

INSPIRATION

Whenever we venture out in public, we want to put on our best self. We try to clean up on the inside and outside when we go to work, shopping, church, etc. We want the world to see the best of us. One of the most profound aspects of the gospel is that Jesus has never required us to clean up before coming to Him. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Since we have no power to clean our sins, Jesus actually requires us to come as we are. He is the only one who can clean us up and make us presentable to a lost world. Yet sometimes we think we are too much the opposite of holy to come before a holy God. But that is far from the truth.

Even Judas was not beyond the mercy, grace and love of God. Had he asked for forgiveness, had he repented of his betrayal, God's love would have washed him clean. Profound, isn't it? But considering that Jesus asked God to forgive the soldiers at the cross who mocked and tortured Him, considering His statement that they had no idea what they were doing, we shouldn't be surprised to know that He would extend the same grace to Judas. He would extend the same grace to any of us. He already has. Does that give you hope? Put a smile on your face? It should.

What a relief to know that when the world tells us "No shirt, no shoes, no service", Jesus says "No shirt? No shoes? No problem!" He does His best work when we come to Him knowing that only He can take us at our worse.



APPLICATION

Ask God to show you if there is someone in your life who you may have put stipulations on in order for you to love them.

Ask God for the strength and courage to put all of your requirements aside and help you to love them as He does.

Ask God to show you how to allow yourself to receive His Grace for yourself.

No shirt, no shoes, no service.

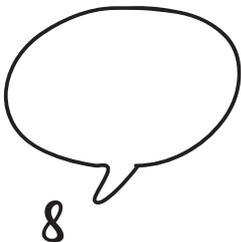


CONTEMPLATION

1. Is there something in my life, past or present that keeps me from coming to God openly and honestly?

2. If Jesus can ask His Father to forgive the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross, is there anything that is really too ugly for His love?

3. Is there someone you know who could use the kind of grace that God extends to all of us? Can you be someone who extends grace to them?



ELABORATION

It's easy to sit in judgement of other people that are making mistakes. Typically we would prefer to not think of our own mistakes when we do this. Who were the Pharisees that criticized the company that Jesus kept? History tells us that they tried to be known as the best authority on Jewish Law. The story from Luke 5 tells us that they may have been an authority on Jewish law, but they also seemed to be quick to judge. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge or you too will be judged". How did the Pharisees become so knowledgeable of Jewish law, but miss the point of God's love? Their judgement here is toward the "sinners" that Jesus was spending time with, but only in part. Most of their judgement seems to be pointed toward Jesus. Verses like Luke 5:32 help us to see that Jesus is a friend to sinners. The question for us today is, "How can we show love to those that may be struggling with sin without falling into temptation ourselves?". And, how do we keep ourselves from falling into the temptation of judging others. Is it easy to love those in sin? Or is it easier to judge people who seem to be living a life of sin?

Further Reading - Matthew 7:2-5; Luke 6:31-42; John 8:1-8; James 2:1-13

PRAYERS & PRAISE



No shirt, no shoes, no service.