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A Spiritual Lesson In Toon Language 65

Inspired By God, Presented By Pastor Richie
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(In God I Trust And Write)

Series: The Smurfs

Episode: Brainy's Smarty Party

Topic: Outcast Party VS Legalese

1: Opening Prayer

2: Discussion

Have you ever felt that you were being treated like a piece of trash, a nobody, an outsider, a worthless person?

When we are treated this way, it is very discouraging, annoying, or depressing in some ways. Sometimes all people are excluded from something they care about. This can mean a social circle, a team, a group etc. The attitude of exclusion unfortunately affects and infects the churches like a virus. Let's look at an example of exclusion with the help of a Smurfs episode called **Brainy's Smarty Party**.

Cartoon Link:

https://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/165/Smarty_Party.webm

3: Discussion And Analysis:

What did you see in this cartoon? What was wrong with Brainy's Smarty Party?

There are a lot of things Brainy did wrong. First, he had a big book of rules specific for the party, which must have taken many days or some months to compile, which he conveniently forgets to explain clearly, make accessible etc. before the party. Second, Brainy throws his friends out for accidents like Clumsy's. Third, look at Smurfette, who is clearly not 150 years or older in age; she was created in the first season (this is the 5th) by a potion of Gargamel's (one of the biggest villains in the series); we can't argue a time lapse because all enemies etc. are still alive, just not active for this show. Fourth, the Smurflings are actually younger than 150 only because they were reversed in age by Father Time's hourglass. Sassette was excluded for being too young (she was created by the same potion as Smurfette in the 5th season). There's a double standard here, Smurfette is in, Sassette is out.

Naturally, this makes the Smurflings feel left out and not worth anything. Papa Smurf effectively tells the kids to throw their own party, why?

This was likely a distraction from the sour taste of exclusion only, as of that point this outcast party wasn't going to draw anyone else because the Smarty Party had everyone else.

Papa Smurf is much like God in the cartoon symbolically because the advice given gave the kids hope and encouragement. The kids would have a good time, be as loud as they want, do what they want etc. Papa led them to be who they were supposed to be and use their version of the Smurf way positively. The kids didn't break village rules that we know of, weren't bad sports etc., they just had fun and freedom.

4: Bible Study, Analysis And Discussion

Let's look at Matthew 9:9-13.

Mat 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's desk and told him, "Follow me." So he got up and followed him.

Mat 9:10 While he was having dinner at Matthew's home, many tax collectors and sinners arrived and began eating with Jesus and his disciples.

Mat 9:11 The Pharisees saw this and asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Mat 9:12 When Jesus heard that, he said, "Healthy people don't need a physician, but sick people do.

Mat 9:13 Go and learn what this means: 'I want mercy and not sacrifice,' because I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners."

As you can see, Jesus is never afraid of working with the imperfect or even the sinners. The Pharisees are very arrogant and full of themselves. Jesus is effectively saying to these religious teachers and other leaders that if they are so perfect then they don't need Him. Of course, The Lord knew better, but since the Pharisees wouldn't acknowledge their need, they wouldn't get help. Jesus went to the people who admitted their sickness of sin.

Mat 9:35 Then Jesus began traveling throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every illness.

Mat 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he was deeply moved with compassion for them, because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Mat 9:37 Then he told his disciples, "**The harvest**

is vast, but the workers are few.

Mat 9:38 So ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

The kingdom needs all the workers it can get, it doesn't matter what things people have done as much, it matters that all people who believe have faith in Christ, and therefore, are forgiven and ready to work on the mission of bringing more sinners to conversion, healing sickness, train these newer converts, then there will be more workers and the load will be easier because of good solid numbers and a spiritually healthy crop of Jesus' followers. Then on top of these things, physical healing is brought by God through select elect people, other gifts like helping, teaching, preaching etc abound. No one knows what gifts will be received or how they are developed a lot of times until a faith in Christ develops. Sometimes though, a gift is evident beforehand, but utilized more strongly or turned to a different function after the faith-walk starts. For example, Saul was always a very aggressive individual, but after conversion, he

was used the same way, but spun differently than he had.

Let's look at Matthew 11: 1-19

Mat 11:1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he left there to teach and preach in their home towns.

Mat 11:2 Now when John in prison heard about the activities of the Messiah, he sent a message by his disciples

Mat 11:3 and asked him, "Are you the Coming One, or should we wait for someone else?"

Mat 11:4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and observe:

Mat 11:5 the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the destitute hear the good news.

Mat 11:6 How blessed is anyone who is not offended by me!"

Mat 11:7 As they were leaving, Jesus began to

speaking to the crowds about John. "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"

Mat 11:8 Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? See, those who wear fancy clothes live in kings' houses.

Mat 11:9 Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and even more than a prophet!

Mat 11:10 This is the man about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

Mat 11:11 I tell you with certainty, among those born of women no one has appeared who is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least important person in the kingdom from heaven is greater than he.

Mat 11:12 "From the days of John the Baptist until the present, the kingdom from heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people have been attacking it,

Mat 11:13 because the Law and all the Prophets prophesied up to the time of John.

Mat 11:14 If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

Mat 11:15 Let the person who has ears listen!

Mat 11:16 "To what can I compare the people living today? They're like little children who sit in the marketplaces and shout to each other,

Mat 11:17 'A wedding song we played for you, the dance you simply scorned. A woeful dirge we chanted, too, but then you would not mourn.'

Mat 11:18 Because John didn't come eating or drinking, yet people say, 'He has a demon!'

Mat 11:19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Absolved from every act of sin, is wisdom by her kith and kin."

Jesus is speaking of John The Baptist to spin the conversation to the cause of the problem, not the symptom. In other words, John is in prison because of hatred, misunderstandings, lies etc. Jesus, in quite the same way is misunderstood, hated and lied about. The problem is obvious; the

leaders, Pharisees and kings in that day wanted nothing but control, double standards to favor themselves to exclude the poor and “imperfect sinners”, they wanted all the honor and power. To do this, the Pharisees made a bunch of what we today call “Legalese”; this is a language of law that's so confusing and unlivable that no one will live like they should under it. The double standard is that the religious leaders can't live by their own rules, but it's “ok” for them. All of this was for selfishness, not in the way of love. Everyone with no power were treated as outcasts.

Let's look at Romans 5

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

Rom 5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace by which we have been established, and we boast because of our hope in God's glory.

Rom 5:3 Not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

Rom 5:4 endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

Rom 5:5 Now this hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom 5:6 For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, the Messiah died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:7 For it is rare for anyone to die for a righteous person, though somebody might be brave enough to die for a good person.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his love for us by the fact that the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners.

Rom 5:9 Now that we have been justified by his blood, how much more will we be saved from wrath through him!

Rom 5:10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, will we

be saved by his life!

Rom 5:11 Not only that, but we also continue to boast about God through our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom we have now been reconciled.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

Rom 5:12 Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death resulted from sin, therefore everyone dies, because everyone has sinned.

Rom 5:13 Certainly sin was in the world before the Law was given, but no record of sin is kept when there is no Law.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless, death ruled from the time of Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the same way Adam did when he disobeyed. He is a foreshadowing of the one who would come.

Rom 5:15 But God's free gift is not like Adam's offense. For if many people died as the result of one man's offense, how much more have God's grace and the free gift given through the kindness of one man, Jesus the Messiah, been showered on many people!

Rom 5:16 Nor can the free gift be compared to what came through the man who sinned. For the sentence that followed one man's offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift brought justification, even after many offenses.

Rom 5:17 For if, through one man, death ruled because of that man's offense, how much more will those who receive such overflowing grace and the gift of righteousness rule in life because of one man, Jesus the Messiah!

Rom 5:18 Consequently, just as one offense resulted in condemnation for everyone, so one act of righteousness results in justification and life for everyone.

Rom 5:19 For just as through one man's disobedience many people were made sinners, so also through one man's obedience many people will be made righteous.

Rom 5:20 Now the Law crept in so that the offense would increase. But where sin increased, grace increased even more,

Rom 5:21 so that, just as sin ruled by bringing death, so also grace might rule by bringing

justification that results in eternal life through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.

Contrary to what the Pharisees, leaders and kings did, Jesus gives us the freedom to be who we need to be in Him. Inside of salvation, there are rules, however Jesus' law is grace not a rule book. We are given forgiveness when we confess our mistakes and sins to God. Some people don't believe they need to apologize for their sins and mistake issues to the people they wrong, but this can cause hurt feelings and burned bridges. I believe this problem should always be avoided.

Let's look at Romans 14

Rom 14:1 Accept anyone who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of arguing over differences of opinion.

Rom 14:2 One person believes that he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only

vegetables.

Rom 14:3 The person who eats any kind of food must not ridicule the person who does not eat them, and the person who does not eat certain foods must not criticize the person who eats them, for God has accepted him.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to criticize someone else's servant? He stands or falls before his own Lord—and stand he will, because the Lord makes him stand.

Rom 14:5 One person decides in favor of one day over another, while another person decides that all days are the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind:

Rom 14:6 The one who observes a special day, observes it to honor the Lord. The one who eats, eats to honor the Lord, since he gives thanks to God. And the one who does not eat, refrains from eating to honor the Lord; yet he, too, gives thanks to God.

Rom 14:7 For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself.

Rom 14:8 If we live, we live to honor the Lord;

and if we die, we die to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Rom 14:9 For this reason the Messiah died and returned to life, so that he might become the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Rom 14:10 Why, then, do you criticize your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For all of us will stand before the judgment seat of God.

Rom 14:11 For it is written, "As certainly as I live, declares the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will praise God."

Rom 14:12 Consequently, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble

Rom 14:13 Therefore, let's no longer criticize each other. Instead, make up your mind not to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

Rom 14:14 I know—and have been persuaded by the Lord Jesus—that nothing is unclean in and of itself, but it is unclean to a person who thinks it is

unclean.

Rom 14:15 For if your brother is being hurt by what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not destroy the person for whom the Messiah died by what you eat.

Rom 14:16 Do not allow what seems good to you to be spoken of as evil.

Rom 14:17 For God's kingdom does not consist of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy produced by the Holy Spirit.

Rom 14:18 For the person who serves the Messiah in this way is pleasing to God and approved by people.

Rom 14:19 Therefore, let's keep on pursuing those things that bring peace and that lead to building up one another.

Rom 14:20 Do not destroy God's action for the sake of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong to make another person stumble because of what you eat.

Rom 14:21 The right thing to do is to avoid eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that makes your brother stumble, upset, or weak.

Rom 14:22 As for the faith you do have, have it as your own conviction before God. How blessed is the person who has no reason to condemn himself because of what he approves!

Rom 14:23 But the person who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not act in faith; and anything that is not done in faith is sin.

We need to live in the way of love with people. In the interest of doing what is right, we need to be willing to submit ourselves to other customs, keep our faith, witness and still not judge. This is definitely a very narrow tight rope, but it gets easier with practice (even though mistakes easily happen with this). We need to pray for mercy for any of these people and ourselves when we make mistakes in witnessing.

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 10: 23-33

1Co 10:23 Everything is permissible, but not everything is helpful. Everything is permissible, but not everything builds up.

1Co 10:24 No one should seek his own welfare, but rather his neighbor's.

1Co 10:25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without raising any question about it on the grounds of conscience,

1Co 10:26 for "the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord."

1Co 10:27 If an unbeliever invites you to his house and you wish to go, eat whatever is set before you, raising no question on the grounds of conscience.

1Co 10:28 However, if someone says to you, "This was offered as a sacrifice," don't eat it, both out of consideration for the one who told you and also for the sake of conscience.

1Co 10:29 I mean, of course, his conscience, not yours. For why should my freedom be determined by someone else's conscience?

1Co 10:30 If I eat with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of what I am thankful for?

1Co 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

1Co 10:32 Don't become a stumbling block to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God,

1Co 10:33 just as I myself try to please everybody in every way. I don't look out for my own benefit, but rather for the benefit of many people, so that they might be saved.

This goes with the last passage very tightly, as clarity is more achieved. We also need to be willing to try new things as we come across different people and accept their kind of hospitality even if its not the kind we want. This is part of grace and love. We need to try to eat what is served without complaints, talk to different people in the ways that show love to them. Witnessing properly can and will win souls easily, as can bad witnessing can easily lose souls by giving that first bad impression that lasts; this makes it extremely difficult to reach a person (even though God can work around such mistakes).

Let's look at Galatians 2: 11-21

Gal 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly wrong.

Gal 2:12 Until some men arrived from James, he was in the habit of eating with the gentiles, but after those men came, he withdrew from the gentiles and would not associate with them any longer, because he was afraid of the circumcision party.

Gal 2:13 The other Jews also joined him in this hypocritical behavior, to the extent that even Barnabas was caught up in their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, "Though you are a Jew, you have been living like a gentile and not like a Jew. So how can you insist that the gentiles must live like Jews?"

Gal 2:15 We ourselves are Jews by birth, and not gentile sinners,

Gal 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified

by doing what the Law requires, but rather by the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah. We, too, have believed in the Messiah Jesus so that we might be justified by the faithfulness of the Messiah and not by doing what the Law requires, for no human being will be justified by doing what the Law requires.

Gal 2:17 Now if we, while trying to be justified by the Messiah, have been found to be sinners, does that mean that the Messiah is serving the interests of sin? Of course not!

Gal 2:18 For if I rebuild something that I tore down, I demonstrate that I am a wrongdoer.

Gal 2:19 For through the Law I died to the Law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with the Messiah.

Gal 2:20 I no longer live, but the Messiah lives in me, and the life that I am now living in this body I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I do not misapply God's grace, for if righteousness comes about by doing what the Law requires, then the Messiah died for nothing.

Hypocrisy is nothing more than a kind of double standard. Peter didn't want to offend people that were clearly believers and therefore, tried to hide from his mission to blend in. By refusing to associate with people that he, by the grace law of Jesus, was meant to be around to witness to, was being a pretty crummy witness to them. When we are afraid of what people think of our mission, then we weaken and our witness is less than it should be.

The law of grace justifies by faith and therefore, isn't bound by a huge book of rules. If we follow the law of grace tightly though, the law is fulfilled anyway because anything wrong is eaten up by forgiveness and we are free to try again. It's more of a relaxed fit so to speak, but still very snug; this is much like a well-fitting garment.

What have we learned?

Brainy's Smarty Party failed because it was rigged

against anyone being the Smurf they were created to be. The Pharisees in Jesus' day had the exact same problem as Brainy. The Outcast Party got all of the Party Smarties because they could be themselves.

Look at Galatians 2: 18 one more time.

Gal 2:18 For if I rebuild something that I tore down, I demonstrate that I am a wrongdoer.

Brainy could have ruined most of his relationships if he didn't come to the Outcast Party when everyone left him, why?

The sour taste of the Smarty Party could have lingered unnecessarily and caused problems every time a Smurf looked at Brainy. Arrogance causes a lot of trouble if not dealt with properly. Hypocrisy has absolutely no place in the Christian life. We all need the humility to admit wrong and have grace on everyone else who does wrong to us and others. We need to never be too smart for our own good;

we can clearly see that this is what the Pharisees were and you can see where this attitude landed them. Jesus called them out every time they claimed to be in control in their various ways—their hypocrisy, their legalese, their oppression of the weaker people etc. I am proud to be a member of the Outcast Party of Jesus because this is where the gospel truly can do the most good and true ministry is done. Love isn't very popular, but it is right, therefore God will reward richly all who have faith in Christ, loves the least of people and use their gifts to further His kingdom.

5: Closing Prayer