

Why Being a Misfit May Not Be So Bad After All

It is morning. I'm sitting outside watching the sun stream into the day. I don't know where to start, so I open my Bible to Luke 14 and ask God to help me.

God, clear the deck for me right now. Take all my cares, everything pressing on me, vexing me, weighing me down. Whatever is crooked, whatever needs to be straightened, whatever is up, down and all around, I am laying them all out on the table. Open me. Posture me to receive. God, I am not an orphan, fatherless, needing to open the Bible to dig something out to feed myself. I have a high and holy Father who is ready, willing, and able to feed me the Holy Writ in the very way I need it right now. I'm pulling up a chair right now to the table of your words. Words that are visceral. Words that are right now. You know me by my name, Papa. Will you meet me here?

The story opens with the imagery of breakfast on a seashore, Jesus cooking breakfast on the morning He restores Peter. This breakfast comes after Peter's three denials of Christ, after Christ's resurrection. God is resetting the deck.

Maybe this is my restoration breakfast too? As I read, 20 years of my life begin to make some sense. Years of what I thought were circles of insanity were perhaps circle patterns led by the Shepherd.

I see the word "misfit" in Luke 14 of the Message version. This chapter is titled "Invite the Misfits." In it, Jesus says, "The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favor. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks.

You'll be—and experience—a blessing. They won't be able to return the favor, but the favor will be returned—oh, how it will be returned!—at the resurrection of God's people" (Luke 14:12–14 MSG).

The word "misfit" usually carries a negative connotation, but today God opens my eyes to its real meaning. A true disciple is one who leaves everything and follows Jesus, who eats his words and does what they say. Someone like that will never fit in with the world. Maybe being a misfit is just about being a pilgrim, someone who is following God in a world that does not understand.

I notice how Jesus wants to invite the common people, not the rich or religious. Not the celebrities of the day. He wants the poor, the sinners. Isn't that whom Jesus came for? Those who know their need? I know mine.

Maybe misfits are people like me who have been pushed against the wall of life by hard and hurtful things, who feel pushed out by a world that tells them they don't belong. And maybe misfits are exactly whom Jesus has saved a seat for.

After reading Luke, about Jesus breaking religion's rules, setting tables, restoration breakfasts, and misfit dinner parties, gospel-fire spreads through my veins. What is this, Papa? What are you doing? What if I set a table, Papa, like the one in Luke 14? What if I invited the misfits like me? And asked Kristi to teach us about ancient tables, about the gospel from a Middle Eastern lens?

I can't make sense of this, but I will ask. I text Kristi: Would you come and teach the Bible at a table? We will serve a meal around a fire. I briefly tell her about my morning with Papa.

She said this sounds like gospel. Yes! She hears it too, sees it too.

My heart bursts into flames as Papa brings full circle what I could never do on my own. He is lifting and turning my heart in a new direction.

Remember when you raised your hands of faith and said yes to me when I asked in Isaiah 6, who will go for me?

Tears stream down my face as something inside me begins to burn. Has it been 20 years since that moment, Papa?

I hear the question again. Who will go for me? This time I have 20 years of ground and a map. I think back over it all before being so quick to answer.

Are you willing to take up your cross daily? Are you willing to let everything burn to follow me?

This exchange is taking place on my deck in the early morning while cars wake up slowly, taking people to jobs, the sun slowly rising above the Tennessee hills to my left. My heart is laid naked at the table God has set for me this morning. I let him look at my motives, my whys.

Here I am, Papa. Send me.

Go, little one. Show and tell. Make it plain. I will make the way bigger and bigger as you go. We will go together. I will teach you what to say. I will put My words in your mouth. Everywhere you go, I go. In every circumstance that finds you and pushes you down, I'm already there. You are never in it alone.

I don't know how long I stay on the deck this morning. I want to keep following Papa's breadcrumbs. It has been a long time since I've eaten breadcrumbs like these.

From a Sabbath meal with religious leaders to a dinner party for misfits, Jesus broke down social barriers. He came for the misfit in us all, and he came for the Pharisee too. The Pharisee in me.

I love your Word, Papa. I love how holistic it is. How generous you are. I love that your love is bottomless. That you search us out.

The last 20 years have been a wilderness, a testing and a sacred adventure, a story of restoration to bring me face to face with my something-more. I'm learning what my name is and what I'm made for. Sacred adventure is finding me again.

At the breakfast on the beach, Jesus was watching the fire, the fish and his disciples. And I know He watches me the same way. Like He watched Peter at breakfast on the seashore, on the other side of his betrayal. Jesus still offers him a meal, still offers him a fresh invitation, like always. Today I'm having breakfast with Jesus. I need to be more than forgiven; I need to be restored to wholeness.

God, remove my shame, pull it up by the root, wash my heart with your words. Scrub it. Replace it with your righteousness and my rightful name, the name I'm known by. The name you called me when you swaddled me with your words when you caught me the day I entered this world.

Every day is new. Every day I get to wake up into Papa's finding-love. I get to allow Him to find me. To come get me. I get to show my life as a story of who God is and what He is like. Our God-stories are like fingerprints—one of a kind. Now I get to write the greatest love story ever written. Mine.

I know the heaviness will come again, but now I know to cry out, "Come get me, Papa!" And He will come running, lift me up, lay me across his shoulders and carry me. I will let Him. I am forever found.

When I was born, I was hurled out into a world unfamiliar to me. It was not mine. I instinctively knew it. My mom pushed me out, and I have fought to find my way home ever since—not back inside her womb but into my heavenly home.

I find it here at the misfit table. The instinct to find home is satisfied here.

“Daughter, there is nothing heavy about my way. I am a Shepherd to you. I take your sin, your shame, your pain, everything you have. I take it from you and put it upon myself and search for you, and when I find you I joyfully put you on My shoulders and carry you home. We do it together on your interior, as we travel inside my story, heading to our final home—a new city, a banquet, a marriage supper. I show up with a grace that is greater than your sin. Little one, it is all My work so that you can’t boast. Your position is rest. Feel the rhythm of the rocking motion while I walk with you, carrying you along. My love, do you see who is doing all the work here? It isn’t centered on you. It is centered on Me.”
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Tiffini Kilgore is a successful entrepreneur and a visionary/encourager at heart. After growing up in a broken home, Kilgore married at the tender age of 16. Divorced and with three small children, she married again. The following years brought two more children but also another broken marriage, chronic disease and major surgeries. Together, she and God began transforming her pain into passion by writing a new story for her life—one of home, healing, forgiveness and new beginnings.

Her home decor company, *House of Belonging*, has been featured or included in *Country Living* magazine, *Cottage & Bungalow*, *Project Nursery*, *Proverbs 31* and *Kindred Vintage*. Today, Kilgore is a mom to six adult children and a grandma to eight. Connect with Kilgore on her website, or on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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