

Welcoming and Belonging

How should we do both in the church?

What did Jesus do?

Three stories

- Zaccheus
- Rich man
- 'Sinful' woman

Zaccheus

Jesus was passing through Jericho. A man was there by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zaccheus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost

Luke 19 1-10

Rich Man

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother.’

“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth

Mark 10 17-22

'Sinful' woman

At dawn Jesus appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin

John 8 1-11

Question One: Who were they?

A chief tax collector

A man who loved money

A woman who loved men

They were all different

But they were all sinners

Zaccheus stole from his own people

The man who was rich, loved money too much

The woman had been caught, red handed,

sleeping with a man who wasn't her husband

Question Two: How did they come to Jesus?

One was found by Jesus, in a tree

One ran up to Him

One was dragged to Jesus, at dawn

They all came in different ways

But they were all welcome

Jesus stopped and looked up...Zaccheus, come down!

Jesus looked at him...and loved him

Jesus stood up and said...neither do I condemn you

Question Three: What happened?

I must stay at your house, today

Go, sell all you have, give to the poor and follow me

Go, and leave your life of sin

They were all challenged

But they responded differently

Zaccheus gave away half of all he had

The man, went away sad

The woman, we don't know

What was the difference? Repentance

Repentance comes from God

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death

2 Cor 7v10

Repentance is an act of the Holy Spirit

...when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment

John 16v8

Repentance does not mean we never sin

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us

1 John 1v8

Repentance does mean turning away from deliberate, persistent sin

What was the difference? Repentance

Repentance is how we become a Christian

Jesus said : **Repent and believe the good news!**

Mark 1v15

Peter said: **Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized...for the forgiveness of your sins**

Acts 2v38

Repentance is also important for us as Christians

(Jesus said:) **If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector**

Matthew 18v15-17

Why does it matter?

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?

Romans 6v1-2

Why does it matter?

Why not just let everyone belong?

#1 The reputation of God and His church in the world

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God

1 Peter 2v12

Also Romans 2v24, 1 Corinthians 6v6 and Revelation 2v20

Why does it matter?

Why not just let everyone belong?

#2 The purity of God's church

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough

1 Corinthians 5v6

Also Galatians 6v1, 1 Timothy 5v20 and Hebrews 12v15

Why does it matter?

Why not just let everyone belong?

#3 The life of the believer

Hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord 1 Corinthians 5v5

Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and ill, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world

1 Corinthians 11v28-32

Also James 5v20 and 1 Timothy 1v20

In conclusion – how should we respond?

Love and welcome everyone

Repent and encourage repentance

Forgive as Christ forgave us

Like Zaccheus, the rich man and the woman caught in sin

Everyone is welcome

we have to chose to belong