



Discipleship Lesson 7 1Q 2014

Jesus and the Social Outcasts

Monday and Tuesday of this week I had the privilege of speaking with the leadership of 15 Southern Baptist Churches, over 200 people, in Texas. What a great group of people.

I presented God's design of love and how our view of God changes our brain and then met in small groups with their various leadership teams and had incredibly positive response across the board.

Thank you for all your prayers and support and let's keep sharing this beautiful picture of God in every opportunity we get.

SABBATH

Read the first two paragraphs, "A young woman..." thoughts?

How do you view this young woman? How is it God can know her sin, your sin, my sin and still love us?

Is there something about how God views our sin and us that if we shared that viewpoint it would enable us to love those who sin against us?

Why did this young woman murder the social worker? What led her to do it? Was it fear, desperation, terror of losing the only being whom she had ever felt love from?

And from where did the fear, that this woman struggled against, come? When did this woman choose to have problems with fear, insecurity, doubt, & selfishness?

So, her behaviors, her actions what did they reveal? A sickness of heart. A heart lacking in love, a heart filled with fear and insecurity, which inevitably acts to protect self.

Her sin, her behavior, then was a symptom of a heart condition, with which she was born, but for which she had yet to take the Remedy that Christ provided.

This is the condition of all humans since Adam's sin, we are born filled with fear, insecurity and selfishness. Thus, we must be reborn, we must have new motives take root in the heart.

But, from where can a person find the solution when they are all alone? Thus the pastor who visited her not only taught her about Jesus, but his concern for her, his compassion, his refusal to reject her, his love for her as a person revealed God's love to her and it was this love that opened the door for her to receive the truth about God as revealed in Jesus.



When we understand God's law as the design upon which life was constructed, the protocols of love, then we realize deviations result in dysfunction, bad behaviors. But the behaviors are merely symptoms of a heart and mind out of balance from God's design.

When you have a child who is sick, and that child may have vomiting, diarrhea, productive cough, they may cry, whine, and be irritable, what is your attitude toward that child? Do you hate the child or do you long to heal the child?

This is how God sees everyone of us. He knows that sin is a sickness of heart, mind and character that steals peace, incites fear, destroys love and instills guilt. He knows that these symptoms lead to behaviors designed to comfort, to bring peace, to bring security, but based on a survival principle, not on God's design and thus we only get worse. But, He also knows He can heal us, if we let Him.

God's forgiveness is not judicial, it is restorative. True Bible forgiveness is the process of recreating in the believer the mind and heart of Christ so that we are restored to God's design and live in harmony and unity with Him.

Thoughts?

We have such problem with people who commit overt sin because we see through human eyes, sinful human law lens and think of sin primarily as bad behavior, breaking the rules and that punishment is deserved. This distortion interferes with our ability to love like Christ loves.

But how did Jesus tell us to treat those who do us wrong, who sin against us?

- Love them and heap burning coals their head
- Turn the other cheek
- Pray for those who spitefully use you
- Forgive

Why? Because they are sick and are dying in their sin and the only remedy to their sinful condition is the truth and love of God. Thus, when we love and treat with Godly concern those who sin, we minister the remedy of God's truth and love and reveal God's design for their lives. This is what the pastor did for the woman in the story.

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Societies establish..." thoughts?

There is a societal hierarchy, which values worldly things. Does God have a hierarchy or is it only human societies that establish hierarchies?

What makes one great in the kingdom of heaven?



Love! The willingness to live in harmony with God's character and design, living to give to help others makes one great in God's kingdom.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. MT 5:17-20

Jesus just finished His sermon on the mount, and what was the message of that sermon?

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. MT 5:3-11

Note what Jesus says makes you blessed – can anyone tell me?

Where did Jesus place the emphasis?

Did he say, “Blessed are you when you pay your tithe?” or “Blessed are you when you eat according to the law?” or “Blessed are you when you don't lie, steal, murder, or commit adultery?”

Why not?



Do you notice Jesus did NOT focus on behavior. Jesus focused on heart attitude. We are not blessed for doing the right thing; we are blessed for having the right heart!

And such a heart we cannot create, we can only receive it in relationship with Jesus Christ!

We are also blessed when we endure the abuse of the world with a heart like Christ, when we love our enemies, when we turn the other cheek, when we pray for those who spitefully use us. Again, we are blessed when our hearts are divergent from the world, when our hearts are in harmony with the King of love from the kingdom of love.

In this context Jesus speaks of the law and those who live in harmony with God's law, His law of love, His design for life, will be great in the kingdom of heaven!

Are their degrees of sin, some that are more offensive to God?

I read this recently in a book entitled Steps To Christ:

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. {SC 30.1}

What is God's scale upon which He measures the severity of sin? The more severely it numbs the conscience and makes one unresponsive to His endeavors to save and heal. It isn't about the specific act, it is about the condition of heart and mind, the closing out of God.

David's sin of adultery and murder was not as severe or offensive in God's eyes as the church leader who judges someone for believing differently and works to have them disfellowshipped. Why? Because David knew he was wrong and repented and sought God's healing presence, but the prideful church leader believes they are right and thus don't recognize the sickness of pride and selfness in their heart and don't partake of God's true remedy.

This makes God sick, listen to the message Jesus has for the Christian church today:

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, **that you are neither cold nor hot.** I wish you were either one or the other!

¹⁶ **So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my**



mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.** Rev 3:16-18

Let’s decode this – How does one get lukewarm? By a mixture of hot and cold – and these people are religiously hot, they promote themselves as being God’s representatives and doing God’s work, yet their hearts are cold and selfish, thus they are lukewarm. And the Greek word for spit is *emeo* from which we get emesis, it means to vomit. In other words, God is saying this pretentious piety, the presenting oneself on fire for God but having a cold heart makes God sick.

So, he counsels, stop looking at self, stop feeling righteous because you have always gone to church on the “right day” or eaten the right foods, or been baptized in the right way, or you didn’t have sex before marriage, or you never smoked, used drugs or drank alcohol, or whatever. Stop thinking you are good because you have done this or that and come back to reality and recognize you are infected with the same disease of fear and selfishness and no amount of external behavior will change what’s in the heart. So, buy from Jesus the gold refined in fire, which is to say, His perfect character refined by His trial of his ordeal, then our filthy selfishness will be overwritten, as He writes the law of love upon our hearts and minds.

How do we buy it? It is the barter method, we exchange what we have for what He has. Our sinful life for His sinless life, our terminal condition for His immortal condition, our wickedness for His righteousness, our selfishness for His love! We then become partakers of the divine nature and live new lives, having our minds enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our eyes anointed with oil.

Thoughts?

The lesson states the same, read paragraph four, “Although hardened by sinful...” Thoughts?

How do we reach those who are struggling with fear and insecurity and seeking to find themselves by abusing themselves with various forms of going against their upbringing?

Grace- can someone tell me about grace? What is it, what does it look like?

MONDAY

- The woman caught in adultery, what did Jesus say?
- What did Jesus do with the knowledge of the sins of the people who brought the woman caught in adultery?
- Adam after sin, how did God approach him? What did God say and do?
- How did Jesus treat Judas?
- How did Jesus treat those who crucified Him?

Here is a story from Philip Yancey’s book *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* On page 49...



Thoughts?

Do we love or do we judge? Where is the balance between loving and intervening? Is there a difference between diagnosing and judging? Can you explain the difference?

When we love someone and they are sick how do you approach them? When they are sick but refusing help how do you approach them? But if you see them as doing bad stuff, not as sick, but as rebellious, how do we often approach?

Can we confront and deal with the sickness of sin in our families in ways that are consistent with love? What might that look like?

TUESDAY

The lesson points us to the story of the demoniac who was living in a cemetery, in rags, with broken chains still upon him, cutting and abusing himself.

Read second paragraph, “A crucial point...” thoughts?

Well said, professional help is often needed but many people reject professional help, believing that if they just had enough faith they would be okay.

What barriers have you seen that prevent people from getting professional help?

Does mental illness determine one’s relationship with God? Absolutely not, any more than physical illness. One of the lies of the devil is that if you are sick it is because of some sin that separates you from God. The story of Job is a great example that disproves this, or the blind man who according to Jesus his blindness was not from his or his parents sin. Likewise mental illness can be a sickness that is physical.

But, it is also true that physical illness could be brought about by sin. A person could get HIV from sinful living, or lung cancer from smoking etc. Likewise some mental health problems could be from sinful living, a person committing adultery will have increased anxiety, insecurity, fear, conflict etc. But it would be wrong to conclude that all illness, physical or mental is a result of some sin by that person.

In the last paragraph it states, “but from God’s perspective every human being is of infinite worth.”

Absolutely true, this is a fact – but have you or anyone you’ve known ever struggled with feelings of worthlessness?

What would you say to someone who was feeling worthless?



From where does one's worth originate?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to review Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well.

What are the lessons you take from this experience?

- Jesus breaks down human barriers
- Jesus loves all people regardless of race or gender
- Jesus disarms by asking her to help him
- Jesus offers her what she really longs for, love (metaphor living water), she had five husbands and her current live-in partner is not her husband. She is lonely, empty, discouraged, and afraid, Jesus offers her love, genuine Godly love. And such love that when she receives it will overflow from her and go out to many. This is the nature of God's love, it gives it cannot be taken and hoarded, it must be given away and when it is it grows and grows.
- Jesus didn't condemn her but offered her hope, he showed her grace
- He diagnosed and provided Remedy
- Jesus told her salvation is of the Jews – yet He told the Pharisees that when they convert a person to Judaism they make him twice the son of hell. How are both true? Because Jesus is representative of true Judaism, the Pharisees practiced false Judaism, a counterfeit. Is there a lesson for us today? Salvation is of Christ, i.e. Christianity, but could some people be converted to a form of Christianity that makes them more bonded to hell than before they converted? Thoughts about this? What might this look like?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "It's hard to imagine..." thoughts?

No doubt there would be no prejudice in a world without sin, but what about the rest of it?

Are class distinctions evil and a part of sin, are cultural differences evil and a part of sin? Or are these Godly and the evil is the selfishness that causes these differences to be used as means of oppressing others?

Did God make:

- Male and female? In His design their was equality, divergence, two separate classes, but equal, sin causes inequality between these two classes God created.
- What about Cherubim and Seraphim are these classes of angels, different divisions?
- What about in Revelation and Ezekiel do we see divisions? Two covering Cherubs, four living creatures, twenty-four elders, thousands and thousands, and then ten thousands times ten thousands?
- Are their beings of different unfallen worlds? Would they have different culture? Is this evil?



- Sin is selfishness, and selfishness has taken the divergence God created, which provides beauty and novelty and uniqueness, and used those differences to create points of exploitation and abuse.

So must we transcend culture or transcend selfishness which makes us uncomfortable with other cultures?

Do we admire other cultures or look down on them as not being as good as us?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “The one class...” thoughts?

Read questions and discuss