

## Discovering What God Actually Thinks About You

### Part 5: Does God Accept Me?

Luke 7:36-50

**IN:** If you actually knew what God thought about you it would change your life.

If he really exists, then he knows EVERYTHING about you... every thought... every real motivation... knows the stuff you keep from everyone else...

So... How do you think he feels about you? Hint: It's not even close to what you would expect... it's so much better and when someone truly gets it, their life is never the same.

So let's talk about it... together.

**WE:** What would it feel like to KNOW you were accepted by someone?

Completely. 100%. Who you are. Of course not every choice you make... But... What you think, feel, find funny, the stuff that makes you YOU... is valued, listened to, and not only tolerated but it added to the love they have for you?

And nothing you do would change that acceptance? You couldn't lose it, ruin it, overstep your bounds?

The thing is we all want to be accepted... in fact...

**The primary question we ask of every relationship is... do you accept me?**

So we try to find people who are like us /think like us/believe like us/act like us/speak like us...

Might even end up conforming/hiding things about us so that they will accept us or will keep accepting us.

Sounds a little like Middle or High School right?

And we usually assume God is like us.

Fickle/easily annoyed and has criteria that needs to be met in order to accept us... has boundaries would get overstep

He loves us, he might like us sometimes, but since he knows everything about us... he doesn't really accept US.

- Seems like his whole thing is about cleaning us up

So we either try to conform to what we're told he wants, try to prove we are acceptable, learn to hide/justify... but it rarely feels like we are on the accepted side...

Or we just give up and move on.

In fact, feeling unaccepted by God and others is a main reason people feel burdened by or simply reject xianity.

Maybe that's you?

But here's the thing... when we look at Jesus as presented in the eye-witness accounts... he keeps smashing people's expectations of God's acceptance... what we discover is...

**When we accept Jesus' acceptance of us, we discover an entirely new life.** Give you a prime example... book of Luke.

**GOD: V. 36** Yes, Jesus hung out with Pharisees too.

Jesus would spend time with whoever wanted to spend time with him... he didn't differentiate.

But most of his following were the common people.... Isn't he afraid of alienating his base/condoning Phariseeism?

**Jesus doesn't take other people's opinions into account when he accepts someone.**

Jesus is willing to associate with anyone who wants to associate with him.

Sat down to eat- Reclining in Middle Eastern low table style

**V. 37-38** Jesus is so not me... "What the crap! What are you doing? Those are my feet, lady."

Jesus is not bothered by the awkward situation. Not bothered by her emotions/tears. Not bothered by her status/her past. Not bothered by the interruption... not bothered by the perfume smell ruining his food.

**V. 39** **We often insist on rejecting the people Jesus insists on accepting.**

- We think we have good reasons... SIN!
- Different Politics / culture / religion / denomination
- "We can't condone their lifestyle by accepting them!"

Read the Gospels... find a time Jesus rebuked/lectured someone for accepting the wrong person?????

Pharisee- "Can't be a prophet b/c allows this woman to touch him..."

No, he proved he was God b/c his mercy/love/compassion compelled him to love/forgive her...

I think we insist on rejecting instead of accepting b/c we also have sin... so we feel deep down we should be rejected also... so we try to earn it... and justify our acceptance b/c we aren't like "them."

**If you need to compare yourself to a "them" in order to feel accepted by Jesus... you don't know Jesus.**

**V. 40-43** **Jesus' acceptance is offensively inclusive.**

One thing I see pretty regularly in these accounts... If you reject the people Jesus accepts... you're going to have a very awkward conversation. Watch this...

## V. 44-48

“Look at this woman”

- Must have been uncomfortable for Simon.
- Probably had been averting his eyes, not giving her the dignity of even looking at her.

Jesus forces Simon to SEE her. To look at her as an actual person made in God’s image.

“You think b/c your sins aren’t as noticeable you have some right to disdain this woman.

...To dehumanize her by labeling her a “sinner.”

But I know who she is, and she knows who she is... And I accept her...

She knew her sin. She wasn’t arguing that she wasn’t a sinner. She admitted it and knew nothing could change it... except Jesus.

The problem was Simon didn’t see himself as a sinner, he didn’t actually know himself nor who Jesus really was... but she did.

She knew what it was to be rejected and she had finally found the someone who completely accepted her.

Nobody there was denying this woman had some things in her past... but Jesus wasn’t harsh with her...

We often picture Jesus pointing a finger at us... condemning our sins, “How could you do this again? How could you think that? How could you try to conform again?”

But he's not pointing a finger, he's opening his arms... All we have to do to be accepted by Jesus is accept the embrace

And then something happens... we start seeing the world, our lives, and the people around us in a different light. We start making different choices.. Not b/c we’re afraid of being rejected but b/c we know we are accepted by the only One who matters...

**Our love is a response to Jesus’ love.** John- We love b/c he loved us first.

**V. 49-50** Interesting... People get angry when you accept the people they reject.

When they are using a “them” to measure themselves against... And it’s taken away they are forced to see their own sin and empty efforts to deal with it.

But look again what Jesus does... he ignores the angry men and reassures the woman.

“Look at me. No, don't listen to them... You’re good. We’re good. I’m on your side. You are mine”

What requirements did she meet?

- Faith- Simply came accepted/trusted

“Your faith has saved you”- You chose to trust me... trust my acceptance of you. You chose to accept my forgiveness for your sin.

“Your faith has saved you”... like Abraham... and everyone since.

**The only requirement to have Jesus' acceptance is to accept it.**

And what does he tell her to do?

Not list of rules, requirements, rituals.

Not... “Knock it off or we’re going to have a very different conversation.”

If following Jesus seems burdensome- it's not following Jesus.

...“Go in peace”

Peace with God... you are forgiven, accepted, loved. Relationship restored.

Peace with yourself... you don't have to have label of “sinner” anymore... you are now the woman who loves Jesus b/c he loves you.

Peace with others... you can offer the same acceptance to others

**Jesus accepts us so that we can accept others for him.**

**Confronting Pushback**

“Ugh... why do you talk so much about LOVE and ACCEPTANCE? You going progressive/liberal?”

1st- B/c I'm a jerk and need constant reminders...

When we think of accepting certain people we get all Pharisee-ish “What about their sins?”

What about them? They are forgiven. That's what.

“But if we accept them we condone their sin!” That's not your job. It's not.

People know they are sinners. They need to know they are accepted and loved.

And when they truly experience it Jesus will work on what he wants to work on.

Start focusing on what he wants you to work on.

2nd- B/c understanding and experiencing God's love and acceptance is the key to everything. It's the motivation behind everything we do.

That woman... did she leave her life of sin... undoubtedly. Why? B/c Jesus lectured her? B/c people refused to associate with her? B/c she was “told the truth in love?”

No b/c she was accepted. She discovered the truth THAT she was loved...

At beginning I said... **When we accept Jesus' acceptance of us... we discover an entirely new life.**

A life where you can rest in the love of Jesus.. Don't have to prove anything... don't have to earn anything

A life where the labels others put on us mean nothing (Punchinello- You are Special)

A life where we aren't wondering whether we are in or out... but can go in peace

A life where we have the privilege of giving this peace to others and inviting them to enjoy it with us.

**Jesus' acceptance changes everything.**

**YOU:**

When we know who Jesus is, what he thinks about us, and what he actually offers... we can't help but be transformed.

Dane Ortlund- It is impossible for the affectionate heart of Christ to be over celebrated, made too much of, exaggerated.

**Read: Matthew 11:28-30**

**Ask: Do I need to accept Jesus' acceptance?** For first time or millionth

**What have I been doing to try to EARN his acceptance?**

**Do I need to offer acceptance?** Are there people you've rejected? - Race/culture/sexuality/political party

A motto I've been trying to live out... I'd rather get in trouble for who I accepted rather than for who I rejected.

Who do you need to get in trouble for accepting?

**WE:** What if we stopped trying to figure out who is in and who is out.. And simply accepted the people Jesus accepts?

What if we could stop trying so hard, stop hiding who we are and could accept that we are accepted simply/completely/powerfully?

It doesn't matter who you are, what you have done, what others say/think about you...

Jesus accepts you. He forgives you. He loves you. He accepts YOU.

So my encouragement to you... **Accept that you are accepted and then live like it.**

**Summary:** Everyone wants to know they are accepted for who they really are. But so often, we are told to conform, clean up, and change if we want to be accepted. Is God the same way? Or is his acceptance something completely different... something completely better?

## Episode Breakdown

00:45 Imagine it...

02:52 Why Christianity gets rejected

05:39 When we reject...

08:10 But Jesus' is offensively inclusive

10:45 What Jesus isn't like...

13:10 the ONLY requirement...

14:40 Got pushback?!

17:30 Our privilege & what's next for us this week

20:30 Questions & updates

## Main Points:

The primary question we ask of every relationship is... do you accept me?

When we accept Jesus' acceptance of us, we discover an entirely new life.

Jesus doesn't take other people's opinions into account when he accepts someone.

We often insist on rejecting the people Jesus insists on accepting.

Jesus' acceptance is offensively inclusive.

Our love is a response to Jesus' love.

The only requirement to have Jesus' acceptance is to accept it.

Jesus accepts us so that we can accept others for him.

Jesus' acceptance changes everything.

Accept that you are accepted and then live like it.

## Weekly Challenge:

Read: Matthew 11:28-30

Ask: Do I need to accept Jesus' acceptance?

What have I been doing to try to EARN his acceptance?

Do I need to offer acceptance?

## Questions:

1. How have you seen God's love this week?
2. What is your reaction to this week's passage and message? What pushbacks, insights, "yeah, but's", doubts, or questions do you have?
3. Read Matthew 11:28-30 slowly. What stands out to you? How would you describe what Jesus is offering here?
4. In what way(s) do you feel you need to accept Jesus' acceptance? To whom do you feel you need to offer acceptance?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

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