

Village Guide

Current Series: Outcasts

Texts: Luke 4.14-22, 28-30

Core Value Focus: Transformation and Peacemaking

Big Ideas from the Message:

- Jesus, the Radical Reformer
 - Jesus made a radical reform to Judaism. As we saw in the message, Luke records Jesus' inaugural address in chapter 4. Jesus comes to be the fulfillment of Jubilee: his news is for the poor, prisoner, sick, and oppressed.
- We are part of the anabaptist movement, the radical reformation arm of the Reformation. In our tradition we have several distinct resources that should empower us in our proclamation of Jesus' reform mission of proclaiming good news to the poor.
- Quote from a key figure in the Radical Reformation/Anabaptism: "For true evangelical faith...cannot lay dormant; but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it...clothes the naked; feeds the hungry; consoles the afflicted; shelters the miserable; aids and consoles all the oppressed; returns good for evil; serves those that injure it; prays for those that persecute it." Menno Simons, *Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing*, 1539
- Understanding "the poor" in Jesus' world: "Who are the poor?... In that culture, one's status in a community was not so much a function of economic realities, but depended on a number of elements, including education, gender, family heritage, religious purity, vocation, economics, and so on.... By directing his good news to these people, Jesus indicates his refusal to recognize those socially determined boundaries, asserting instead that even these 'outsiders' are the objects of divine grace." Joel B. Green *The Gospel of Luke* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), 211
- The message of Jesus upsets the gatekeepers of the boundaries.
- God is not captive to human boundaries of status.
- We are all "poor" in some areas, even if it isn't obvious.
- Jesus sees in "outcasts," what others fail to see.
- "Status" produces shame. Jesus proclaims jubilee from shame. This is his reformation.

CONNECT (5 min)

- Question chosen for open group discussion or someone pre-invited to share their story.

HEAR (5 min)

- Spend some time in your group sharing what you recall from Sunday's message. Give a loose theme or subject of the sermon to jumpstart everyone's thoughts and recollections. (Example: "On Sunday, Kurt continued our series, Outcasts. Who was there on Sunday? Could you recap the content for us?" What struck you, and what questions did it leave you with?)
- Read Luke 4.14-30. What did Kurt say that these passages reveal about God? About us? Do you see anything differently or that wasn't mentioned in this particular sermon?

TALK (20 min)

*Note: This format is intentionally less linear in an effort to generate discussion. It is not meant to be followed left-to-right, nor do all the questions need to be asked. As a facilitator, stewarding good discussion means modeling **true listening**, which also means a conversation without an agenda. Use your discernment to see what your group needs to talk about.*

Conceptual	Practical Implications	Spiritual Formation
Outcasts in Scripture	Outcasts and regular life	Outcasts and Transformation
<p>What does “the poor” mean according to the Gospel of Luke? (Talk especially about Joel Green’s observation).</p> <p>Jesus came to reform ancient Judaism, to remind it of its unique mission to the poor and outcast. The Reformation was a movement within the church to remind it of its vocation in the world and where it had lost its way. Why is it so hard to reform things while staying connected to them? Do you have any thoughts as to why Jesus would want to Reform Judaism rather than re-start a new religion?</p> <p>Looking at Luke 4, why do you think Jesus was met with interest at first, but eventually met with hostility? How do you imagine the scene playing out?</p>	<p>When Luke 4 is read, we think of the poor as having to do with socio-economic status. And this is thoroughly true and not to be downplayed. However, in ancient “honor-shame” cultures, the “poor” cast a wider net. Think of modern day outcasts that might fit Jesus’ vision. What would Jesus say to them?</p> <p>Jesus affirms outcasts as “in,” but usually also challenges them. In fact, Jesus challenges people from all walks of life from all different places on the “status” spectrum. Why is invitation and challenge so important to Jesus? How does this bring us closer to confronting shame in its many forms, both personally and/or systemically?</p> <p>Jesus liberates people from shame. This is the core of his message. Yet many of us have found the church and/or other Christians as a source of shame at times. How might Jesus invite us to lean into this reality? Where else in our culture do we see shame being induced?</p>	<p>Take a few minutes of silence to think of what your current experience of life these past couple weeks have been like. (Give a few minutes for reflection before asking the question). As you look inward, is there a situation that you are sitting with that provokes shame within you? Are you willing to share this? (If not, no pressure at all!!!)</p> <p>We are all in different places in our spiritual journey. Can you think of ways in which Christian community and Jesus have partnered together in the healing of shame in your life?</p> <p>What is one step you might take this week in discerning ways forward to bring your shame to Jesus? Do you trust him with your shame enough to explore a new layer of it?</p>

(Space for your own questions or notes)

LIVE (20 min)

- How might this conversation impact you this next week? What are you taking with you?

- How might we pray for each other based on this conversation and other highs/lows in life?