

## Drawing Disability

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The other day I got a joke in my email. I'm going to change it a little, actually a lot, because the original might be considered somewhat sacrilegious. But it contained a very important truth that I would like to point out. My version of the joke goes like this:

An elderly man hobbled into a little restaurant and with some difficulty seated himself at the counter. He ordered a coke and as he waited, he saw a man down at the end of the counter who looked like Jesus. When the waiter came back by, the man asked, "Is that Jesus down there?" The waiter told him it was, and the man told him to serve him a soft drink.

A man with a hunched back came in a few minutes later and also sat down at the counter. As he was ordering, he too noticed the man at the end of the counter. When told by the waiter that it was indeed Jesus, the man told him to serve him a piece of pie.

A third man came in who was something of a redneck, and causing a great disturbance found a stool at the counter. He looked down at the end of the counter and hollered out, "That must be Jesus! Waiter! Give the man a cold one!"

When Jesus got up to leave, he walked over to the elderly man, touched him, and said, "For your kindness, you are healed!" The man then sprang to his feet and practically bounced out of the place. Then he walked over to the hunchback, touched him, and said, "For your kindness, you are healed!" This man straightened to his full height and jumped for joy as he left. But as Jesus walked toward the redneck, the redneck jumped back and cried, "Don't touch me, I'm on disability!"

The sad part is that we all know people like this. It seems silly to be resistant to the grace of God. Why would we not want to receive his tremendous blessings? But there are many people who would rather be on "disability" than be healed. This would seem to be crazy. But we have essentially the same problem in this country with our welfare program. Some people would rather sit back and get money for doing nothing than work a job that gives them fulfillment and income with which to better their quality of life. The redneck in the story did not want to lose a *perceived* benefit. He did not have sufficient vision to enable him to see the true riches that Jesus was offering.

The Pharisees had a similar problem. They perceived a benefit in the law, and did not want to accept the kingdom of God as Jesus offered it to them. They did not even see themselves as in need of healing. They were perfectly comfortable with a scheme whereby they could earn their way. They just were clueless as to how impossible it was to please God in that manner.

Some people are afraid to accept the blessing because they are afraid of what the Spirit of God might do in their hearts. They are afraid to be changed, to be reborn. And so they do not want the touch of the Master's hand.

God clearly shows in the Bible that He will not force you to accept His grace. But he will not give us a free ride on that grace, either. We are all sinners, and thus "disabled". But grace is not a social program from God that allows us to reject the presence of Jesus as our Savior. So we must not reject God's grace, nor allow our selves to think that we can cash in on it. We must genuinely give our hearts to God to be saved through the blood of his dear Son.

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