



Jesus, the Son of God, didn't put on skin so he could understand what we are going through. *Nope.*
If Jesus had a purpose statement put on a plague, it would likely say: *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."*
Today we discover how that applies to the sinful extreme, the 'squeaky clean', and everybody in between.

GOD'S GRACE: You aren't good enough, but you haven't gone too far.

Let's deal with a couple of cases of those who might think they've gone so far they CAN'T be forgiven. First, there's the **tax collector**. Anyone who reads through the gospels will notice a *theme*, that most thought when it came to sinners, tax collectors & prostitutes were the worst of the worst.

Crooked Businessman (Read the Story - Luke 19:1-10)

Luke 19:5-10 (CSB) When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house." ⁶ So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. ⁷ All who saw it began to complain, **"He's gone to stay with a sinful man."** ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much." ⁹ **"Today salvation has come to this house,"** Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ **For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."**

If you think God CAN'T forgive you...or someone else, who has sinned to the extreme, Jesus, God in Skin, thinks differently.

Next we see a contrast between a sinful woman and a proud Pharisee. The Pharisee, a religious leader in the community, invited Jesus for dinner. We don't know his intentions, but he likely wanted to have a one-on-one discussion about what Jesus had been teaching. But then an uninvited woman shows up and does something strange.

Sinful Woman and Proud Pharisee

Luke 7:37-50 (CSB) ³⁷ And a woman in the town who was a sinner found out that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house. She brought an alabaster jar of perfume ³⁸ and stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears. She wiped his feet with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—**she's a sinner!**"

Doesn't Jesus get it? He can't be a prophet or he wouldn't let HER, a sinner, touch him.

As you read the Gospels, and you should, you will notice this is one of several times that *religious leaders somehow think that Jesus is sinning by spend time with...sinners.*

Luke 7:37-50 (CSB) ⁴⁰ Jesus replied to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." He said, "Say it, teacher." ⁴¹ "A creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Since they could not pay it back, he graciously forgave them both. So, which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered, "I suppose the one he forgave more." "You have judged correctly," he told him. ⁴⁴ Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she, with her tears, has washed my feet and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet since I came in. ⁴⁶ You didn't anoint my head with olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, **her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much.** But the one who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸

Then he said to her, **"Your sins are forgiven."** ⁴⁹ Those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Contrast the sinful woman & the proud pharisee. This sinful woman is amazed that Jesus is willing to forgive her, while the prideful pharisee doesn't even know that he needs forgiveness from Jesus.

- One might think she can't be forgiven, (until she hears the precious words of Jesus)
- The other thinks he doesn't need to be forgiven.

GOD'S GRACE: You aren't good enough, but you haven't gone too far.

Finally, let's look at how Jesus deals with the 'squeaky clean' religious extreme. Nicodemus was called "a ruler of the Jews" - part of the Jewish supreme court called the "Sanhedrin". Jesus calls Nic "a teacher of Israel." So here's a religious leader, a man who likely has memorized much Scripture, a man whose personal life was likely squeaky clean, who set up an evening appointment with Jesus.

Religious Leader (Read the Story - John 3:1-21)

John 3:2-3 (CSB) ² This man came to him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform these signs you do unless God were with him." ³ Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, **unless someone is born again,** he cannot see the kingdom of God."

No one sees the kingdom of God by his/her GOODNESS, but by God's GRACE. In order for a person to see the kingdom of God, he/she must be born TWICE = Physical birth & spiritual birth. That includes religious leaders and the squeaky clean.

Receiving God's Grace

John 3:14-15 (CSB) ¹⁴ "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that **everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.**

Nic knows the story. God had judged the Jewish people by sending snakes to bite them (read about it: Numbers 21:4-9). *God showed grace when the people looked at the bronze snake statue - a reminder of their rebellion against God.* Those who refused to look died. In a similar way, we must look to Jesus on the cross, an eternal reminder of what our sin cost to be forgiven.

Be ready to ask others this question **"If we could be 'good enough', then why did Jesus have to die?"**

As you read through the gospels, to **believe in Jesus** is to follow Jesus, to be His disciple, and those can trust that Jesus gives them **eternal life.**

Thankfully, Jesus came to seek and save the lost, the sinful extreme, the 'squeaky clean' and everybody in between.

GOD'S GRACE: You aren't good enough, but you haven't gone too far.

Question: *Am I a follower (disciple) of Jesus?*

* *Want to talk further? Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), or another follower of Jesus soon!*

Reading Plan this Week: "The Good Book" - chapters 26-30 (Scriptures: Luke 8, John 3, Luke 15, Mark 15, Matt. 28)

* **Communion** in our Discussion Groups on **Nov. 4**, just before our **Thanksgiving Meal** (bring a side dish)