



Outcasts

Jesus is continuously in the company of those on the margins of society – they are neither completely accepted nor completely rejected.

Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (5:32) and “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (19:10)

Boundaries are strong in this society between clean and unclean, acceptable members of society and those less so.

His ministry is one of status reversal, of status transposition, of grace for unexpected people.

Read Luke 19:1-10. Jesus and Zacchaeus.

1. Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?

Some have claimed that Jesus was killed because of who he ate with.

“In the ancient Mediterranean world, mealtime was a social event whose significance far outdistanced the need to satisfy one’s hunger. To welcome people at the table had become tantamount to extending to them intimacy, solidarity, acceptance; table companions were treated as though they were of one’s extended family. Sharing food encoded messages about hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and crossing boundaries.”¹

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, “This fellow welcomes sinners **and eats with them.**” (Lk 15:1-2)

“The point, though, is not that Jesus misunderstands the social conventions related to eating and their religious significance. One might say that he understands them quite well, *and exploits them*. The very people excluded from the table of the holy, he welcomes, and in so doing he serves as their physician and extends to them salvation. (19:9-10)”²

¹ Joel Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 87

² Green, *Theology*, 89

2. Jesus and the Marginalized

Category A – The Poor

Luke 16:19-31 The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 18:18-30 The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 6:20, 7:22, 14:13, 14:21, 16:20,22

Category B – The Tax Collectors

Luke 5:27-32 The calling of Levi

Luke 7:34 Jesus as friend of tax collectors and sinners

Luke 18:9-14 Pharisee and Tax Collector Parable

Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus

Category C – The Women

Luke 8:1-3 women were helpers

Luke 8:48 bleeding woman healed by touching Jesus

Luke 13:10-17 crippled woman “daughter of Abraham” healed on the Sabbath

Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha

Category D – Women compared to Men

Luke Ch.1 – the response of Jesus’ mother compared to John the Baptist’s father

Luke 2:25-38 – Simeon and Anna at the Temple

Luke 4:25-27 Elijah and the widow

Luke 7:36-50 anointing by ‘sinful’ woman at Simon’s house

Luke 11:31,32 Queen of the South compared to the men of Ninevah

Luke 15:4-10 Man with 100 sheep, woman with 10 coins

Luke 24:1-12 women at the tomb, men don’t believe

Category E – The Disabled

Luke 7:21,22 blind, lame, leper, deaf, dead, poor

Luke 8:26-39 The Gerasene demoniac

Luke 9:37-43 The boy with convulsions

Other categories to consider:

Race – Samaritans, Gentiles

Age – Children

Jobs – Beggar, Servant, Shepherds, Soldiers (Tax collectors)

Social Labels – Hungry, Oppressed, Widow

3. A Classic Reversal Story: Read Luke 7:36-50

In the House of the Pharisee: A Woman Acts! (Scene 6)

- Jesus praises a woman in the company of men! Not only that, but she is shown to be honorable, in contrast to a MAN who is shown to be dishonorable. Outrageous behavior from a guest!
- Jesus shows a lack of appreciation for the hospitality shown him, against tradition

The guest in any society is expected to show appreciation for the hospitality extended to him regardless of how meager it might be. In the Middle East these expectations of the guest are solidified into an unwritten law. The host is expected to downgrade the quality of his offerings as inadequate for the rank and nobility of his guest. Irrespective of what is set before him, the guest *must* say again and again that he is unworthy of the hospitality extended to him.

Kenneth Bailey, Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes, p.14, Book 2

- the speech is addressed to Simon, but delivered facing the woman - a speech in praise of her kindness and worth. It removes the tone of harsh accusation we might expect if Jesus were facing Simon.
- “I entered your house” - “I came in under your roof. I became your guest. You were responsible to extend to me the traditional forms of hospitality, but you refused!...This woman whom you despise has compensated amazingly for your failure.

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washing of the feet (a servant’s job, or self-done), but he could have provided the water.

Contrast: The woman has washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her crown and glory: her hair

- no kiss. Simon referred to him as “rabbi” so should have kissed his hand.
Contrast: The woman has covered his feet with kisses (kept on kissing)

- no anointing with even cheap olive oil
Contrast: The woman has used an expensive perfume

- The ultimate twists:
 - the great unrepentant sinner, whose presence defiles, is not the woman, it is Simon!
 - the true prophet (Jesus) has not only read the woman's heart, he has read Simon's too
 - Simon, the judge, becomes the accused

The "sinful woman" is elevated, and Simon the Pharisee is brought low.

Another example: Pharisee and Tax Collector (18:9-14)

It is the tax collector who goes home justified before God.

4. Who does Jesus regard as the righteous?

15:7 (lost sheep) I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance
 5:31-32 (challenged after the calling of Levi) Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance"

5. The 'reversal' motif

13:30 Behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last
 18:14 (after the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector) for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.
 This motif is present at the very outset in the birth narratives: 1:52-53 Mary: he has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble; he has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty
 6:21, 25 blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh; and woe to you who laugh now, for you will weep and mourn

Homework: Read article by Marshall on Salvation, *DJG* 719-724 (attached)