

What Scandalizes You?

Luke 5:17-39

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And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying,

“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

And Jesus answered them,

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” - Luke 5:30-32, ESV

It's getting hard to shock people these days. We've become hardened, cynical, numb. What does scandalize us tells us much about our worldview, our assumptions about reality. So, what scandalizes you? Are you ever shocked by your own sin? Are you ever surprised by how sinful your own thoughts, words, or actions can be? Is that perhaps because you've started to believe that you are better than you really are?

In today's reading in Luke, we see the Pharisees scandalized twice by Jesus:

1. When Jesus pronounces the paralytic to be forgiven, the Pharisees question, *“Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”* The Pharisees are sure that this paralytic had to be a big sinner, or else God would not have judged him with paralysis. This is why Jesus demonstrates His power to forgive by healing. The Pharisees just cannot not believe in such forgiveness, in such powerful mercy.

2. When Jesus goes to the home of Levi to eat and drink with the tax collector and his sinful friends, they ask, *“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”* The Pharisees know here that the Messiah would surely be more interested in hanging around with people like them, the respectable religious, than around the notoriously sinful.

The mercy and grace of Jesus scandalizes Pharisees. They couldn't believe that He would dare to pronounce someone forgiven. Then, they couldn't believe that the Messiah would ever associate with "those kind of people." As soon as we begin to believe that some people are beyond saving or that we've somehow grown beyond sinning, we are showing our hearts to be more like the Pharisees than like Jesus.

Jesus answers the scandalized Pharisees by basically telling them that they are not His priority because they don't see their need for Him. He comes as the Great Physician to heal, but they don't think they are sick. He comes as the Savior who saves sinners, but they think they're righteous. May we never lose sight of our need for Jesus, that we might always see our need for His healing and His saving grace.