

Confessions of a Recovering Shamer

0607-09

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.'

"Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.'" Jesus commented, "This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself." Luke 18:10-14 The Message

After this he went out and saw a man named Levi at his work collecting taxes. Jesus said, "Come along with me." And he did—walked away from everything and went with him. Levi gave a large dinner at his home for Jesus. Everybody was there, tax men and other disreputable characters as guests at the dinner. The Pharisees and their religion scholars came to his disciples greatly offended. "What is he doing eating and drinking with crooks and 'sinners'?" Jesus heard about it and spoke up, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I'm here inviting outsiders, not insiders—an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out." Luke 5:27-32 The Message

Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them." Matthew 22:37-40 The Message

...we found that the majority of "Born Again Christians" said they are "very convinced they are right about the things of life". Also believers say they often try to persuade others to change their views. UNCHRISTIAN, David Kinnaman, page 192

If we cross the line and judge people to make ourselves feel better, we are just as sinful as those whose actions we condemn. Being judgmental pushes people away from God's purposes, and people become repulsed by an image of Jesus that is not at all like the real thing. When Christians are judgmental, when we are arrogant, and quick to find fault, we are unchristian. UNCHRISTIAN, David Kinnaman, page 184

And the eunuch wanted to be baptized. His exact words were "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?"

Lots of things, actually.

Remember Phillip's background and upbringing? He reflects the conservative religion of the time.

According to law, a eunuch is excluded from the assembly. The law is very clear on that point. As a good conservative Jew, Phillip should have viewed the eunuch as "damaged goods" and refused to baptize him on that basis. If Phillip baptizes the eunuch he will be breaking a serious rule that determined your standing with God.

This is the tension throughout the early church.

What do you do when your religion isn't big enough for God?

What do you do when your rules and codes and laws simply aren't enough anymore?

What do you do when your system falls apart because the new thing that God is doing is better, superior, more compelling?

JESUS WANTS TO SAVE THE CHRISTIANS, Rob Bell and Don Golden, pages 100,101

We see one another as saints who sin, rather than sinners who are saved. If we truly believe in our heart of hearts that we are saints, then we are able to stand with each other in the reality of our sins. If we don't believe that, and instead view each other as sinners, we will demand that others work on their sin in order to have a relationship with us. TRUEFACED, Thrall, McNicol, Lynch, page 72

When we trust God, we live by this value: *the godly are those who trust God with themselves*. Period. TRUEFACED, Thrall, McNicol, Lynch, page 73