



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 6 3Q 2016 Jesus Mingled with People

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Now the tax collectors...” What do you think of the allegation of the Pharisees and lawyers?

Why were the religious leaders upset that Jesus was mingling with tax collectors and sinners?

Why did they consider this to be wrong?

What was the basis of their value system, or another way to say it, what was the measuring device they used to determine what was right and wrong? Was it not an imposed law construct?

And where does an imposed law construct focus one’s attention? In other words, when one operates in a legal system, who does one remain primarily concerned with? Self! They were more concerned with their own legal standing before God and so-called righteousness than they were with helping others. In fact, they would sacrifice others, neglect others, in order to do what they thought was “right” for themselves.

What about today, do we find within Christianity that this same dynamic is at work—people so focused on not sinning they would neglect someone in need?

What did they focus upon to determine a wrong? Was it not behavior?

But where does God look? Upon the heart! So, is behavior what is most important—the specific act one does, or is it the motive of the heart?

And, can we always tell the condition of the heart by the behavior? The Bible says by their fruits we can know them—but does that mean by the behaviors?

What would you say of a man who organizes his own militia to attack a wealthy caravan of a sovereign nation and in the process kills many people?

Didn’t Abraham do this? Abraham went to war and killed many people, his behavior was one of killing others, a violation of the commandment—yet what was his heart?

- Was Abraham a person who liked to kill—bloodthirsty?
- Was Abraham a person who valued life? How do we know?
- Remember Abraham pled for the lives of the wicked in Sodom? What does this reveal about Abraham’s heart?



- How many Christians today are pleading for the lives of people they view as living in sin?
- Yet, Abraham led his men to kill many people—but what was the motive of his heart? Was it to kill or was it to save? Wasn't it to save Lot and the others who were being taken as slaves?

Was Abraham condemned by God for going to war to rescue Lot and the others?

Even though Abraham's motives may have been to rescue, to save life and not take it, what was the likely impact upon Abraham?

Was there a price Abraham paid, was there a toll on Abraham's mind, heart, psyche?

Notice, Abraham's actions after the battle, he refused any reward; he would not take any increase in wealth or payment—why?

What is the world's response to winning a battle? To celebrate, to feel good, to feel empowered, to feel rewarded, to feel blessed by God—but do you think Abraham had a different take?

Was it possible Abraham was sad? Was it possible Abraham saw this entire series of events, not as something to celebrate, but as something to grieve? Yes, it was necessary to save Lot and others, but it was a sad thing to do—like severing a gangrene limb—who wants to do that? We may have to do it to save a life, but should we really rejoice—“Yeah—we just cut off an arm!!!” No! this would be a very corrupt way of seeing the world.

How many today see war, conflict, fighting, killing as something to celebrate rather than something to grieve?

Is it the specific behavior that matters or the condition of the heart?

So, back to the religious leaders in Christ's day and how they criticized Christ, what did they value? Why did they do it?

- Did the leaders value selflessness, and focus upon the motive of the heart
- Or did the religious leaders value externals, rituals, legal forms and ceremonies?

What did Christ value? How did Jesus see people?

How did the Jewish leadership, and all of society for that matter, see lepers? As sinners who should be condemned and shunned!

How did Jesus see lepers? As children who needed healing! How do we see sinners today?



The lesson talks about being Jesus to people, can we be Jesus to people if we see sin as a legal problem that requires punishment?

How must we understand sin and sinners in order to be Jesus to people? Isn't it a necessity to see sin as a spiritual sickness in need of healing?

Is there Scripture to support this?

Ah, sinful nation,
a people loaded with guilt,
a brood of evildoers,
children given to corruption!
They have forsaken the Lord;
they have spurned the Holy One of Israel
and turned their backs on him.
⁵ Why should you be beaten anymore?
Why do you persist in rebellion?
Your whole head is injured,
your whole heart afflicted.
⁶ From the sole of your foot to the top of your head
there is no soundness—
only wounds and welts
and open sores,
not cleansed or bandaged
or soothed with oil. Isaiah 1:4-6

Save means to heal, salvation means to make whole, to restore. All of Scripture, rightly understood is about restoring, healing, fixing our brokenness.

But, when we see sin as breaking rules, we want to inflict punishment rather than to heal and restore.

If we approach people this way we misrepresent Christ, we obstruct people from knowing God, we may convert them to a religion, but we don't bring them to Jesus.

SUNDAY

The lesson takes a paragraph from *The Ministry of Healing* about how Jesus approached people and makes a list of how to approach people, lets read the second paragraph, "Christ's method..." thoughts?

What do you think about this list? Why did Jesus mingle with people?

- He loved people and that alone was a reason
- But He also wanted to connect in order to heal and save



- Thus, it was a requirement to mingle in order to bring the people into contact with truth and love

Jesus did care about people; He was compassionate; He did sympathize and He did seek to meet the needs of people—what impact upon people did this have?

What happens in you when you experience someone who actually cares about you, sympathizes with your struggles and you can tell they really want to help meet your needs?

Do you experience yourself drawn to them? Does it increase your trust in them?

Read bottom green section, “Dwell on this amazing...” Would anyone like to share what they have experienced, considered, realized as you have contemplated that our Creator became human and dwelt among us?

Do you think it would have been hard for you to believe that Jesus was God if you had been there 2000 years ago?

I watched a movie recently called *Risen* and it is about a Roman centurion investigating the reports of Jesus rising from the dead. And it is very well done, but it really brought home how hard it would have been to see Jesus and recognize Him as fully God. He was so humble, so human, that I think I would have really struggled with it had I lived back then.

Has anyone else ever considered this?

So, when Jesus asked them who people said He was Peter answered:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. MT 16:16,17

So, I don’t think it would have been possible to recognize Jesus except for the enlightenment of the Holy.

MONDAY

The lesson is about the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son.

What is the difference between the sheep, coin and son? What lessons do we learn from each?

Did the coin know it was lost?

- Are there people who are lost that don’t even know it?



- Did the one who lost the coin go searching for it?
- Are we to be God's agents to search for the lost who don't know they are lost?
- How? What method to reach the lost who don't know they are lost?
- Would this be the classic missionary taking the truth about God to people who have never heard it?

Did the sheep know it was lost?

- Probably, but did the sheep know its way back?
- Are there people who know they are lost but don't know how to find their way back?
- Are there people who know their lives are messed up but don't know how to fix their lives?
- Are there people who don't even know there is a healing remedy for their lives, even though they know they are sick in heart?
- Are there people who are lost, know they are lost, and have been taken advantage by those who claim they are there to help them? How, what kind of exploitation happens to the lost?
 - Certainly the gross exploitation that is criminal even in this sinful world
 - But what about exploitation and entrapment by those seeking to deliver them? Does this happen?
 - Do people who are lost ever end up in cults?
 - Do they ever end up trapped in religions that burden with guilt?
 - Did Jesus tell the religious leaders in His day that they were doing this to people, burdening them, not delivering them?
 - Does this happen today?
- Do we have a message for the lost who know they are lost that will actually heal, deliver, and lead the lost to being found?
- What is that message? How would you share it? What would you say?

Did the son know he was lost—initially? No! Did he eventually realize he was lost? Yes! And did the son know the way home?

- Are there people who have gotten lost who don't know they are lost because circumstances are so good for them they don't realize it?
- And are there people who, having wandered away from God's design for life—left God's estate—have eventually found themselves at rock bottom, in the proverbial pigsty?
- And are there people in the pigsty, who do know the way back, who must make the choice to return before any help can be given? Why?
 - Because if help were given before they make the choice to return it would only keep them from coming home, it would obstruct them from turning their life around.

What is our role in dealing with these different types of lost people?

We must have wisdom to discern the different types of the lost—who are the ones that need us to reach out to help lead them home, versus those who must choose to come home before they can be helped.



We are to be—lights in the world, to be beacons, to be bastions of hope, to reveal a better way, to offer a real remedy—how? What message offers hope?

Read bottom Green Section, “Have you ever...” Does this happen, do we ever avoid witnessing, offering hope to people because we don’t want them in our communities?

Why would we do this?

Do we avoid offering medicine to someone who is sick because we don’t want them well?

Is it possible we don’t witness to certain people because much of what Christianity has shared in the past has been a false gospel with no power to heal, so on some level we realize that the people we witness to will not be changed, and therefore will come into our fellowship with the same baggage, issues, problems, and we don’t want them?

Would we have a different attitude if we believed the gospel of Jesus Christ would truly transform people to be the most lovely, kind, trustworthy, patient, understanding of all?

- Imagine we find a sick individual, and we begin providing a treatment that will heal and cure, is wellness achieved instantly?
- Are there often symptoms in the healing process?
- While the medicine and treatments are working, are there still fevers, coughing up phlegm, diarrhea, vomiting?
- Can people who are actually getting well, who are participating in the healing process still have symptoms that we might find offensive, symptoms that might be gross, might smell bad, might turn our stomachs?

When people who have lived in the world, who have been battered by the world, who have suffered in the world, who have participated in the vileness of the world and are sick in heart, full of fear, insecurity, selfishness, come to Christ and genuinely begin the healing of their hearts, do they often still struggle with symptoms? And what might these symptoms look like?

Could a person in the healing process say things in hurtful ways? Could they act insensitive to others? Could they be so wounded still that they react with criticism, defensiveness, and even accusations toward others?

Does this mean they are not getting well or could it be there is a lot of healing still to do?

Mary Magdalene came to Jesus and some suggest she gave her heart to Him, but then there was a period of struggle where she relapsed back into old behavior before she was finally free.



Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome. {DA 568.1}

Are we able to see past the immediate behavior to understand that people are often wounded, and in the process of healing and not take personal offense? Can we mingle with people who are struggling and be gracious?

But are there others, who we must set boundaries with and restrict from fellowship, whether at the hospital or at church? Who would they be? Those who persistently refuse treatment and are actively sabotaging the health of others.

TUESDAY

Read Mt 9:10-13:

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." NIV

What is the message Jesus is giving them? What did He want them to learn?

What does it mean "I desire mercy not sacrifice"?

Where does mercy necessarily focus the attention? On others! Mercy focuses our minds our hearts upon delivering, restoring, helping someone else. Can you be merciful without someone to be merciful to?

Where does sacrifice focus the attention? On self, on paying for one's sins, on fulfilling one's duty, on influencing one's god with one's sacrifice, on earning some credit, on being recognized etc.

So, what was the point Christ was making? That salvation is about restoring love into the heart, about recreating the inner being to be in harmony with God and His design of love. But their religion, rather than restoring love, was actually working to solidify them in selfishness, to make selfishness a virtue.



- They thought it was a virtue to deny one's parents care and donate the money to the temple, perhaps have a building named after themselves,
- to give large offerings in public so everyone would notice,
- to say long prayers so people would realize their piousness,
- to fast and make sure everyone saw they were fasting.

But, they wouldn't help the wounded man on the street, they drove the sick out of their presence, they criticized the poor as condemned by God.

Read third paragraph, "Here again, we are seeing..." Does this happen today? Do people focus more on ceremony, than the condition of the heart? For instance, is the form of baptism what is essential, or the condition of the heart?

Can people be baptized by immersion and have hearts that remain filled with selfishness and still be enemies of God?

Can people be baptized by sprinkling and have renewed hearts and be God's children?

Do Christians every get caught up in fighting and arguing over ceremonies and miss what is really important—the condition of the heart?

Could the same be said for which day one worships upon?

Read fourth paragraph, "Thousands are making the same mistake..." What do some make their idol? An idea or opinion!

What is an abomination? Fasting and prayer actuated by a self-justifying spirit—why?

Because it leads to false security, it leads people to think they are well while they are dying.

Did you hear a few years ago of a pharmacist who had taken people's expensive anti-cancer medications and replaced them with placebo and gave the cancer patients nothing but a fake medicine, while telling them they were getting the cancer treatment, billing the insurance company for the expensive medicine and then selling the real medicine on the black market?

What is your reaction to such deception? Isn't it an abomination? Why? Because a healer is a fraud, he is tricking people into taking a false remedy that not only will fail to heal them, but will prevent them from seeking a true remedy because they think they are getting one.

This is what fasting, prayer, communion, Sabbath observance, or any other religious ritual does when it comes from hearts that seek to justify self—which happens under the penal legal model.



There is another form of this abomination—those in which people don't seek to justify themselves with works or ritual, but in which they claim legal justification accounted in books in heaven WHILE there is no actual change of heart or character, no rebirth, no renewal, no regeneration. In other words, a false legal remedy that brings a false sense of security so people don't participate in God's true remedy.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about how to we mingle in the world without being corrupted by the world.

The lesson notes errors on two extremes:

- Those who don't want to be corrupted so they cloister themselves away from the world—either in monasteries, or in religious ghettos and only interact with people from one's own religious community.
- And on the other extreme are those who become so connected to their friends in the world they leave God behind and become part of the world.

What wisdom would you share to help people find that right balance?

Are there any elements that would be *requirements* before one can successfully find such a balance?
What makes one vulnerable to corruption by friends in the world?

I would suggest several elements are necessary, actual requirements:

- One cannot share what one doesn't possess—so before a person can successfully witness in the world that person has to come into a knowledge and experience with God and His kingdom
- One must have some level of health before one can be a healer to others. Those who are so wounded, broken, in pain, in crisis, in need, empty, lonely, etc. that they can't see past their own hurt are not yet in a position to handle the stress of interacting with those who are not mature in Christ—why not?
 - Persons who are still wounded, empty, and needy seek relationships to get—to get approval, love, validation, acceptance, or perhaps fame, wealth, security. They live in fear of not getting, fear of rejection, fear of failure and thus are vulnerable to compromise if the prize they are seeking is threatened.
- To be able to successfully interact with the world we must be healthy enough to walk away, to tolerate rejection, to handle criticism, to be able to be okay when not included, to set others free to have their own opinions
- The mature are those who focus on doing in governance of self that which is right, healthy, reasonable, while leaving others free to love us or hate us and realizing that such actions are evidences of where the other people are in their journey.



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “No question...” What have we been given in Christ? How would you describe it? What is it that you have received from Christ that is worth sharing with others?

Is it future eternal life insurance that we are promoting, or do we have something that we receive from Christ that has real value in our lives right now? What?

Read last four paragraphs, “Robert Linthicum...” What do you think of these three descriptions of churches?

Do you find these distinctions valuable? Or are they artificial?

What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world?

Is there a difference between institutional religion and organized ministry? What is the difference?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa