

## “For Jesus, So Loved Everyone.”

By Rev. Edgar F. Solís

### **Introduction:**

Robert Simons from Harvard Business Review wrote an article entitled. “Choosing the Right Customer.” A short portion of this article states. “All companies claim that their strategies are customer driven.” Worldwide, most powerful companies function with the marketing logic of offering the best products and services to obtain good profits. In a simple phrase, “I’ll give you my service and product, and you’ll be happy to give your money.”

But not all people in the world are able to buy everything.

A great percentage of the population is excluded from the benefit of the market and the goods of rich countries. Jesus came, spoke, and modeled a path of inclusion and love for everyone, and it is incredible that after two thousand years of Christianity, the world seems to be stuck on hate and exclusion. With their actions and policies, many people in power and others who support bigotry and alienation against other human beings in our society have misrepresented the substance of Jesus' message. For them, Jesus sounds different.

In 2018, a YouTube comedy group, Friend Dog Studios, produced a video where actors update the teachings of Jesus by juxtaposing them with the beliefs of some lost or confused Christians.

Here are some examples. Imagine Jesus saying something Like this.

“Truly I say unto you: Whoever welcomes one of these little ones in my name might be letting in a murderer or a drug user, so let’s take this child to a detention center on the border.”

“For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, and behold, I’m all lazy and entitled. You shouldn’t have done that.”

“Do unto others as you suspect they might want to do unto you.”

“What has a man profited if he gained the whole world but lose his soul? A lot! He has profited a lot, I mean one soul for the whole world? That is an amazing deal!

“If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him and...shoot him! That is the law.”

“If you want to be perfect, go sell all the possessions that you have and give the money to a solid mutual fund.”

“*Rabbi Rabi, surely you can heal me.* My child, of course, I could, but who would pay for it? *What? I don't understand I don't have any money.* Yes, it is a sad story, but it does not make me responsible.”

“It is super easy for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; the richer, the better really, maybe get a solid gold house just to be sure.”

“Love your neighbor as yourself unless you are better than your neighbor, and tell them that they're weird, and you don't want to bake them a cake.”

#### **Contexts matters:**

The message is important, but the context, place, and time where the message of Jesus was preached is crucial.

The scene in Luke 4:14-21 passage is fascinating. It defines in profound ways the nature of Jesus' ministry – shaping both what we may expect of him and his followers and how we are to interpret subsequent acts of ministry.

Jesus came back to his hometown, Nazareth, the epicenter of his own childhood and religious heritage, to proclaim the nature and goal of his prophetic ministry.

Borrowing from Isaiah, Jesus situates the character of his mission within the hope for the restoration of Israel. Jesus interprets the words of the prophet and extends the nature of that

hope. Empowered by the holy Spirit, Jesus' interpretation means that the words of the prophet are now for the entire world and not only for the Hebrew people.

Now, in Luke, the poor are understood best as “the marginal” – as those excluded from social and religious intercourse because of any number of factors, such as those related to gender, age, economic destitution, physical malady, or religious impurity.

Jesus also emphasized the concept of “release” as freedom from oppression.

Jesus understood “release” especially in terms of forgiveness of sins, which is integral to a restored relationship with God and to human wholeness, as persons are released from diabolic power.

### **Theological reflection:**

I am convinced that the church is the entity that can produce a change in the understanding of welcoming, acceptance, and inclusion in the world.

We need to seriously and joyfully believe that we can model a new path for humanity – a path where everyone is accepted and can receive the benefits of all good and all necessary means for happiness.

God is calling us today to co-create with the Holy Spirit a new path for humanity, a new understanding of welcoming, a new economy where all are included in harmony with life and the planet – a new path for our church to express what is right, what is good, what is holy, what is love, what is faith, what is welcoming for everyone, as did Jesus.

We are called by God to express this from our own epicenter, from our own Nazareth.

### **Conclusion:**

The church is not a company looking for profit. The church is God's business looking for everyone to receive God's good news message of love and inclusion. The time when the church

was a local faith community looking for members to sustain the structure, and the building is gone. We need to consider that our ministry is now going beyond these walls!

There is no interest among the new generation of people in becoming church members simply in order to belong to a prominent religious club or just give their money and time for religious entertainment. Out there, the people of this generation are looking for something real – something that is honest and legitimate.

Dear church, if we want to really be a church that welcomes everyone, we need to live out our faith with a true attitude of love, acceptance, and compassion for everyone, as Jesus did.

In Luke's passage, Jesus declares how radical he is in his intentionality of proclaiming the good news for everyone. In business language, Jesus wants to reach out to a different customer target: not the one who can pay for a benefit or a service.

He wants to reach out to those who cannot pay anything, give anything, or produce any profit.

Who do we want to serve? Are we looking for customers or Jesus' followers?

Jesus' message reminds us that the good news from God means that, for the good of everyone, the poor, the marginalized, the outcast, the sick, and people in trouble come first.

Let's move on to a new path of love, acceptance, and compassion for everyone!

For Jesus, so loved everyone. Let's do the same. Let's live a life of compassion and love for all! All means all! Amen!