



## **Week Seven Prayer Focus – Jesus’ Perspective, a New Paradigm**

**Ask our Father in heaven to give us the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation so that we will have a full knowledge of Him; ask that we will have His heart and His love, to see as He sees, and love as He loves; ask that, as we know Him more and more, we will be filled with the exact same love the Father has for Jesus, and that this love will fill us and overflow out of us to others (Ephesians 1:17, John 17:26).**

### **Jesus’ Perspective, Not Ours**

This morning I drove by a woman hunched over on the sidewalk going nowhere. Her back was to me, but I could tell from her wild filthy hair, sticking out unkempt in all directions, that she had not washed or been cared for in weeks, months probably. She was just stark bones – sharp shoulders and elbows, crumpled over the bags and rags and refuse and debris of what must be a desperately broken life. Ravaged by drugs was my I guess, and likely the horrific troubles and abuses that go with that devastation. My casual tendency, in my rush and preoccupation with very important family matters, was to judge and dismiss her, maybe extend a moment of distracted pity mixed with fatalistic “oh well,” “too bad,” and even a hint of self-righteous condemnation. The final subconscious conclusion: she was not worth my stopping for – my little perspective, not the Lord’s. But today, the Holy Spirit arrested me when He turned my eyes so she could capture my gaze.

Jesus tells a story about the kind of selfless love the Father is calling us to. A certain man – no name, nationality, occupation or specific destination – fell by the wayside, attacked and left for dead by robbers. The priests and religious leaders of the day noted, then sized up the man in a passing moment of “too busy to stop” or “not worth my pity or care,” and continued indifferently on their way. A hated, inferior, mixed-race sinner – a man from Samaria – was the one who, moved by compassion, sacrificed his time, risked his safety, and gave his resources to rescue the unknown stranger from death. (See Luke 10:25-37.) In a single story, the Lord Jesus masterfully exposes both the hypocrisy of cold-love religion, and the self-righteous superiority hidden in our hearts. What smallness of my heart was the Holy Spirit exposing in the parable of the faceless, broken woman who fell in with the one who came to her to steal, kill and destroy? What glorious loving intention was in the Lord Jesus’ heart for her, that he wanted me to see if I could look through His eyes?

### ***Conversation Starters with Jesus***

What things in your life or your experience tend to keep you from stopping to help unknown people around you?

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any lies, biases or judgments in your heart that keep you from receiving and sharing His love.

Where has cold-love religion hurt Belmont Church, and what can you do to change things so we excel in the same kind of selfless love the Father has for His Son Jesus?

## **If You Forgive Anyone Their Sins, Their Sins are Forgiven**

Included in Jesus' commission to His followers in John 20, is yet another outrageous claim. He has already told them, "I am sending you the same way my Father sent me," and "Receive the Spirit of the Living God." In establishing a new kingdom order for His people to advance in the earth, Jesus grants the disciples astounding authority and power to carry out His mission. But then He adds this puzzling statement, "If you forgive anyone their sins, their sins are forgiven." What? It calls to mind Jesus' promise to give us the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, so that whatever we prohibit on earth, will be prohibited in heaven; and whatever we permit on earth, will be permitted in heaven. Here, Jesus is giving authority to forgive sins – or to hold them? He is unlocking access to the authority of the King to move things in the earth to line up with the order of heaven? God is waiting for us to be moved with compassion toward broken people so He can move in compassion on their behalf?

The epic story of God recorded in the Bible is clear: our Father in heaven is looking to partner with human beings to accomplish His purposes on earth. Far more than disposable pawns He controls with some puppet strings, the Living God is looking to invade the earth through partnership with His kids! But it is only going to work if we have our hearts and our words aligned with His. In Luke, Chapter 9, we read of some amazing exploits Jesus' disciples are privileged to accomplish and witness in His Name. They cast out demons, cure diseases, announce the Kingdom and heal people. They see miraculous multiplication of food to feed thousands. Three of them even see Jesus transformed before their eyes, until His body radiates the glorious light of His person and His kingdom! Freely they have received all that is given so freely! What is more, Jesus confides in them – He is the Messiah! – along with the secrets of His coming bloody sacrifice and resurrection, although they cannot grasp it.

However, in a moment of rejection as Jesus is turned away from a village in Samaria, two of His friends, James and John, ask a stunning question, "Sir, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?" The unspoken judgment condemns all the people to cataclysmic annihilation. They are just inferior, half-breed sinners anyway. Jesus soundly rebukes James and John, instructing them, "You don't know what kind of spirits are motivating you!" As much as they had experienced and known of Jesus at that time, their hearts and perspective still showed they were subject to be moved by agreement with Satan's lies about Jesus' mission, His motives and His character. Jesus did not come to condemn and destroy, He came to save and give life abundantly, overflowing in every possible way! (John 10:10.) As they received this life, they were to share Jesus' heart to take it generously to others near and far, even to the broken people of Samaria!

### ***Conversation Starters with Jesus***

*What situations do you need to pray to see Jesus' perspective, so you can confidently prohibit or permit things on earth, so the Father can move on your behalf in heaven?*

*How are you doing with the hard work of rest in "Chair No. 1," living and loving from your sure identity and intimacy with the Father? ([Please refer to Leif Hetland's message June 23.](#))*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to show you places where your paradigm needs to change so you approach people with the same lavishly-loving, limitless generosity of your Father in heaven?*

*How would Belmont change if everyone shifted their paradigm to view our current struggles as an opportunity for Jesus to show His power, reveal His glory, and form His character in us?*