

Home Group study: week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## Jesus Christ: Dangerous Revolutionary

### 6: A Scandalous Freedom

At the moment we are bogged down by rules, but we can all see the reason why. What things are we looking forward to doing once we are 'free' again?

Matt's sermon on Sunday was about the way Jesus ignored unnecessary rules and conventions in order to show love and compassion to people. The other day I was driving through Laleham in the pouring rain. A man was standing at the bus stop — and the bus service is much reduced at the moment. What should I have done? Shown compassion and stopped to pick him up, or stuck to the 2metre distancing rules and not let him into my car?

#### Read:

##### Matthew 8: 1-3

The rules about leprosy are very clear. Leviticus 13: 45-46 says '*Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" As long as they have the disease they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.*' Much of this sounds a bit familiar. Leprosy was contagious and incurable, so it's clear why such law was needed. Jesus would have known the law: but what does he do in this passage?

**John 4: 4-10, 16-18.** The Jews and the Samaritans did not mix. Jesus was gaining in unpopularity with the Pharisees in Judea so was heading home again to Galilee. Interestingly, verse 4 says 'He had to go through Samaria'. That was certainly the direct route, but the convention was for Jews to detour around Samaria and avoid actually going through it. So even by choosing the direct route Jesus was flouting convention: and no doubt the Spirit of God was leading to him this very controversial meeting with a woman. There are three ways Jesus is breaking the cultural conventions of the time; what are they? *(Here's a cribsheet!*

*1: In that culture, a man shouldn't talk to a woman without her husband or father present and certainly shouldn't be alone in her presence;*

*2: She was a Samaritan and v9 tells us what is wrong with that and*

*3: She was, shall we say, morally a bit dubious (vv16-18) so definitely off limits for a chat!)*

In his compassion for her Jesus has addressed her moral issues and revealed to her that he is the Messiah (see verses 25-26). In what ways is she a strange choice for the person chosen to declare to Samaria the news that the Messiah has come? Why do you think Jesus chose her?

**Matthew 12: 1-13.** On Sunday we just looked at the first part of this story. What rules are Jesus and the disciples breaking? Why do they (allegedly) break the rules? Jesus compounds this felony from verse 9 by healing someone on the Sabbath. How does Jesus justify this 'felony'?

### **Understanding**

Jesus is clear that the law will never be changed. In Luke 16: 17 he says 'It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.' In each of these passages Jesus is demonstrating freedom from the law. So is Jesus actually breaking the law? How does Jesus exercise freedom without falling into sin? What is Jesus teaching us about the way God wants his law to be obeyed? *(There is a much deeper, more significant law of God: he wants us to be compassionate and show love, mercy and justice which is far more important to him than our keeping of the letter of the law. God never intended that his law should be a hindrance to showing compassion, mercy, love and justice.)*

### **Application**

Jesus has given us freedom from sin by his death and resurrection.

Are we comfortable with freedom, or do we still like to work within the framework of the law?

Why might this be?

How do we avoid letting the law getting in the way of our freedom to do what is right?

Does that freedom mean we can disregard the law?