

The Forgotten: The Belittled

08/09/2009 - Jim Johnson – Luke 14:1-6

The word “belittle” means to trivialize someone or disparage someone. To make them seem less important or unworthy. It is to make a person feel or appear to “Be – Little.” Most of us are fairly familiar with the experience. At times we have been belittled and, on occasion, we have been the belittler. The laughter – the jeering – the teasing. Wasn’t it horrible? The Lord has not forgotten the person who is belittled. He proves it in Luke 14: 1-6.

A. Some folks live to _____ others. – 1-2

The Pharisees were such people. They had invited Jesus to a Sabbath Day dinner. The text makes it clear that they were up to no good. They were watching Him closely, looking for a weakness to exploit or an unguarded word by which to condemn Him. (1) The host made sure that Jesus was seated right behind a certain man who was suffering from a disease called dropsy. (2)

Dropsy is the abnormal accumulation of serous fluid in the tissues of the body, or in one of the body’s cavities. It is usually caused by a faulty heart or diseased kidneys. The body just isn’t able to carry off excess liquids efficiently which causes the body to puff up into grotesque shapes. It is often accumulated in the abdominal area causing a person to appear to be severely overweight.

This guy no doubt was belittled. The kids in the neighborhood must have been merciless. They brought their friends around to see the side show. The man could do nothing about it. There was no remedy back then for what he had.

The kids were one thing, but the Pharisees were another. They were not interested in him and his pain, but they were interested in exploiting his condition for their own purposes. He was used a hapless pawn in an effort to trap Jesus. They plopped him right in front of Jesus – so that He would be forced to do one of 2 things. Either He could ignore the guy and appear to be heartless, or heal Him on the Sabbath and appear to be lawless. Either way Jesus lost.

At some point, this man with dropsy must have realized that once again, he was in a situation where he was being used and abused for the sake of others.

B. Christ _____ the belittled. 3-4

In verse 3, Jesus asked a simple question, *“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?”* He was on to them and therefore flipped over the trap and snared the trappers with it. If they said no, they would appear to be heartless, if they said yes, then they would appear to be lawless. They shrewdly answered by saying nothing. (4) Jesus then spoke loudly through what he did.

1. He _____ him.

The man’s enormous stomach began to visibly shrink. This was a miracle you could watch take place. His huge protrusion of a stomach began to subside. He no doubt healed the precipitating problem as well such as the bad heart or diseased kidneys that caused the dropsy.

2. He _____ him.

Back then when you were broken – people just avoided you- like the plague. They didn't want to touch you or have you touch them for fear of somehow getting what you got. Jesus could have healed by uttering a word, but He took hold of him instead. His touch said, "I love you and I am not afraid of you."

3. He _____ him away.

Jesus healed him on the Sabbath because He cared about that man, and he also did it to challenge the Pharisees. But he also decided that he had been used and manipulated by others long enough." So once the man was healed – Jesus sent him away. Jesus didn't want him to feel like He was using him, too. He released him from his disease and then released him from his belittlement.

C. And then He _____ the belittlers. – 5-6

In verse 5 Jesus asked a second question. *"Suppose your son or ox should happen to fall into a well on the Sabbath day. Which one of you would not pull him or it out?"* He was probing for the intention of the Sabbath Day laws. God gave that law to save His people from working to death. He knew that people need to regularly interrupt their work week with a day of rest so he gave us the Sabbath law to save us.

The Pharisees would certainly have rescued a loved son or a valuable animal on the Sabbath to preserve their life, and if the heart of the law was to save us from overwork, then it is in concert with the law that we should save someone from harm on the Sabbath. They knew that, so again they made no reply. (6)

APPLICATION

The Lord remembers and cares for the _____ .

We need to remember that people sometimes do evil things. They think nothing of using and abusing others to entertain their friends. Their meanness is more a commentary on them, than the people they torment. If you have been beaten up and belittled by words and attitudes and maybe even the fists of others – know that God remembers you – that He loves you. Even now He offers to heal you, to touch those wounds, and to free you from the hands of your belittlers. If you know Him, run to Him. Read His Word to discover the wonderful things that He thinks about you. Pray to Him and experience the shock and joy of having Almighty God watch your back. If you know Him, run to Him. We also need to remember that to belittle others is a grievous, destructive thing to do. It paints us as being as heartless and manipulative as the Pharisees. Fortunately, the Lord Jesus shed His blood to cleanse such sin.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Have you ever been a belittler? What is it about this story that convicts you?
2. Have you ever been belittled? What is it about this story that brings healing to you?
3. How can you use this story to encourage others who are downtrodden?