

Week 7

Day 1

Scripture Luke 19:1-10

Last week Brent introduced the topic of what it looks like when we face challenges while trying to be the salt and light of the world. I want to look at the topic of outcasts. I think at some point or another we all feel like the outcast or the outsiders. We feel left out, excluded and alone. We feel like no one understands us. We desperately want to feel known.

One of the coolest things about Jesus was his attitude towards the outcasts in the bible. The people that were often left out or seen as less than. Any other religious leader would have stayed clear of them, but not Jesus. This week we read the story of Zacchaeus who was a tax collector. This was a guy who represented a government that was taking people's money and oppressing them, this was not the guy you wanted to hang out and have a meal with.

But Zacchaeus didn't let being an outsider keep him from seeking out Jesus. Because he was a small man and there were crowds he went so far as to climb a tree to try and see Jesus. And Jesus could have easily just kept walking but he didn't. He took the time to not only acknowledge Zacchaeus, but also go so far as to say he wanted to go to his house to eat. Jesus singled him out, acknowledged him and validated him.

While the world saw Zacchaeus as unloveable, Jesus saw the opposite. Jesus saw his heart, he saw a man who was willing to go to extremes to even see Jesus. Jesus saw his desire for connection and acknowledgement. Jesus called him by name. He does the same for us, he sees us in our pain, in our confusion and in the moments we feel like we are unloveable and he calls us by name.

Day 2

Scripture Luke 5:12-16

While Zacchaeus may have been seen as unlovable because of his job and what he represented, he was not nearly as much of an outcast as those who dealt with leprosy. Leprosy is a skin disease that is infectious meaning coming in contact with someone who had it could mean you also end up with leprosy. That led to lepers being completely ostracized from their communities and families. They were made to live outside of the city and anytime anyone came near they had to shout "Unclean".

I can't imagine the loneliness that caused. The need to scream out that you were unclean every time some came near had to weigh on them. They were outcast, they were shunned and avoided by others, how could you possibly think well of yourself when the entire world around you told you that you were someone to be avoided at all costs.

But Jesus once again doesn't go with what society says, when a leper comes up to him and begs him to make him clean, Jesus doesn't hesitate to not only heal him but to do so through

touch. He gives this man the healing he is longing for, but he also gives him the gift of acknowledgment and physical touch which he hadn't had in who knows how long.

Mother Teresa is perhaps one of most famous humanitarians. She was a nun who was known for exemplifying the life of Jesus especially when it came to the outcast. She helped set up funds as well as an entire colony for those who suffered from leprosy so that they had a safe place to live and work. Even though she saw the hardships of those dealing with leprosy, she said that, "The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted."

And this is what Jesus did and still does, he sees those who feel unwanted and and unloved and he meets them where they are at. He says I see you, I see your hurt and pain and I am here.

Day 3

Scripture Luke 7:36-50

The last outcast I want to talk about is the one who is seen as unworthy. In this passage we see someone who is called a woman of the city, meaning she works on the streets. She is known for her sins and seen as only that, a sinner.

But once again she is not treated by Jesus like they expect him to. She is not treated with the same contempt and standoffish as the Pharisee treats her. She does something that would have been seen as improper by coming up and washing the feet of Jesus and Jesus doesn't immediately stop her and send her away. No, he sees her tears, her heart and her love and he grants her forgiveness.

Jesus is not scared off by our sins, he is not repulsed by our mistakes. He does not see us as only those things that others might use to define us. He sees our hearts. And in these examples of the outcasts we see how he didn't care about what everyone else thought and expected. Those who the world saw as undeserving he saw as deserving. He saw broken people who wanted to know him.

I pray that this week as you think about what it means to be an outcast, whether that is you or maybe how you view someone else, that instead you would stop and see them how Jesus does. That we would all be seen as worthy.

Day 4 Prayer

Today I want you to spend some time talking to God about times when you feel alone and like an outsider. Ask him to show up and remind you that he is with you always, that you aren't alone.

Day 5 Catch up

We know life gets crazy so take today to catch up on what you may have missed so far this week.

Day 6 Questions

- 1) When do you feel the most like an outcast? Have you ever experienced Jesus in those moments?
- 2) How can you show up for others who also struggle with feeling like an outcast or with loneliness?
- 3) Do you ever feel defined by your mistakes? How can you start to see yourself differently?

Day 7 Journaling

Today I want you to write about all the ways God shows up for you. Reflect on the times you were also the unloveable, the unclean and the unworthy. But then don't stop there, then write about how God views you, how he sees you as loveable, clean and worthy.