

11. What the Bible Says About Ministering at the Edges - handout

Leviticus 19.9-10, 33-34; Matthew 9.9-13; Luke 14.7-14

Type [bit/ly.nlncmu](https://bit.ly/nlncmu) into the address bar of any browser for a series overview and session notes.

A. Getting started - Tim

- Did anyone write a prayer to God this week? Are you willing to share it?
- This week our focus is on people at the edges of our society. Other than the poor, who we'll focus on next week, who are the people at the edges?

B. Leviticus 19.9-10, 33-34

Holiness in Personal Conduct

The Lord also said to Moses, 2 “Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

3 “Each of you must show great respect for your mother and father, and you must always observe my Sabbath days of rest. I am the Lord your God.

4 “Do not put your trust in idols or make metal images of gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

...

9 “When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. 10 It is the same with your grape crop—do not strip every last bunch of grapes from the vines, and do not pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.

...

14 “Do not insult the deaf or cause the blind to stumble. You must fear your God; I am the Lord.

15 “Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly.

16 “Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people.

...

33 “Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. 34 Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

35 “Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or volume. 36 Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your containers for measuring dry materials or liquids must be accurate. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 “You must be careful to keep all of my decrees and regulations by putting them into practice. I am the Lord.”

Questions

- Does this passage remind you of any other Old Testament passages?
- What does this passage tell us about God's view of efficiency optimization in business?
- Can you think of any other areas where God teaches inefficiency?
- Read Lev 25.23-24: "The land must never be sold on a permanent basis, for the land belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenant farmers working for me. With every purchase of land, you must grant the seller the right to buy it back." How does this verse enlighten our thinking about how God works?
- How might this understanding change our behaviors and attitudes?

C. Matthew 9.9-13

Jesus Calls Matthew

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. 11 But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

12 When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." 13 Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

D. Luke 14.7-14

Jesus Teaches about Humility

7 When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: 8 "When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? 9 The host will come and say, 'Give this person your seat.' Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

10 "Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. 11 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. 13 Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

Questions

- Who do you tend to associate with more, the “righteous” or the “sinners”?
- What does it look like to “make room at the table” for those who are typically marginalized or cast out?
- In what ways do we subconsciously look for repayment from our interactions with others?
- Luke 6:36 says “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” What does mean in light of this discussion?

E. Connecting to life and the world

Questions

- Today’s focus is people at the edges of society: foreigners (refugees, immigrants, or second-generation residents), social outcasts (those who prey on society, tax-collector), those of low status (special needs, uneducated). Can you add to the list?
- What is a scarcity mentality as opposed to an abundance mentality?
- How can we, and our church, operate from an abundance mentality?
- What privileges do we have that many on the margins lack? In what ways can we lay down some of our privileges for those at the edges? How can we use our privileges to lift others up?
- How can our church better minister at the edges?
- Can you think of any tangible ways to touch people on the edges this week?

F. Closing

11. What the Bible Says About Ministering at the Edges

Leviticus 19.9-10, 33-34; Matthew 9.9-13; Luke 14.7-14

Teaching notes are in italics; these are eliminated in the Handout pages. Type **bit/ly.nlncmu** into the address bar of any browser for a series overview and session notes.

A. Getting started - Tim

- Did anyone write a prayer to God this week? Are you willing to share it?
- This week our focus is on people at the edges of our society. Other than the poor, who we'll focus on next week, who are the people at the edges? – ... *Today's lesson is about 1) foreigners (refugees, immigrants, or second-generation residents), 2) social outcasts (those who prey on society, tax-collector), 3) those of low status (special needs, uneducated).*

B. Leviticus 19.9-10, 33-34

Holiness in Personal Conduct

The Lord also said to Moses, 2 “Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

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am the Lord.”

Questions

- Does this passage remind you of any other Old Testament passages? – *It’s another recapitulation of the 10 Commandments (Exodus & Deuteronomy), sometimes called the Holiness Code.*
- What does this passage tell us about God’s view of efficiency optimization in business? – *God’s business model includes deliberately building inefficiency into our enterprises!*
- Can you think of any other areas where God teaches inefficiency? – *Keeping a Sabbath. Charitable giving, going the extra mile.*
- Read Lev 25.23-24: “The land must never be sold on a permanent basis, for the land belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenant farmers working for me. With every purchase of land, you must grant the seller the right to buy it back.” How does this verse enlighten our thinking about how God works:
 - *God entrusted the land to people. Their work that of stewards or tenants. God, the landowner, intended for the land to provide for everyone, not just for the current “owners.” This mindset was not one of simple charity but a question of what kind of society the people of God are called to foster. The vulnerable have the right to harvest the edges of the fields, they are not to depend on voluntary gifts alone.*
 - Our stewardship of God’s resources needs to go beyond simple charity, we need to join God by inviting people on the edges to move into the center of God’s community. Rahab lived at the edges, so did Ruth and Naomi, and God ushered them into the center to the extent they were the ancestors of King David... and Jesus.*
- How might this understanding change our behaviors and attitudes? -- Check out [Ministry at the edges - Meditation](#) (handout at the end of the class)

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10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. 11 But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?”

12 When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” 13 Then he added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

In this passage Jesus calls a tax collector (possibly named Levi but known to us as Matthew) to follow him. Tax collectors in those days were distrusted because they were not only working for the

occupying Roman government but they also abused their power by taking more than what was owed and lining their pockets with the surplus. Furthermore, because they were Jews, they were not regarded very highly among the Romans. As such, tax collectors were outsiders in society and Jesus befriended these “sinners.”

Sinners as it's used here is probably referring to those who were in violation of the Torah. Exodus 22:25-26 (NASB) 25 “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26 If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets. In V13, when speaking to the Pharisees Jesus recalls Hosea 6:6 (NLT) I want you to show love (or mercy) not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings.

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Jesus had been invited to a Sabbath meal at a leading Pharisee’s house. He saw how they were jockeying for the best seats at the table for themselves. So He gave them some great life advice on where to sit at social gatherings. Take a lesser seat and be asked to move up rather than taking an important position and have to be embarrassed when asked to move. Then Jesus then tells the host that the guest list is all wrong. While having important guests at a dinner would increase his status, it would also indebted his guests and they would then invite him their parties in reciprocity. It's not that having meals with friends is wrong but it simply isn't inclusive enough. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This means an umbrella of openness to those we might see as an other or outsider.

Questions

- Who do you tend to associate with more, the “righteous” or the “sinners”?
- What does it look like to “make room at the table” for those who are typically marginalized or cast out? — *Showing the true love of Christ that we have experienced in our own lives.*
- In what ways do we subconsciously look for repayment from our interactions with others? — *An expectation that they will invite us to events or help us in our time of need.*

- Luke 6:36 says “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” What does mean in light of this discussion? — *All of these texts are a call for the people of God to show concern and kindness for the poor and the vulnerable among us.*

E. Connecting to life and the world

Questions

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- How can our church better minister at the edges?
- Can you think of any tangible ways to touch people on the edges this week? – *Pray for them. Homeless bags (Subway cards). Find a way to meet someone on the edges this week.*

F. Closing