

# Jesus - The Ministry of Inclusion

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Matthew 8:1-4 (NIV)

*Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy, and includes the Priests*

<sup>8</sup> When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. <sup>2</sup> A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

<sup>3</sup> Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

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*From The Sin of Exclusion Meditation 10 of 52  
By Richard Rohr June 14<sup>th</sup> 2013*

"Those at the edge of any system and those excluded from any system ironically and invariably hold the secret for the conversion and wholeness of that very group. They always hold the feared, rejected, and denied parts of the group's soul. You see, therefore, why the church was meant to be that group that constantly went to the edges, to the "least of the brothers and sisters," and even to the enemy.

Jesus was not just a theological genius, but he was also a psychological and sociological genius.

*When any church defines itself by exclusion of anybody, it is always wrong.*

It is avoiding its only vocation, which is to be the Christ. The only groups that Jesus seriously critiques are those who include themselves and exclude others from the always-given grace of God.

Only as the People of God receive the stranger, the sinner, and the immigrant, those who don't play our game our way, do we discover not only the hidden, feared, and hated parts of our own souls, but the

fullness of Jesus himself. We need them for our own conversion.

The Church is always converted when the outcasts are re-invited back into the temple. You see this in Jesus' commonly sending marginalized people that he has healed back into the village, back to their family, or back to the temple to "show themselves to the priests." It is not just for their re-inclusion and acceptance, but actually for the group itself to be renewed."

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Matthew 17:22-26

*The Temple Tax, and Jesus includes the Tax Collectors*

<sup>24</sup> After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"

<sup>25</sup> "Yes, he does," he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?"

<sup>26</sup> "From others," Peter answered.

"Then the children are exempt," Jesus said to him.

<sup>27</sup> "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."



Masaccio Tribute Money. Brancacci Chapel, Florence

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*Jesus heals Legion and instructs him to tell the citizens of The Ten Cities of the Decapolis.*

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.  
<sup>19</sup> Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."  
<sup>20</sup> So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

*The names of the traditional Ten Cities of the Decapolis come from the Roman historian Pliny the Elder . They are*

- Gerasa (Jerash) in Jordan
- Scythopolis (Beth-Shean) in Israel, the only city west of the Jordan River
- Hippus (Hippus or Sussita) in Israel
- Gadara (Umm Qais) in Jordan
- Pella (West of Irbid) in Jordan
- Philadelphia, modern day Amman, the capital of Jordan
- Capitolias (Beit Ras) in Jordan (Dion, Jordan)
- Canatha (Qanawat) in Syria
- Raphana in Jordan
- Damascus, the capital of modern Syria; Damascus was considerably north of the others and so is sometimes thought to have been an "honorary" member.



*Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man and sends him home*

<sup>9</sup> Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. <sup>2</sup> Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

<sup>3</sup> At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

<sup>4</sup> Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? <sup>5</sup> Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?' <sup>6</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>7</sup> Then the man got up and went home. <sup>8</sup> When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

*Bartimaeus Receives His Sight, and is included in the company of Jesus*

<sup>46</sup> Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging.

<sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>48</sup> Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

<sup>50</sup> Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

<sup>52</sup> “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.”

Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

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Luke 17: 11-19

*Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy - by sending them to the priests*

<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. <sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

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John 20: 11-18

*Jesus appears to Mary and gives her the task of announcing his resurrection to the disciples*

<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup> They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” <sup>14</sup> At this, she

turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.



### *The Collect*

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### *The Grace*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and evermore.  
Amen.

(2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV )