**HOMILY REFLECTION GUIDE**

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

**WEEK 5 of 5**

**Fifth Sunday of Lent: You Have to Die so that You Can Live**

**March 21, 2021**

**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**

* Lent challenges us to let go of the things that can distract us from our true identity as God’s beloved children and that distract us from our ultimate purpose in life of loving and serving God and others. In other words, **Lent reminds us that you have to die so that you can live.**
* This is one of the foundational beliefs we have as Christians, not just during Lent, but throughout our Christian life: that, by God’s grace, death leads to life.
* In today’s Gospel Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. This shows us that Jesus also calls us to new life when we have been in a tomb: crushed by crisis, tragedy and loss in our lives, or when we have buried ourselves through sin, selfishness and giving in to the lies and temptations of the devil that draw us away from God. Jesus calls us by name, to find in him the strength and determination to overcome life’s setbacks and to renounce any evil influences in our lives, to come into his light, to be unbound and to find freedom in him.
* But, in order to receive that new life and freedom in Jesus, we have to die first. And the key to dying to ourselves is the renunciation of all the things in our lives and in our world that are not of God. Renunciation is the Third Key of the Unbound Ministry model. Therefore, in the Unbound model, renunciation means you want no more of the lies and empty promises of Satan that have drawn you away from God.
* Going through this Third Key of Renunciation is not easy for us; in fact, it is impossible for us to do this renunciation on our own. That is why, in Unbound, the Third Key of Renunciation is linked with the Fourth Key of Authority, the authority that comes to us from Jesus himself.
* While the Third Key of Renunciation requires honesty and humility to recognize and name the ways we have allowed ourselves to be drawn away from God, the Fourth Key of Authority requires faith to believe that we have been given Jesus’ authority and power over any evil influence in our lives. And, it also requires the courage to command this evil influence to leave in Jesus’ name as well as the courage to follow through the words we have spoken by changing our lives accordingly.
* We have to be unbound if we want true freedom in Christ. We have to die so that we can live.
* See above for a summary of the Five Keys of Unbound.

**Prayer Read at the End of the Homily**

*(from Neal Lozano’s book “Unbound:*

*A Practical Guide to Deliverance, p.93):*

Lord Jesus, I surrender my life to You. I trust in You. In the name of Jesus I renounce Satan and all his works and empty promises. In the name of Jesus, I command every evil spirit I have renounced, every spirit behind the sins I have confessed, to leave me. Thank You, Jesus, for giving me victory over my enemies and for setting me free. I am not afraid. Amen.

**Testimonies from Those Who**

**Have Experienced Unbound Ministry**

* “I am leaving with an absolutely new level of freedom. I had something in my heart for almost thirty years. It made me fearful, uncertain, and jealous. Now I am free.”
* “I was under constant self-condemnation for past confessed sins, and I felt worthless. Now I am free to bask in Jesus' love for me.”

**Key Scriptures about Renunciation**

* **Matthew 16:24-25**

Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

* **Ezekiel 14:6**

Therefore say to the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!

* **Titus 2: 11-12**

For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to renounce godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age...

**Key Scriptures about Authority**

* **Mark 16:17-18**

These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

* **Luke 10:17-19**

The seventy[-two] returned rejoicing, and said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name.” Jesus said, “I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power ‘to tread upon serpents’ and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you.

* **Matthew 28:18-20**

Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.

* **Revelation 12:10**

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been thrown down.”

**Questions to Think About**

1. Have your Lenten practices helped you to die to yourself? How?
2. Can you remember a time when the Lord brought you through a traumatic experience and helped you find new life in him?
3. Can you remember a time when you were able to renounce something in your life that was leading you away from God and then found that renouncing it helped you to experience freedom, peace and joy?
4. What are some other areas of your life where you need to renounce something that is a negative influence for you or others? You can look at my message in today’s bulletin for some ideas.

**Recommended Resources**

* Book: **Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance,** for more information about today’s homily, read Chapters 5 and 6.
* 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

**Want Someone to Pray with You?**

If you would like to set up an appointment with someone to talk about how you can experience how Jesus can set you free from the lies and temptations of the devil, from guilt, fear or resentment, from an addiction or a trauma you experienced in the past, we have a team of people who have been trained in the Unbound Ministry model who can pray with you. Simply send an email with a request to set up a confidential appointment to the following address and someone will contact you: unbound@saintdominics.org.