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Jesus' Message of Salvation: A New Human Family

Susan Lankowski¹

Salvation was the central message in Jesus' ministry; however, it was not a new concept to 1st century Palestinians. The religious elite followed a rigid "body of rules, norms and legal decisions on specific points"² of Torah/Mosaic Law. Its intricate structure of rules, regulations and rituals focussed on purity, tithes, food laws, Sabbath and festival observance.³ They believed that strict adherence to Torah would grant them God's favour and, therefore, salvation. The common person was not able to live in this state of purity due to the obligations of everyday life. Jesus, however, lifted this yoke and provided a new meaning for salvation: it was open to all people of all nations, creating a new human family. Jesus crossed social and cultural boundaries, seeking out the marginalized and oppressed and offering the gift of salvation to people otherwise rejected. He urged all his listeners to seek a right relationship with God by moving towards solidarity and community with the poor and insignificant of society.

In contemporary theological discussion, "liberation theology" is a way to consider Jesus' message of salvation from the perspective of those on the margins of our current global economy.⁴ Further, it is concerned with living out what it means to be a Christian in a poverty-stricken world and proclaiming the Gospel in a way that the oppressed believe they are loved by God, thereby empowered to become active participants with this message of salvation.⁵ "The theology of liberation...examines the relationship between salvation and the historical process of human liberation in light of a faith that seeks justice."⁶

We set forth to examine how Jesus altered the meaning of salvation within the culturally and socially diverse region of Galilee and how that message is liberating for us today, specifically for women.

Salvation and 1st Century Palestine

In the first century, the region of Galilee was easily the most populous part of Palestine. It was surrounded by foreign nations⁷, under Roman rule and "traversed by the greatest roads in the ancient world."⁸ It was made up of Jews and Gentiles alike and surrounded by cities of various ethnicities. Due to their close proximity to the outside world,

¹ MA (Christian Studies) – TH530B: Introduction to Jesus and Salvation, Winter 2018

² Douglas A. Knight, "Tradition History", in David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol VI*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 637.

³ Anthony J. Saldarini, "Pharisees" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. V.*, by David Noel Freedman, ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 299.

⁴ Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 184.

⁵ Ibid., 184-185.

⁶ Ibid., 185.

⁷ Virgilio Elizondo, "Jesus the Galilean Jew in Mestizo Theology", *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 271. Accessed January 8, 2018, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

⁸ William Barclay, *The Mind of Jesus*, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), 48.

Galileans were eager, forward-looking people, open to new ways and new ideas.⁹ It was also, therefore, a hotbed for cultural encounters, tensions and exchanges.¹⁰ In their daily lives, Galileans were under the watchful eye of Rome, who had the support of local tax collectors, Gentile soldiers and the Rome-appointed religious elite (the High Priests) to oppress the population for their gain.¹¹ Rural Galilean Jews were mostly poor peasants who were exploited by distant landowners and even the Temple officials who considered them “backward, impure, rebellious and ignorant” despite their love and loyalty to Jerusalem, Judaism and the Temple.¹² In short, Galilee was a land of predominantly Jewish people who frequently met and interacted with diverse others under difficult circumstances and the one in which Jesus would spend his formative years.¹³ It is within this background that the Jewish people held out hope for the coming Messiah who would restore their independence and reaffirm their identity. It is important to outline what this new hope looked like within this region of Galilee.

First century Palestinian Jews were devout people who knew their scriptures and had a deep sense of identity as the Chosen People of God. The common man on the street was waiting for salvation in the form of a deliverer of God’s people, who would triumph over the Roman occupying forces and re-establish Israel’s peace and prosperity. They lived, however, in close proximity with people of Graeco-Roman (Gentile) ethnicity whose worldview and interpretation of salvation was vastly different. The Graeco-Roman worldview was anthropocentric¹⁴ and tolerant in religious matters. Within the Roman Empire, an Imperial Cult flourished and worshipped many gods, but its main purpose was political, to promote a single unity among an expanse of people.¹⁵ Here, salvation was sought in two directions: the first embraced magic, astrology and mystery cults and appealed to the general population; the second included philosophy and Gnosticism, which appealed to the more sophisticated person.¹⁶ The Imperial Cult would not tolerate the worship of a single deity, lest it supersede the honour obliged toward the emperor who was considered god-like. This alternative to a God-centred worship, however, “did not satisfy the hunger of the human heart for salvation”¹⁷ resulting in the ultimate conversion of many Gentiles to Christianity. This is in stark contrast to the Jewish view of salvation which was theocentric and focussed on the observance of Torah. It included the expectancy of deliverance from God and required repentance of a person’s sinful ways.¹⁸ It is interesting that both Gentile and Jew were looking for a deliverer and concerned with the destiny of their soul.

Salvation through the Kingdom of God

The region of Galilee is the world in which Jesus grew up and began his ministry. Jesus spent his life in a poor, rural peasant family and would have experienced the oppression of

⁹. Ibid., 48.

¹⁰. Elizondo, *Galilean Jew*, 271.

¹¹. E.M.B. Green, *The Meaning of Salvation*, (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1965), 56.

¹². Elizondo, *Galilean Jew*, 271-272.

¹³. Ibid., 272.

¹⁴. Green, *Meaning of Salvation*, 86.

¹⁵. Ibid., 75.

¹⁶. Ibid., 77.

¹⁷. Ibid., 75.

¹⁸. Ibid., 86-87.

the Romans and the diversity of a culture that divided people. He becomes one of the rejects and marginalized of society and even though at his baptism he is revealed the beloved Son of God (Mark 1: 11),¹⁹ his precious humanity preserves the pain of his early years.²⁰ This Galilean village situated on the periphery of political, intellectual and religious powers of the world was the crossroad where Jesus' dramatic shifting of the cultural, social and religious norms inaugurated a new humanity that would not be limited by blood or ethnicity.²¹ It is from here that Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation of salvation through the kingdom of God: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1: 15). The expression "kingdom of God" was familiar to a 1st century Jewish audience. However, Jesus declares the kingdom of God has come near; it is here and now! This is ground-breaking news and something entirely new to the Palestinian Jews. The kingdom of God has been made accessible to a person through Jesus. The bridge is crossed by direct action of God and the direct breaking-in of God into this world through Jesus.²² We can look to the prayer Jesus gave us for more clarification on the kingdom of God and Jesus' urging for people to come into a right relationship with Him and one another: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6: 10).

A common feature in Hebrew writing is 'parallelism', which is a case where the second sentence repeats the first sentence in such a way as to amplify or explain it.²³ Using this principle, we can arrive at the following definition: "The Kingdom is a state of things on earth in which God's will is as perfectly done as it is in heaven."²⁴ Citizenship in this kingdom becomes a personal issue between one's self and God but also among one's neighbor; however, he also made it clear that it belonged to everyone, Jew and Gentile. The Jewish people were already aware that the kingdom had come and was still to come, but Jesus presented a new possibility in that it was already present, which means "the time which followed his coming was different from the time which preceded it."²⁵ Jesus has provided the opportunity for people to pave their own path to God; he is the gateway to God's kingdom and salvation.

Jesus Liberates with Radical Inclusion

In the diverse region of Galilee, first century Palestinian Jews considered anyone outside of their community to be unclean and pagan. However, within their community, purity laws cast people into the marginal recesses of society for physical and mental illnesses, as well as class distinctions, thus creating social and cultural divisions. Jesus set out to invert this value structure. The Gospels are full of accounts of Jesus healing, forgiving sins and exorcising demons within the Palestinian Jewish community; it is also what he did outside of this community that is of value to this discussion. Jesus reached across these boundaries and provided an altruistic example of nurturing inclusion, so that all may grow

¹⁹. Harold W. Attridge, ed. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), (New York: HarperOne, 2006). All biblical verses are taken from NRSV.

²⁰. Elizondo, *Galilean Jew*, 274.

²¹. *Ibid.*, 273-274.

²². Barclay, *Mind of Jesus*, 54-56.

²³. Barclay, *Mind of Jesus*, 60.

²⁴. *Ibid.*, 60. For other examples, see Ps. 46:7, Ps. 23:2, Ps. 24:1

²⁵. *Ibid.*, 60-61.

and develop as God intended.²⁶ Liberation from the challenges that divide people from one another is a movement toward reconciliation; a right relationship between God and others.²⁷ I would like to examine two gospel stories outside of the Jewish community that highlight this message and persuaded first century Palestinians to rethink the terms of salvation and their path toward the kingdom of God. Moreover, these stories will conceptualize our contemporary understanding of salvation in terms of liberation. (Mark 7: 24-30) Jesus leaves Galilee and goes to the region of Tyre, which is a wealthy Phoenician town on the Mediterranean Sea within Gentile territory. The narrator points out that Jesus has no intention of preaching the good news but rather enters a house, attempting to remain unnoticed. He is discovered by a woman described as “Greek, of Syrophenician race” who bows down at his feet and asks him to cast the demon out of her daughter (7: 25-26). Jesus then replies, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” (7: 27)²⁸ This retort is surprising and offensive. However, it will lead to a salvific act, but for whom?

In Hebrew Scriptures, Jews are defined as “children of God” (Is 30:1; 63:8; Jer 3:19) and dogs are despised in the New Testament (Lk 16:21; 2 Pet 2:22). Moreover, the word is derogatory when assigned to people. Jesus’ reply is offensive to the woman, given the Jewish context and the plural form (of dogs): the woman and her daughter are clearly positioned as outsiders in this narrative.²⁹ Further, “due to a lack of cultivatable land, Tyre needed to buy agricultural products from the Galilean hinterlands, which created food shortages and caused suffering among the rural Jewish population.”³⁰ Thus, Jesus turns a well known hierarchy on its head, with the wealthy Gentiles cast as the hungry dogs and preference given to the poor, rural Jews.³¹ The gap that separates Jesus and the woman is emphasized by male and female, poor Galilean and upper-class Syrophenician, Jew and pagan, all of which provide cultural, religious, social and economic reasons for distance.³²

The woman’s reply to Jesus’ retort is witty and intelligent, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” (7: 28) The woman does not dispute her identification as a “dog” or a “taker of bread” and significantly changes the word for children from *tekna* (child; descendent) to *paidia* (older child), hence, Jews are still to be called children but the emphasis is no longer on having been begotten by God (descendent), but on their dependence on God (all people), which is a universal characteristic.³³

Jesus finishes the discourse by replying, “For saying that, you may go – the demon has left your daughter.” (7: 29) Jesus appreciates the woman’s words or *logos* that she has spoken to him. Through her words to Jesus, the woman accepts the priority of Israel but also stresses the favour of the little dogs – the others exclusive of Israel – “all a manifestation of her dignity as a human being, a *logos* that flows from her God-given humanity.”³⁴ It is the woman who

²⁶. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 195.

²⁷. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 195.

²⁸. Pablo Alonso, “The Woman Who Changed Jesus” in *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Christology for the 21st Century*, ed. Robert Lassalle-Klein, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 122.

²⁹. *Ibid.*, 122.

³⁰. *Ibid.*, 123.

³¹. Alonso, *Woman Who Changed Jesus*, 123.

³². *Ibid.*, 123.

³³. *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁴. *Ibid.*, 125.

brings Jesus the word of God through her abilities to see beyond the divisions that separate them. Jesus undergoes a change of mentality with his perception of the little girl, changing his wording from “dog” to “daughter,” which leads him to acknowledge her humanity.³⁵

Jesus' relationship with the Father is an active presence – always open and sustaining. Perhaps this encounter is an example of the delicate tension that existed between his humanity and his Father's will. “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) Jesus must live these words and accepts the woman and her cultural status, upholding a right relationship with the Father and a Gentile woman. I may even suggest that this was such a life-changing moment of grace for Jesus that he continues to travel in Gentile territory. The Gospel of Mark continues, “Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.” (Mark 7: 31) This is an extremely indirect way to get back to Galilee, which scholars believe Jesus spent time taking his message within Gentile territory,³⁶ perhaps as a result of his encounter with the Syrophenician woman. This is the example he is setting for his disciples and for us to rethink the terms of salvation. Jesus goes to the periphery – a place where any structure is the most fragile - and it is here that he is challenged. This is the challenge of the kingdom of God.³⁷

The second gospel story of salvation through liberation has Jesus crossing cultural boundaries on the other side of the Sea of Galilee within the Decapolis. Mark 5: 1-20, “Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demonic,” is the narrative of Jesus' meeting with a man who was possessed by an unclean spirit. It is a shocking scene as the man lived within a tomb and not in a house, as though he was quarantined; ritually unclean, isolated from human community and homeless, as though he were dead. He was naked and uncontrollable, thus lacking personal identity and status as a human being; he spoke in “I” and “we” statements, in personal crisis of an identity. Jesus rid the man of his unclean spirit and the man was found sitting at his feet, submissive like a disciple, clothed and in his right mind, therefore reinstating his humanity. Jesus returns him to his home to declare to all what God has done for him, thus restoring him to his community with a vocation.³⁸ In this example, the man with the unclean spirit is trapped within himself and completely cut off from his community. Jesus rid the man of his demons and restored his sense of humanity, placing him back in his community. What are the demons that hold us back from becoming fully engaged in our own communities and relationships? It is a subtle balance between one's sense of self and our place within a community. Cultivating our demons may subdue one's voice, triggering us to question our self-worth. It is essential for our sense of dignity as human beings to be able to name ourselves and live with a sense of belonging. Jesus liberated this man and gave him the power to control his own destiny; his own actions towards a right relationship with God and others. He also does this in Gentile territory, reaffirming to his disciples and his audience that the inclusion of those outside the Jewish community will “form a new human family based on love of God and love of neighbor”³⁹ thus establishing a new meaning for salvation.

³⁵. Ibid., 125.

³⁶. Alonso, *Woman Who Changed Jesus*, 127.

³⁷. Ibid., 131.

³⁸. Joel B. Green, *Why Salvation?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 38. The concepts and ideas of Mark 5: 1-20 in this paragraph were taken from this source, page 38.

³⁹. Elizondo, *Galilean Jew*, 277.

Jesus also preaches his message of salvation within the Jewish community of Galilee. Mark 1: 40-45, “Jesus Cleanses a Leper” and Mark 5: 25-34, “A Woman Healed” are both healing stories and important because they emphasize the exclusion of individuals due to impurity which places them outside of their community into a perpetual state of poverty. The leper and the hemorrhaging woman were considered unclean because of their physical conditions. It was socially unacceptable for them to approach Jesus, or for Jesus to interact with them. The leper requests to be made clean and Jesus, moved with pity⁴⁰, does so. He instructs the leper to make an offering to the priest which purifies him thus allowing him re-entry into his community. The woman with the hemorrhage, otherwise known as a flow of blood, would have produced a state of ritual impurity resulting in social restriction or exclusion,⁴¹ an outcast and poverty-stricken.

Moreover, it was socially unacceptable for a woman to approach a man (Jesus) in the 1st century. The woman sought after Jesus for healing, but the crowds were great and pressing in on him and her only option was to come up behind him and touch his cloak; she was instantly healed. “Immediately aware that the power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?”” (Mark 5: 30) A combination of the woman’s great faith and Jesus’ commitment to seek out the marginalized could, perhaps, suggest the surge of power unleashed. But here is an interesting question to consider: From whom did the power come? NRSV translates ἐξελθοῦσαν as “having gone forth,” suggesting that Jesus had willingly and knowingly released the healing power. However, a more literal translation is having “go or come out of; flow out; disappear,”⁴² which implies the healing power was taken out of him by another agent. I would like to suggest that this woman’s need of salvation was so powerful that it was acquired by a simple touch without her asking. The woman’s newly found purity enabled her to go back to her community. Jesus solidarity with those on the periphery of the 1st century social and cultural norms freed him from the intolerances that plagued ordinary people within the current value structure. It was scandalous to those who opposed, but salvific for those willing to be open to the kingdom of God. This salvation – liberation – that Jesus proclaimed within and outside of Galilee fostered a “vision of society based on human dignity, mutuality in relationships, and active concern for the most vulnerable members of community.”⁴³ It is by one’s own actions that a right relationship can be developed with God thus achieving God’s will on earth as it is, was, and will be in heaven.

Salvation and the 21st Century – A Global Village

Jesus’ ministered the message of salvation at a local/regional level. Today, technological advances have us interconnected on a global level. Globalization has

⁴⁰. Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Gospel According to Mark”, in *The HarperCollins Study Bible, NRSV*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 1726-1727. NRSV Mark 1: 41^e cites a variance of the word “pity” with “anger”. It states that “anger” is most likely the original word, which is a harsher albeit more interesting interpretation. I would like to suggest that Jesus was, perhaps, angry at the situation in which he found the leper – outcast and poverty-stricken.

⁴¹. Collins, “*Gospel of Mark*”, 1733. See note 5.25.

⁴². Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 348, b. δ.

⁴³. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 186.

marginalized a large percentage of the world's population into poverty and oppression, specifically women. Our global interconnectedness provides us the resources to foster human solidarity and support internationally, but the evidence suggests otherwise.⁴⁴ The economic scales have tipped favourably to the West, leaving the majority of the world's population living in poverty and violence. However, these economic scales are also evident within our own communities: one out of every seven Americans lives in poverty totalling more than forty-five million, which is more than the entire population of Canada.⁴⁵ The lack of opportunities and resources diminishes a person's political, social, cultural and economic freedoms and, amidst the anxiety for survival, forces people to make tough choices, live day-to-day and strains relationships.⁴⁶ Poverty reduces the human condition to insignificance. Despite being a global village, fostering Jesus' concept of a new human family is most evident and manageable at the local level within established communities. Pope John Paul II stated that "the human person is intended for community and finds fulfillment only in living as a self-gift to others."⁴⁷ Christian faith draws us into a relationship, reminding us that we are not strong enough to journey alone; not only do we need God, but we also need others.⁴⁸ Christian community is the experience of connection, especially when it forms into genuine friendship.⁴⁹ It is in the spirit of community that the marginalized can find hope and salvation in each other and Jesus.

The oppression of African women is troubling. Extreme poverty, sexism, rape, the unavailability of education or medical aid has made their situation one of the most oppressive in the world. In these situations, however, the responsibility of the survival of a family falls to women. They work harder and longer to provide the water and fuel they need, but with very limited resources.⁵⁰ African American women experience the same limitations, though not as extreme,⁵¹ and the success of their families also fall on the shoulders of these women. The cycle of oppression in terms of their lack of education, medical support and gender inequality keep them on the margins of society in the developed world. These two worlds are interconnected in the strength of communities and faith in the one who walked in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized: Jesus Christ.

Amidst the dire situation in which African women live, they have developed a view of salvation and its transforming gift. According to Mercy A. Oduyoye in her article "Jesus Christ," the spirituality of African women is centred on the person (humanity) of Jesus.⁵² He is the one to "bring healing, life and dignity to the suffering. Jesus came to give a voice to the voiceless."⁵³ "They find an affirmation of their personhood and worth in the person of Jesus,

44. Mary Doak, "Jesus of Galilee: Hope for a Globalized World in Despair" in *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Christology for the 21st Century*, ed. Robert Lassalle-Klein, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 221-222.

45. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 8.

46. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

47. Doak, *Jesus of Galilee*, 227.

48. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 251.

49. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*, 253.

50. Doak, *Jesus of Galilee*, 229.

51. Stephanie Y. Mitchem, "Womanists and (Unfinished) Constructions of Salvation," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17, no. 1 (2001): 85-100, 98.

52. Mercy A. Oduyoye, "Jesus Christ" in *Hope Abundant*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 167-185, 171.

53. *Ibid.*, 172.

who was born of a woman without the participation of a man.”⁵⁴ Jesus’ touch of the hemorrhaging woman (Mark 5: 25-34) has become a very important image for African women not only for its healing power but for the liberation of all that oppresses women culturally.⁵⁵ In the smaller, regional context, African women form communities that support one another and look for salvation in their everyday lives. “Living under such conditions of hardship, African women have learned to identify the good, attribute it to God and Christ and live a life of prayer in the anticipation that the liberative potential of the person of Jesus will become a reality in their lives.”⁵⁶

Pain and suffering are a part of the African American woman’s reality where “suffering is any mental, emotional, spiritual or physical force that radically disrupts our lives.”⁵⁷ It is paralyzing, in that, it is frozen and not moving towards justice and freedom.⁵⁸ Historically, black women have resisted suffering by maintaining the memory of past injustices, creating a self-defining language to guard how they identify themselves and relating it to a Christianity that is shaped by African values.⁵⁹ The oppression black American women experience has sparked a “culture of resistance” which strives to actively renegotiate the parameters of the hierarchy of oppression.⁶⁰ Taking shape is an arena where woman can become self-empowered and network to support self and community.⁶¹ Salvation in this light is the desire of a transformation to right relationships within their community and the structures of society. Jesus’ life of resistance and survival strategies helped people “survive the death of identity caused by their exchange of inherited cultural meanings for a new identity shaped by the gospel ethics and worldview.”⁶² This is the Jesus to which African American women can relate.

Living within the context of globalization and a secular society, which is gaining momentum, cultural and social differences occur at a much more local level than even a generation ago. You do not have to go far to interact with ‘others’. Diverse ethnicities and low, socio-economic pockets reside in our cities and neighbourhoods. An example can be made of the emphasis black women put on community as a liberating agent to take responsibility for each other. Western society has become more individualistic and self-centred as people isolate themselves in work, media, and technology in the name of convenience and achievement. “To focus more on being than having and on the quality of one’s heart rather than the quantity of one’s possessions” is to find what truly liberates.⁶³ Living in oppressive environments, the black women noted above have found liberating qualities to their marginal lives: the poor have learned how to be patient, how to be humble and how to endure. They have learned how to share generously with the little they have and choose hope in the midst of their suffering. Even when everything has been taken away, they realize that the one thing that cannot be taken is the freedom to choose the kind of person

⁵⁴. Ibid., 179.

⁵⁵. Oduyoye, *Jesus Christ*, 174

⁵⁶. Ibid., 181.

⁵⁷. Mitchem, *Womanists*, 89.

⁵⁸. Ibid., 89.

⁵⁹. Ibid., 89-90.

⁶⁰. Ibid., 87.

⁶¹. Ibid., 87.

⁶². Ibid., 91.

⁶³. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice*, 258.

they wish to become.⁶⁴ That is the challenge of the kingdom of God: to step across the cultural and social barriers to have an encounter that is liberating. A challenge to stand in solidarity with the poor, as Jesus did, and resist the value structures that restrict our growth as human beings. "When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."⁶⁵

A New Human Family

Jesus came with a message of salvation to establish a new human family, open to all people of all nations. The 1st century Palestinians expected God's deliverer to triumph them over the oppressive forces of Rome, but instead was summoned to triumph over their own intolerances. It was an unexpected proclamation of radical inclusion and revolutionary love grounded in God. The kingdom of God had been redefined to take present action to establish God's will on earth as perfectly as it is in heaven. The message of salvation challenges us today to cross cultural and social boundaries, as Jesus did, to cultivate a movement that liberates all people, but specifically the marginalized, to live with the God-given dignity of their humanity. Jesus invites us all to choose that right relationship with God and humanity.

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⁶⁴. Ibid., 260.

⁶⁵. UN Women, Twitter post, March 26, 2018 (10:55 am) accessed March 26, 2018, <http://twitter.com/UNWomen>

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