



WEEK 2 - LEADER GUIDE

"Historical Encounters" - Message by Chad Bruegman

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Do you know what your name means? Do you feel like it says something about you? Why or why not?

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching Series called "The Outsiders." When you think of outsiders, you think of people that just don't seem to fit, or you think of outcasts and rebels; the people on the outside looking in. But what did Jesus think about outsiders? I think you might be surprised at who the outsiders are in God's eyes, and it certainly isn't who you think it is. That's because in God's eyes, we were all outsiders at one time. What if knowing that God loved us even when we were outsiders changed the way we saw people?

In his message this week, Chad talked through the story about the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and wiped them with her hair. We don't know what her sin was, but we do know that EVERYONE knew that she was a notorious sinner. There was probably a collective gasp as she portrayed a culturally unacceptable display of affection and gratitude. Yet, Jesus allows this woman to continue.

Read: Luke 7:37-50

Does anything stand out to you about this passage?

**What do we learn from Jesus response to the Pharisee who "thinks to himself"?
(Verses 40-48)**

In his message, Chad pointed out that we do not have the power or right to judge another. Yet, we all do it in our thoughts. We might not act judgmental, but there could be many "religious thoughts" about how something "should be". Jesus brings understanding to the situation by reading Simon's mind and telling him a parable to humble him.

John McArthur says, "The worst possible sinner, the most unredeemable one of all, is the one who thinks he is not a sinner and does not need redemption."

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

GROW

None of us are Righteous from our own actions. In Jesus' day, the Pharisees were the "best Christians". They were the people who set the standards of how to live most piously. Yet, because of their exemplary living, they had less awareness of their need for a Savior. When Jesus died on the Cross, He forgave our sins. However, in this story, the people observing Him did not acknowledge Him as God, so that concept was completely foreign to them.

Re-read: Luke 7:47 & 48

What stands out to you about this interaction?

How do you think you would have reacted if you had been in the room?

The *IVP New Testament Commentary* reflects on how Jesus handles the reckless act of love that this woman gives.

Love often produces such an extraordinary response. The woman's action reflects not only gratitude but also humility. She recognizes who it is who has made her feel welcome. No washing, kiss or greeting had met Jesus at the Pharisee's door, but the woman supplies them all. She appreciates Jesus' offer of grace and seeks to honor it with devotion and love.

Jesus is not done. In a remark that raises the stakes, he proclaims that the woman's sins are forgiven because she has loved much. It is important that this statement and the parable be combined to allow Jesus' theological point to be clear. Jesus is not saying that the woman's works have saved her. Rather, the love and forgiveness that have made her feel accepted by God (the parable's point) have produced her acts of love. Jesus commends the faith that led to her works (v. 50).....Jesus closes with a declaration that deepens the message. He reassures the woman by telling her, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." With this he turns her earlier expression of love into evidence of saving faith. Faith has motivated the response of love and humility that was evidenced in the anointing. Her story shows that sinners can know God will respond when they turn to him.

Jesus represents the messenger of God who ministers God's love. As a result, he is open to and conscious of the opportunity that exists when sinners are loved. He does not ignore sin, but he recognizes that sin can be reversed when God's love is received. The Pharisees' separatist attitude stands rebuked as an inappropriate model of holiness. The heavenly Father is ready to forgive debts when we turn humbly to him.

What is your reaction to this (does anything stand out to you)?

What does having your sins forgiven mean for you in your own life?

Is it hard for you to accept God's love and forgiveness? Why or why not?

MOVE

If we are honest with ourselves, we all need a Savior. Whether you were raised in Church and would be considered a "good person", or you were the worst person known to man, we all stand guilty of sin. When Jesus told this woman that her sins were forgiven, she was given confirmation that He was her Savior. She had seen something in Him that she knew she needed.

Responding to God's love, WITH love, is part of living our lives to the fullest. When we respond to God with love instead of obligation, we enter an intimacy that is more fulfilling than anything else on earth. We were created to be in relationship with God. He loves us and wants us to love Him in return.

When we do good deeds simply to gain His favor, it is religion. (The Pharisees did good things all the time so that they would look like good people.) When we do things out of humility in response to His love, it moves God's heart because He knows that our heart is in the right place.

Does knowing this change anything for you? If so, what?

Do you do things to get the approval of God, or to get the approval of those around you? Why?

Is there anything you feel like God has put on your heart to do out of response of his love for you? If so, would you share it with the group?

Conclude with any thoughts or questions from this weeks study.

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO.

1 John 4:19

We love because He first loved us.