

Jesus on Relationships

Right Attitude Toward the Others

Lesson 7

Introduction

To be a disciple of Jesus required spending time with Him, watching, listening and following His example. In the first century, everyone had a status, their place in society. In each layer of society there were the "us" and "the others." As a rabbi, Jesus' status would have been that of Pharisee especially because of the huge influence He had on the crowds. However, He had not come through the same formal training so was not well accepted into their social groups. Jesus was about to teach His disciples, and some of the Pharisees, how God views "the others."

Enter Into the Story

As we go through several stories in the life of Jesus, try to imagine yourself in the setting and as one of the people in the story.

Tax Collectors and Sinners - Matthew 9:9-13

Read through this story of Jesus' call of Matthew (also known as Levi,) inviting him to become one of His twelve disciples. Then, based upon this story:

1. What was the attitude of the Pharisees toward Jesus?

2. What was Matthew's reaction to Jesus' surprising invitation?

3. What was Jesus' answer when the Pharisees questioned why He would lower Himself to associate with such scum as a tax collector?

4. What did Jesus tell the Pharisees, these first century teachers of God's Law?

Reflect

In this story, imagine you were one of those "sinners" whom the Pharisees considered to be "scum." How did:

5. Jesus make you feel?

6. The Pharisees make you feel?

7. What message do you think Jesus was teaching His disciples about "the others," the tax collectors and sinners?

The Immoral Woman - Luke 7:36 - 50

In this story, an "immoral woman" was expressing her gratitude toward Jesus while He was dining in the home of a Pharisee named Simon.

8. What was the Pharisee thinking about Jesus in this story?

9. Jesus answered Simon's thoughts through a story (parable). What was the implication of that story for:
 - Simon?

 - The immoral woman?

Reflect: In a society where woman had very little status, what was Jesus teaching His disciples about the worth of women? (See also Luke 8:1-3)

Children - Luke 18:15 - 17

Of all the levels of status in first century society, the lowest was filled by children and slaves.

10. What attitude did Jesus' disciples display toward the children?

11. What did Jesus say that day, to the disciples, about children?

Reflect From this story, in addition to the right attitude, what was Jesus teaching His disciples through the children?

In lesson #6, Jesus and His Disciples, Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans showed His disciples that He had also come for even these "outsiders." (Mark 4:1-38) But what about the ultimate "outsiders," the Gentiles?

The Gentiles - Mark 5:1-21

As you read through this story, try to imagine yourself being in the boat as one of The Twelve. In verse 1, the land of the Gerasenes was described as the "other side." When Jesus got out of the boat on that "other side," His first contact with the "others" was a man possessed by multiple demons.

12. Rather than rejecting the man, what did Jesus do for him?

13. What was the result when crowds gathered and saw this man clothed and in his right mind?

14. What was the attitude of the now freed Gentile man toward Jesus?

15. What were Jesus' instructions to him?

16. The man did as Jesus asked. When Jesus returned, what was the result? (vs. 21)

Reflect

17. As you look over these stories of people who were considered to be "the others," "the outsiders" of their day, what do you think Jesus was teaching His disciples then and now?

Putting Feet to Christ-like Attitudes Toward "The Others"

Jesus lived in a way that was contrary to His society. He placed value on all people and did not separate them into categories of "us" and "them." He wasn't like the Pharisees who wanted people to obey all the rules and follow right behavior before they would become acceptable. Jesus accepted people where they were, broken and in need of a Savior.

18. Are we so very different from the Pharisees of Jesus' day when it comes to associating with those who are not like us? Who do you think might be considered "the others" in today's society in:

- The church?

- Society?

Is there someone you are in contact with that you consider to be "the other?" If so, write their name down and begin to pray for that person. Ask to see him or her with the eyes of Jesus. Recognize that they too are created in God's image and loved by Him. As you seek guidance through continued prayer, when an opportunity arises, extend the love of Jesus through your hands and feet.

Begin today to include in your prayer life asking for your eyes to be opened and your heart softened to see your world as Jesus does. Then, according to the popular theme of the 90's, ask "What Would Jesus Do?" and reflect His attitude to each person you come in contact with.