

“Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.” Luke 15:1 NLT

## [lectio] // LUKE 15:1-10

Luke begins this discussion that sounds like he's going to open with a joke. So an IRS agent, a local riff-raff, and a nefarious, unscrupulous gangster walk into the church one day... Eugene Peterson interprets, “By this time a lot of men and women of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus....” Then suddenly the text shifts - they came to LISTEN! Wait, this isn't a joke setup, this is real. Jesus spoke in such a way that those with bad reputations came and listened. Why would thugs and corrupt, low moral people come and listen to someone preach at them? What was he saying to this group of outcasts? It's like Jesus went out and began hanging out with the smokers on break and started chatting them up. Luke DOES NOT tell us what Jesus was saying to them. All we know is that the religious leaders had a hard time just seeing ANYONE, let alone a rabbi, hang out with this “kind” of crowd. What was Jesus talking about? I'm dying to know what attracted them? Was it the words? Was it the attitude? Was it stories or just a sense of honest love towards them? When you have a reputation like theirs you get used to rejection by the “normal” folks and begin to only hang out with people who “get” you, don't judge you and have just as bad a past as you do. The only reason a thug would hang around such a nice, loving person would be to mock them, or behave more wicked than normal just to keep the defenses up. Sometimes I think broken people feel uneasy being around perceived “perfection” or that person that has it all together. But this group didn't feel like that around Jesus, WHY? How can a holy god-man not make a dirty, shame-filled hu-man feel LESS-than? I don't know. But, Jesus spoke to them and they listened. When I get a chance to speak who do I want to listen? People I respect? People I want to admire me, like me? People that can compliment me and maybe even connect me to better opportunities - like a nicer network of people? Do I ever speak so that undesirables, immoral, or even corrupt people want to listen?

Dad,

The people you want to attract are not normally the people I want to be around! Thinking of that “sick in need of a doctor” talk, I still feel pretty uncomfortable around people who come from my family background. And “speaking” so they want to hear? What would I even begin to say? I am such a self-righteousness pig most of the time. I do not have it together, but I want them to THINK I do. And... AND, I have this fear - I DO NOT want to go back! I don't want to get back into the crazy, drama, pain, anger, tears, constant confrontation and degrading words that were thrown around the house like knives and acid. What did Jesus think about when he spoke to them? What did he feel for them as he chatted about life? He was not intimidated by their failures and faults! What did they hear THROUGH his words? I want to speak LIFE like Jesus spoke life. I want my conversations to be DRIPPING with hope! I want to honor, love and exude grace, peace and forgiveness EVERY TIME I speak.

## [contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root