

Good Call!

Cool Kids and Kind Kids

August 28, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – The Year of the Lord’s Favor (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point:

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “*the year of the Lord’s favor*” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new possibilities with God this year and always.

Reflect on this Scripture: Luke 14: 1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Commentary:

The kingdom of God will bring about a revolutionary reversal. The very standards and practices of discrimination will be overthrown. The outcasts will be accepted as equals. Those who live by Kingdom standards and values now will not only bear witness to the kingdom but also will be rewarded in the resurrection of the righteous. Righteousness, not social position or the esteem of others, should be our goal. God does not look on the glitter of our guest list. Instead, God looks to see that we have practiced the generosity and inclusiveness of the kingdom in our daily social relationships. One standard offers the reward of social position, the other the reward of God's favor.

The distinctiveness of Jesus' vision of the kingdom was nowhere clearer than in his protest against discriminatory meal practices. Jesus and the Pharisees ate differently. For Jesus, meals were times of celebration and an inclusive fellowship that foreshadowed the inclusiveness of God's Kingdom. Perhaps it is time that we followed his example and learned new table manners.

- The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol IX, p. 288

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. In this passage, Jesus flips the norms of social engagement, suggesting that the host should invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind*. Why would Jesus call his disciples to be intentional about expanding their 'guest lists'? Why would marginalized people be VIPs to Jesus (and us)?
2. As we consider normative social practices in the first century (and even today), why do people tend to stay in their own sphere of comfort, engaging primarily (or even exclusively) with people who are most like themselves? How might this practice limit one's life experience and personal growth?
3. Have you ever grown from interacting with someone outside your normal social circle? Are there benefits for the other person as well? Share an experience with your group.
4. In a world that is often kindness-challenged, how can we grow more intentionally kind and inclusive, practically speaking. What spiritual disciplines might be helpful as we seek to grow in kindness?
5. How can you respond to Jesus' 'Good Call' this week? What is one way that you can draw a wider circle? Who will you invite to have coffee with you, or even to join you for worship or Alpha on September 6?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Widen your circle of kindness by being a Reading Buddy in a local elementary school (contact Pastor Beth – bkellner@fumccoppell.org) or sign up and invited a neighbor for the Alpha intro September 6 (contact Pastor Sumesh – <mailto:sjacob@fumccoppell.org>)
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Luke 14:13-14 NRSV *But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*