORTH SACRIFICING FOR. I know this because I know my savior and HE has done a great work in me.”

 **For more Unbound testimonies go to:**

[www.heartofthefather.com/prayer/testimonies.](https://www.heartofthefather.com/prayer/testimonies)

**Recommended Resources**

* Book: **Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance.** For more information about today’s homily, **read Chapter 3**.
* Neal and Janet Lozano’s website: www.heartofthefather.com/
* YouTube video: **Introduction to Unbound and the Power of the Gospel**—www.youtube.com/watch?v=9owV8QsOIn4