**Lesson – 7 Jesus and the Social Outcasts**

**Read for your study:** [Matt. 21:28-32](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2021.28-32), [John 8:1-11](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.1-11), [Mark 5:1-20](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%205.1-20), [John 4:5-32](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%204.5-32), [Matt. 9:9-13](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%209.9-13).

**Memory Text: -** The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?([John 4:28-30, NKJV](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%204.28-30))**.**

**Introduction: -** In every society there are established hierarchies or patterns of social classes. This pattern of social classes in Hinduism is called the “Caste System.” One’s duty, or dharma,**** in life depends on the variables of caste, sex, and stage of life. There are four social classes namely: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. The fifth class is known as the Outcastes, the untouchables. According to Bhagvat Gita the works of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Shudras are different, in harmony with the three powers of their born nature.

The works of a **Brahmin** () are peace, self harmony, purity; loving – forgiveness and righteousness, vision, wisdom, and faith. The works of **Kshatriyas:** ( ) a heroic mind, inner fire, constanccy, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and noble leadership. Trade, agriculture and the rearing of cattle is the work of a **Vaishya** () And the work of the **Shudra** () is service.

During the time of Jesus there were established hierarchies too. At the top rank were the wealthy and well-educated. In the middle rank, there are the “ordinary” people. They are the good, moral, hard-working citizens who own businesses or have good jobs. At the bottom of the pyramid are the prostitutes, substance abusers, criminals, the homeless. In Jesus’ day the “bottom” or the lower class included the lepers, the tax collectors, and not to be surprised, even doctors! Doctors were included in this group because they were constantly dealing with illness, dead bodies, and many unclean things.

Jesus spent much of His time working with social outcasts, the so-called “bottom dwellers” of society. In this lesson we will learn about:

1) The woman taken in adultery as described in **John 8**;

2) The demon-possessed man/men as described in **Mark 5** (and also **Matthew 8 and Luke 8**);

3) The Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar as described in **John 4**; and

4) Matthew’s feast as described in **Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5.**

Let us dive into our study and learn!

**Bottom Dwellers: -** In any society, it is the wealthy and the educated that acquire the highest position. The middle class or the **‘ordinary’** people are the next. They are the good, moral, hard-working citizens who own businesses or have good jobs. The rest occupy the lowest level of the social class such as the prostitutes, substance abusers, criminals, the homeless. During Jesus’ time, the list included the lepers and tax collectors too.

In **Matthew 21:28-32** Jesus mentions of two contrasting groups of people. Those who say, “Yes, I will go,” but do not. And those who say, “No, I won’t go,” but eventually change their minds and do. **Into which group do we more naturally fit? Do we still face this situation in our days? Why was Jesus more effective in reaching the lower class than He was with the upper social class? Why do you suppose those two groups (Pharisees and the Sadducees) particularly opposed Jesus’ ministry?**

The socially elite during Jesus’ time included the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Among the millions of Jews in Palestine and scattered throughout the Mediterranean world of those days, there were only about 6000 Pharisees. **(See Josephus – Antiquities 17:41-42)** The number of Sadducees was much smaller. Together they formed the Sanhedrin.

Did any of them ever respond to Jesus? **(Acts 6:7)** No, just a few! We know about **Simon,** the former leper, who was the **uncle of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.** We know about **Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.** And, of course, there was **Saul/Paul** who responded to God on the road to Damascus. But, it is interesting to notice that later quite a number of Pharisees became Christians. **(Acts15:5)** **But unfortunately, they carried many of their Pharisaical ideas into their world of Christianity!**

**In the very Act: -** The passage in **John 8:1-11** narrates a story of an adulterous woman who was brought to Jesus by the Jewish leaders. They claimed to have caught the woman “in the very act,” and the Mosaic Law said very clearly that both the man and woman were to be stoned to death.

**Question: Why did those Jewish leaders bring that woman to Jesus?** Their only purpose in bringing her alone to Jesus was to trap Him and declare Him guilty of either: 1) Setting aside the law of Moses, or 2) Assuming the prerogatives that belonged to the Roman oppressors; for only the Romans were allowed to pronounce the death sentence on someone.

**Question: How did Jesus handle the situation?** Assessing the situation, Jesus said, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” **John 8:7** Then He stooped down and wrote each one’s sin. Seeing this, they began to go away.

In **John 8:8**, we notice that the men left, beginning with the eldest. (See also Desire of Ages pp. 460-462 and Ministry of Healing 86-89)

Ellen White in **Ministry of Healing** said: This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she showed her gratitude for His forgiving mercy. For this erring woman the world had only contempt and scorn, but the Sinless One pitied her weakness and reached to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounced, Jesus bade her, “Go, and sin no more.” **(The Ministry of Healing P. 89.2)**

In **Desire of Ages** she writes**, “**In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of perfect righteousness. While He does not palliate sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn, but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn; but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope.-**Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 462.**

**How do we learn to show grace, even to the guilty, while still not diminish sin?**

**The Lowest of the Low: -** Jesus had spent a long day of preaching in Capernaum and He was tired. He got in the boat with other disciples and went off to sleep at the back. When they were in the midst of the lake, a terrible storm arose. The terrified disciples woke Jesus up and He calmed the storm! **(Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25)**

Next morning they arrived on the other side of the shore near a cemetery where they met two demon – possessed men who attacked Jesus. It is interesting to notice the sequence of events that took place which are recorded in **(Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39).**

1. Jesus preached all day at Capernaum and He was tired.
2. He went to sleep in the bottom of the boat.
3. Heawoke and calmed the storm.
4. When they landed on the shore, He was attacked by twodemon-possessed men.

We may not clearly understand demon possession. **Why did the storm arise when Jesus was asleep? Could it be that the devil wanted to drown Jesus?** **And when he couldn’t, he used these insane men to attack Jesus?**

Notice what **Ellen G. White** comments in her book, **The Great Controversy, P. 513!** “Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men. United with Satan in his rebellion, and with him cast out from heaven, they have, through all succeeding ages, co-operated with him in his warfare against the divine authority. We are told in Scripture of their confederacy and government, of their various orders, of their intelligence and subtlety, and of their malicious designs against the peace and happiness of men. **(GC 513.2)**

**Jesus cast the thousands of demons from the men into the two thousand pigs which ran over the cliff and drowned in the Sea of Galilee.** A short time later, fearing further financial loss, the public came out and asked Jesus to leave.

**Have you ever wondered why did Jesus let the livestock drown in the Sea? After all this was their means of livelihood!**

**Ellen G. White beautifully points out saying,** “But the purposes of Christ were not thwarted. He allowed the evil spirits to destroy the herd of swine as a rebuke to those Jews who were raising these unclean beasts for the sake of gain. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged into the sea, not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners. The preservation of both the keepers and the owners was due alone to His power, mercifully exercised for their deliverance. **(The Great Controversy, P. 515.1)**

**The Woman at the Well: -** In John Chapter 3 Jesus spoke to one of the elite Jewish Pharisees in secret at night. In John Chapter 4 we see Jesus breaking social norms of the Jewish custom by speaking to a social outcast Samaritan womanat the well of Sychar in the middle of the day. The Jews did not speak nor kept any relations with the Samaritans because they were considered as outcasts.

According to Jewish custom, He was not to speak to Samaritans unless absolutely necessary. As a man who was not related to her, He was not supposed to speak to that woman, and He certainly was not supposed to drink from the same cups or pitchers from which she drank. **(The Desire of Ages, P. 183)** But Jesus broke that barrier between an outcast and the elite. The scriptures tell us that the woman left her water jar behind and raced into town to become the first person to announce the arrival of the Messiah or Christ.**What was Jesus trying to teach the Jews through this incident? Should this teach us about our social prejudices and social norms in regard when they interfere with witnessing?**

**Publicans and Sinners: -** Sin has marred our lives and our human relationships. It has brought class distinctions, prejudices, and culture and ethnic boundaries across the globe. It has caused much suffering and pain in our world. But that’s not what Jesus taught! Jesus condemned these social barriers influenced by prejudices.

 **Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; and Luke 5:27-32** gives us an account of Jesus’ association with the publicans and sinners. Matthew had been one of the foremost tax collectors for the village of Capernaum. Tax collectors were not very popular and welcomed among the people as they were considered sinners who had become wealthy by unfair means.

Jesus called Matthew saying, “Follow Me”. Matthew was delighted to follow Jesus. He left everything. Soon, he prepared a feast and invited many social outcasts to his feast. And Jesus was there.

**How did the Pharisees react to Jesus’ action?** The Pharisees were dismayed that a so-called Jewish Rabbi was eating with publicans and sinners and other social outcasts. Jesus responded by quoting from **Hosea 6:6** which say, “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice…” Commenting on the attitude of the Pharisees, **Ellen White** writes, “The Pharisees beheld Christ sitting and eating with publicans and sinners. He was calm and self-possessed, kind, courteous, and friendly; and while they could not but admire the picture presented, it was so unlike their own course of action, they could not endure the sight. The haughty Pharisees exalted themselves, and disparaged those who had not been blessed with such privileges and light as they themselves had had. They hated and despised the publicans and sinners. Yet in the sight of God their guilt was the greater. Heaven’s light was flashing across their pathway, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; but they had spurned the gift.” -**Ellen G. White, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1,088.**

**How did Jesus feel about meeting and associating with the publicans, sinners, and outcasts?** It was the outcast, the publican and sinner, the despised of the nations that Christ called and by His loving-kindness compelled to come unto Him. The one class that He would never countenance was those who stood apart in their self-esteem and looked down upon others. . . . **(The Ministry of Healing, P.164.2)**

**How are we as a church doing at reaching people of different culture, ethnicity, race, and language? Are we comfortable in ministering to them? Do we experience social barriers between them and us? If we are to follow Jesus, shouldn’t we try to do the same as Jesus did?**

**God Bless You!!!**