

“Jesus Was Gracious and Compassionate”

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All of us tend to look at things from a certain perspective, a certain angle. We do that because we’re finite creatures: we only see and know part of the story, not the whole story. Because that’s the case, we often tend to emphasize certain truths and ignore other ones. This is certainly the case when we talk about God. For example, some people like to talk about God’s holiness or his power, while other people tend to talk more about God’s love. It seems that this becomes even more exaggerated when we talk about Jesus. Some people talk about Jesus as if he never said anything negative. This would be the “all-inclusive” Jesus. Others talk about Jesus as if he were a tough-guy, the ex-carpenter who swung a hammer and caused a commotion in the temple, tipping over tables and making a whip to drive people out. And everyone seems to have their own version of Jesus: the socialist Jesus, the feminist Jesus, or the libertarian, free-market Jesus. Many of these views contain truths, but they end up being distorted because they’re incomplete.

Any complete picture of Jesus confounds us all. He is tough and tender. He is gracious and demanding. He is inviting and terrifying. He was a common man but the most amazing person who ever lived. Jesus doesn’t fit neatly into any box. We can’t domesticate or tame him.

Recently, when I talked about Jesus, I said he was a preacher who talked about sin. I said that he was divisive. All of that is true. But Jesus isn’t just a hardline preacher who condemns. He is also gracious and compassionate. John rather famously tells us that he is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).¹ We need both truth and grace. Without truth, there is no right and wrong, no justice, nothing true to know or say or do. Without truth, there’s chaos. But without grace, there’s no love or forgiveness. Without grace, there would be no second chances. Without grace, we would live in a cold, hard, judgmental, unforgiving world. And it seems like our society is tilting in that direction. So, we need both truth and grace, and we must not forget that Jesus was gracious. Today, I want to focus on Jesus’ grace. We need to know about the grace of Jesus because we all need it so badly.

Let us consider one passage in the Gospel of Matthew. This is Matthew 12:15–21:

¹ All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

¹⁵ Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all ¹⁶ and ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸ “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
²⁰ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
²¹ and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

We are told that Jesus healed people. Why did Jesus heal people? Well, consider some other verses that come later in Matthew’s Gospel:

Matthew 14:13–14

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Matthew 15:32

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

Because Jesus had compassion on the people, he healed them and fed them. In Mark 6:34, we read: “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” The people of Israel were supposed to be led by prophets, priests, and elders. They were supposed to be shepherded by these leaders. But they weren’t being taken care of. Jesus had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He healed, he fed, and he taught these lost people who desperately needed a leader.

Back to Matthew 12: after Matthew tells us he healed people, he quotes from Isaiah. The quotation is Isaiah 42:1–3. We’re told that Jesus, the Messiah, isn’t one who quarrels with people. That doesn’t mean he didn’t argue with people. If you read the Gospels, you know he did. But he didn’t pick fights, you might say. He argued, but he wasn’t argumentative. He didn’t impose his will on people. He didn’t force himself upon people.

In verse 20, we are told that Jesus will not break a “bruised reed.” Literally, this is a crushed or even shattered reed. Reeds had various uses. In the Bible, we see they are used for measuring rods (Ezek. 40:3–8; 42:16–19; Rev. 21:15-16) and pens (3 John 13).² Reeds were cheap and replaced easily. A crushed reed was a useless thing, something that you throw away. But Jesus would not break and throw away these reeds. Of course, we’re not talking about reeds. We’re talking about people. Jesus was compassionate to those who were broken, those who were “damaged goods.” He didn’t treat them harshly.

The same thing is true of a smoldering wick. A smoldering wick is a wick that doesn’t work well. It smokes instead of burns; it is about to go out. Normally, one would replace such a wick. The old, broken one would be thrown away and replaced by a new one. But Jesus didn’t throw away people who were damaged. To translate this idea into something more relevant, we might say, “A leaky umbrella he didn’t throw in the trash.”

People hurt back then in different ways. Many were poor and had physical problems, such as diseases and handicaps. I can’t imagine what it would have been like to live with a debilitating condition two thousand years ago, without modern medicine. But people also hurt because of broken relationships and bad decisions. And people are still hurting in many of the same ways. Though we have modern medicine, we can’t completely escape pain. We certainly can’t escape death. And we still have broken relationships. Other people can be mean, abusive, and cruel. And a lot of our hurt comes from our own wrong decisions, our own sin.

It has often been observed that Jesus dealt with the humble and broken people with love, while he was harsher with the proud. He was more tender towards those who knew they needed help, and he was tougher with those who didn’t realize their true condition. Some people think that Jesus was always tough on the rich and the religious and always gracious to the poor and the “sinners.” But that’s not always the case. Some rich people became believers, people such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) and Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–42). Some Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin, including Joseph and Nicodemus, also became followers of Jesus (John 19:38–42). Surely many poor people rejected Jesus. So, the real dividing line is not between the religious and irreligious, or the rich and poor.

² Ironically, the Roman soldiers gave Jesus a reed as a mock scepter, and they then beat him on the head with it (Matt. 27:29-30).

The dividing line was between the humble and the proud, those who realized their need and those who did not, those who had faith and those who lacked faith.

We see Jesus' compassion and graciousness in some of his encounters with women who were considered "sinful." The first one we'll look at is Luke 7:36–50. In this passage, we find three people: Jesus, a woman with a sinful past, and a Pharisee named Simon. The woman has put her faith in Jesus and is grateful for the forgiveness she has found in him. Simon does not seem to have that kind of faith. Pay attention to how the two of them are different.

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. ³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

⁴¹ "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴ Then turning toward 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 has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The scene of this passage is the home of Simon, a Pharisee. Simon has asked Jesus to come to his house and eat. Pharisees are normally portrayed as self-righteous people in the Gospels, but even so, Jesus eats with one here.³ Darrell Bock, who has written one of the best commentaries on Luke, says, "He is making himself available to all types of people from all types of backgrounds."⁴ As they are eating, "a woman who had lived a sinful life" comes to Jesus with a

³ Luke is the only Gospel writer that tells us that Jesus ate with Pharisees. See here and Luke 1:37; 14:1.

⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 694.

jar of perfume. The text doesn't tell us what her sinful past was. Some people think she was a prostitute. Others think she might have been adulterous. Jerram Barrs says, "From the way Simon thinks about her we should probably assume that she is either a prostitute or a woman who has been sexually promiscuous in such an open way that the whole community knows about her immoral life."⁵ Honestly, we don't know, but we do know that Jesus dealt with other women who had sexual sins (John 4; 7:53–8:11), so it wouldn't be surprising if that were the case here.

What's interesting is that this woman doesn't say anything in this entire passage. But her actions speak a thousand words.⁶ She cleans Jesus' feet in a most unusual way, by wetting his feet with her tears, wiping his feet with her hair, and then kissing his feet and anointing them with the perfume. This may seem very odd to us, but we need to consider a few things. People wore sandals at that time, which meant their feet would become rather dirty. Good hosts would allow their guests to wash their feet. It appears that this woman was first weeping—not just crying.⁷ She then began to wet Jesus' dirty feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and then poured perfume on them. This perfume would have been very expensive. Clearly, this is an act of gratitude and love. As the whole passage reveals, she is a "sinner" who has been forgiven by Jesus. Her act of service flows out of love and gratitude.

Simon, however, doesn't see things this way. He says, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (v. 39). Earlier in this same chapter, some people claimed that Jesus was "a great prophet" (v. 16). But Simon doesn't think so. He seems to think a real prophet would know what kind of sinful, unclean woman this was, and he wouldn't allow her to touch him. Simon wrongly assumed that a man of God could not have fellowship with sinners.

Jesus was aware of his reputation among the scribes and Pharisees. He ate and drank with unrighteous people; therefore, the Jewish leaders called him "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 7:34). Jesus knows what Simon is thinking, so he tells him a short parable. A moneylender has two debtors. One of them owed five hundred denarii, about one and a half year's wages. The other owed fifty denarii, about two months' wages.⁸ The

⁵ Jerram Barrs, *Learning Evangelism from Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 133. Bock (*Luke 1:1–9:50*, 695) thinks this is a possibility.

⁶ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 695.

⁷ The verb used is βρέχω (*brechō*), which is used to describe rain showers (Matt. 5:45; James 5:17; Rev. 11:6). *Ibid.*, 697.

⁸ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 237.

moneylender forgives both the debtors. Who will love him more? Or, to put it another way, who will be more grateful? The answer is easy: the one who has been forgiven more. Even Simon knows this answer.

The meaning of the parable seems quite clear. According to Darrel Bock, “the moneylender depicts God; the debt is sin, the two debtors depict different levels of sinner: the one who owes less pictures the Pharisee, the while the one who owes more represents the woman.”⁹ But notice that both the religious man and the woman of apparently ill repute are both debtors.

Then Jesus tells Simon that that he, the host, did not wash Jesus’ feet, but the woman did. Apparently, Simon did not think Jesus was worthy of this honor, but the woman did. Simon did not greet Jesus with a holy kiss, probably a kiss on the cheek, but the woman kissed Jesus’ feet. Simon did not anoint Jesus’ head with olive oil, but the woman anointed Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume. The point is clear: this woman has been forgiven much, and because she is so grateful, she has expressed her love in very clear ways. She has given Jesus her all. She has cleaned his feet in the most intimate of ways. She has given him the most expensive gift she could give, a bottle of perfume. She is worshiping Jesus. Simon, on the other hand, does none of this. He shows no sign of gratitude or love. It’s clear that he doesn’t believe Jesus is the Messiah, let alone a prophet.

What’s interesting is that Jesus shows that he is a prophet because he knew Simon’s thoughts and he knew the woman’s sinful past, whatever it was. But Jesus is much more than a prophet. He tells the woman her sins are forgiven (v. 48). Now, who can do that? Did the woman commit some offense against Jesus? Not directly. But only the offended party can forgive someone else, someone who committed the offensive act. The other guests at Simon’s dinner party realize this. That’s why they ask, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” (v. 49). The answer, of course, is God. God is the one who forgives sins. This idea is already presented earlier in Luke, when Jesus heals the paralyzed man who is brought to him on a stretcher by four of his friends (see Luke 5:20–24). Jesus tells the woman, “Your faith has saved you.”

Of course, it is God who saved the woman. Faith is the instrument of salvation. We are saved by God’s grace, and this comes *through* faith. It does not come through works, through any actions we do. It does not come from saying a set of words, as if we could chant a magical

⁹ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 700.

spell to receive forgiveness. Salvation doesn't come through giving away all your possessions or trying hard to be squeaky-clean. It doesn't come through going to church and getting baptized. It only comes by being united to Jesus through faith and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And this is an act of God. After we're saved, we should express our love and our gratitude to God, and this should come quite naturally.

Simon, the Pharisee, was probably a very moral person. He probably thought of himself as clean, because he did all the right religious things. He probably didn't understand the depth of his sins. He didn't understand what Isaiah 64:6 says:

We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Even the best things we do are polluted by sin. It is impossible for us to earn our way to God. And that fact has two major implications:

One, the fact that we are saved by God's grace and not our good deeds should cause us to worship God. We should be like the woman, weeping over our sin and weeping because God has forgiven us. Have you had moments like this? Not all of us are terribly emotional. We might not all literally cry when we think of our salvation. But I think we should be moved somehow.

As I was thinking of this, I thought about something that Blaise Pascal wrote. Pascal (1623–1662) was a French mathematician and philosopher. After he died, a piece of parchment was found sewn into the lining of his jacket. And on that parchment was a very personal poem. Apparently he kept the poem in his jacket so it was on him at all times. The poem is known as "The Memorial," and it begins by stating that it was written in 1654, the "year of grace."¹⁰ More specifically, date was November 23, 1654. This was apparently his moment of conversion. This is part of the poem:¹¹

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.
I have cut myself off from him.
They have forsaken me, the foundation of living waters.
"My God wilt thou forsake me?"

¹⁰ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 178.

¹¹ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Alban Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin, 1966), 309-310, quoted in Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 372-73.

Let me not be cut off from him for ever!
“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only
true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.”
Jesus Christ.
Jesus Christ.
I have cut myself off from him, shunned him, denied him,
crucified him.
Let me never be cut off from him!

The certainty of God’s existence, and of Pascal’s forgiveness came like a fire. He realized he had forsaken God—he realized he had sinned against God. But he also knew he had found eternal life in Jesus, and with that realization came tears of joy.

Many other people have experienced something similar. They have experienced the grace of God and have never gotten over the fact that a holy God could forgive them for all that they have done. Last week we sang “Amazing Grace,” perhaps the most famous hymn of all. The words were written by John Newton (1725–1807). Newton was a British slave trader in the eighteenth century. While he was a young man, he had a very difficult time. He joined the British navy against his will when he was eighteen. After attempting to desert the navy, he was flogged and released on a small island off of Sierra Leone in West Africa. He spent over a year living in poverty until he found employment on a slave ship. While at sea, one night there was a violent storm, and Newton called out to God. This was the beginning of his conversion experience. Later, he would quit the slave trade and he spent the last forty-three years of his life as a pastor. He was able to work against the slave trade in England and he influenced William Wilberforce (1759–1833), a Member of Parliament who worked for years to get the slave trade and the institution of slavery abolished in England.

Our society would never forgive Newton for his past sins. He would be permanently “canceled,” as it were. But Newton knew that God had forgiven him.

But Newton was never able to forget his sin and the salvation he received by God’s grace. “Shortly before his death he is quoted as proclaiming with a loud voice during a message, ‘My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!’”¹² Is this your experience? Do you marvel at God’s grace? Do you know the perfect holiness of God, how pure he is and how high his standards are? Do you know the depth

¹² Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 170.

of your sin? If you know these things, and you have come to Jesus in faith, you should be amazed at God's grace. If you haven't experienced the wonder of God's grace, it may be time to examine yourself. This is no light thing. Your eternal destination hangs in the balance. Salvation is freely given, but salvation leads to transformation, and discipleship comes with a cost: whoever would gain eternal life in Jesus must first give up his or her old way of life (see Matt. 16:24–25).

The second major implication from the fact that Jesus is gracious and compassionate is that we, his people, should also be gracious and compassionate. John Newton believed that the experience of God's grace should change someone. This is what he wrote: "He believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness of spirit. Humbled under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others, if he has aught against any."¹³ Christians should be humble and forgiving. We should be tender and gentle. We can also be tough like Jesus, and cling to the truth of the gospel like Paul, but we can't be tough and tenacious without being tender, too. And we have no right to look down on others and act as if we're better than they are.

This is what John Newton wrote about what our attitude towards non-Christians should be like:

A company of travellers fall into a pit: one of them gets a passenger to draw him out. Now he should not be angry with the rest for falling in; nor because they are not yet out, as he is. He did not pull himself out: instead, therefore, of reproaching them, he should shew them pity. He should avoid, at any rate, going down upon their ground again; and shew how much better and happier he is upon his own. We should take care that we do not make our profession of religion a receipt in full for all other obligations. A man, truly illuminated, will no more despise others, than Bartimeus, after his own eyes were opened, would take a stick, and beat every blind man he met.¹⁴

We were saved by God's grace. But for the grace of God, we wouldn't be Christians. So, we can't act as though we are better than non-Christians. We didn't pull ourselves out of the pit. We didn't make ourselves alive. We would still be spiritually blind if God didn't open our eyes.

¹³ John Newton, Letter VI: "Of the Practical Influence of Faith," in Richard Cecil, *The Works of the John Newton*, vol. 1 (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1824), 170.

¹⁴ John Newton, *Memoirs of the Rev. John Newton*, in Richard Cecil, *The Works of the John Newton*, vol. 1 (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1824), 105.

Unfortunately, even Christians can forget that they are justified by God's grace, not by their works. Christians have sometimes looked down on others and paraded their righteous deeds. Sadly, some Christians even think of this as evangelism.

I have heard Christians boast of such self-righteous "evangelism." I remember a man in a Bible study who said that when he and his family were at the movies, he told the man behind him to stop swearing. In a separate conversation, I heard his wife say that the other people at her workplace know she is a Christian because she doesn't swear. Both the husband and wife thought that they were witnessing by showing others their good morals.¹⁵

But that isn't evangelism. Think about it: what message did these people communicate through their actions? Did they indicate something of God's love and grace? Or did they just let other people know that they were morally superior? How were their actions different from a Mormon's or a Muslim's? That message that they were communicating wasn't Christianity. It was moralism. That message says, "Be good and you get God." Christianity says, "You can never be good enough to get God. But God came down to rescue sinners and bring them to himself." We don't need to communicate a "holier than thou" message. We need to communicate that we are great sinners who are saved by a great Savior. We need to communicate that no one is good enough to earn God's favor because each one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We need to tell people that the only way to be put back into a right relationship with God is through repenting of sin and putting one's faith in Jesus.

Jesus, who was without sin, had the right to look down on sinners, and he did not. The only ones he condemned were the self-righteous. When he interacted with "sinners" such as tax

¹⁵ Barrs (*Learning Evangelism from Jesus*, 113), provides two other good examples of this false brand of evangelism:

One person told me that one day at work, she had criticized her fellow employee for the soft porn novels sitting on her desk. She had told the other woman that they were offensive to her as a Christian. I asked what the effect of this was. She replied that the woman had told everyone else in the office about it during the coffee break; and then, the next day, the woman asked her to remove her Bible from her desk, because she found it offensive.

An even sadder example came from a young man who started working at a garage. On the first day he was deeply upset by the 'girly' posters prominently displayed in the work area. He denounced the posters to the other men, telling them how offended he was, and he gave them a stern lecture about sexual purity and God's condemnation of lustful thoughts. The next day the men had obtained some far worse posters of pornographic images and tacked them to the walls. The young man immediately resigned his position. He told me this story because he was proud of his actions. He had been a good witness to Christ, and then he had been persecuted for righteousness' sake.

collectors, prostitutes, and adulteresses, he offered himself as an alternative to their sin. He didn't overlook or condone their sin—remember, Jesus preached against all kinds of sin. He spoke to them with compassion, grace, and love. And he certainly wasn't afraid to spend time with these people. If we don't act like Jesus, by loving unbelievers and spending time with them, then we're pretending we're more holy than Jesus.

The Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus ate with various sinners. We see this in Luke 5, right after Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector who was also known as Levi. This is Luke 5:29–32:

²⁹ And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. ³⁰ And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ³¹ And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Jesus spent time with tax collectors and sinners—often sexual sinners. I wonder why this is so. Of course, I suppose it's a historical fact. But I believe that God is not only the author of the Bible, but also the author of history. Ultimately, everything that happens is under his control. So why does Jesus spend time with these people? Perhaps because sex and money are the biggest idols. Perhaps because all of us, prior to coming to Jesus, were idolatrous. Actually, we were *adulterous*. We were unfaithful to our true spouse. The Bible continually compares idolatry, the worship of a false god, to spiritual adultery. In that sense, we were all like this woman who came to Jesus. We had sinful pasts and bad reputations. We were unclean. But Jesus was compassionate and gracious to us. He saved us—not because of anything we did, but because of all that he did. He took our penalty for sin when he died on the cross. He died a criminal's death though he never did anything wrong. And we are credited with his righteousness, his perfect obedience, his spotless moral record. That is amazing grace.

If you are not a Christian, I urge to consider your life. Do you realize the ways that you have failed to love and obey God? Do you understand how you have failed to love other people and treat them well? That means you're a sinner. You deserve condemnation. That's bad news. But the good news. Is that Jesus is merciful and gracious. He stands ready to forgive you. He even laid down his life, dying for sinners. No one else can do that for you, and no one else would do that for you. I urge to consider Jesus, seek him, and ask him for forgiveness.

Christians, Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He came for the sick and the sinners (Luke 5:31–32). Let us be amazed by his grace, and let us be gracious to others. We need to be gracious to each other, and not hold grudges. The apostle Paul says, in Ephesians 4, “do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil” (Eph. 4:26–27). Resentment and grudges give the devil opportunity to divide and destroy.

Jesus sought out people who were rejected by others, people who were lost and lonely. We should look out for people like that and befriend them. We should love the people that are hard to love, because Jesus first did that to us.