



*Written by
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“Heart Break Café” Episode 3: "Unbiased Compassion"

Scripture: John 4: 7-26

Dramatic Category: Heart Break Café

NOTE: The pastor presents his sermon under the guise of having lunch with someone who is having a problem with some spiritual issue. Set a table and two chairs on stage. Follow the main cue lines in the menu/script, but adlib the rest. Have fun; this can be hilarious!

Topic: Unbiased compassion without prejudice

Performance Time: 20 minutes *(This is the pastor's sermon, so it may be longer)*

Number of Players: 3 players *(2 men, 1 woman)*

Objective:

To show that compassion for all people, without prejudice, is the identifier of God’s people.

Synopsis:

In this visit, Pastor Barry and his friend, Mike, are stuck on the "wrong side of town" as evening approaches due to car trouble. They wait for the tow truck at “The Heart Break Café.” "At least the people in here aren't quite as scary as the ones that are loose on the streets," Mike says as he surveys the seedy people in the café. Barry strikes up a conversation with LaRoue, the "hard-luck" waitress, and begins sharing the gospel with her. Mike is appalled that Barry would relate to "such a woman"! Throughout the "freeze moments" in the skit, Barry connects Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman to their encounter with LaRoue, all the while stressing that unbiased compassion is the identifier of all those who would call themselves Christians, and the gospel is for everyone!

Cast:

LaRoue: *A comical character. She is a truck stop-type waitress, gum chewing, raspy, wearing a food-stained apron, hair up in a bandanna, and has an attitude.*
Mike: *A young man who is overly concerned about his car.*
Pastor: *The pastor of the church, who delivers his sermon about the Samaritan woman, using Mike's prejudice as an example.*

Props:

Tray
2 waters
A plate with a sandwich
Two place settings
2 "Heartbreak Café" menus with logos on the outside, and "cheat scripts" on the inside

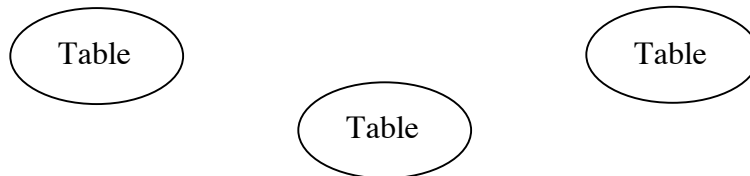
NOTE: At the end of this script, a "cheat script" is included. It is recommended that this "cheat script" be placed in the menu and left open on the table for the pastor and Mike to consult as the sermon progresses. LaRoue can also place a "cheat script" on her tray.

Sound:

3 wireless microphones
Play "Rock Around The Clock" or some other 60's hit.

Stage:

Set up 3 tables with 2 chairs at each one of them (*see below*)
Design a "Heart Break Café" logo and display it on the screens before the skit starts
Make scripture slides to display during the course of the sermon; they add "meat" to the moment, and make it appear less theatrical.

**Lighting:**

Change the lighting from the skit portion of the sermon to something different when the Pastor gets up to talk. This protects the integrity of the sermon.

NOTE: A "FREEZE" or a stage "tableau" for Mike and LaRoue is recommended on a cue from the pastor, so that he can get up from the table and address the audience. This will give more of a "regular sermon" feel. When the pastor sits back down at the table, it is a cue for Mike and LaRoue to resume the scene. Lighting changes will add to this 2-dimension feeling.

NOTE: The following is very loosely scripted and relies heavily on ad-lib because the dialogue between Mike and the pastor has to sound relaxed and casual. They can say whatever seems natural as long as the script's main points are covered.

Every pastor has his own way of crafting a sermon on prejudice. The following are only the main points that LaRoue will be setting up and illustrating.

Please add whatever else the pastor wishes to say on the subject, and encourage LaRoue and Mike to antagonize one another to their hearts content beyond the scripted lines.

The Script:

"The Introduction"

(The service continues in whatever fashion is customary for your church. When the time comes for the pastor's someone (perhaps an associate pastor) gets up to introduce the sermon on the subject of prejudice. After the introduction, the music "Rock around the Clock" (or whatever theme song you have chosen to play) is played and Barry enters the stage, followed by Mike who constantly looks over his shoulder at his car.)

MUSIC: "Rock Around The Clock"

GRAPHIC: Display the "Heart Break Café" logo.

(The pastor and Mike walk toward the front of the stage as the theme music is playing.)

LIGHTS: UP BACK WALL, COLORFUL STAGE LIGHTING

Entrance: *(Barry enters with Mike trailing behind.)*

Barry: Let's just wait for the tow truck in here, Mike. It's too hot to wait outside.
(Mike enters with hesitation)
You want a bite to eat?

Mike: *(sides up to Barry)* Are you kidding! Eat here?

Barry: Sure, why not?

Mike: Look at where we are!
I always drive around this town; now I'm stuck in it!
This is the "mother" of all greasy spoons...
...a cross between "Mayberry" and "The Twilight Zone"!

Barry: *(He sits at the SR table on the right side)*
Have a seat, Mike.

Mike: *(He follows Barry, but wants to sit where Barry sits.)*
If I'm gonna' sit, I have to sit here.

Barry: Why?

Mike: So I can see the car. You have no idea what could happen to a car like mine in a town like this. It could be stripped for parts in the time it takes to hit the washroom.

Barry: *(Humors Mike by switching seats.)* Okay.

LaRoue:

(enters, carrying ice water on her tray over her head, shouting in the direction of Mike and Barry)

Hey Barney! I heard a snap; I think you got 'em.

(Mike bolts upright as she approaches.)

Hi guys. Welcome to the Heartbreak Café. "Stay a while...leave with a smile"

(She sets the water before Mike and Barry)

My name's LaRoue. What can I getcha'?

Mike: Is your kitchen sanitary?

LaRoue: It is now.

Mike: *(shocked and jumping to his feet)*

Are you kidding me! Did you just kill a pest?

LaRoue: You bet we did, so don't you give us any trouble.

We could be on a roll! *(She pushes the water toward Mike.)*

Have a drink; it's a scorcher out there!

Mike: *(in a hoarse whisper to Barry)*

I gotta' get outa' here!

Barry: *(trying to calm him)* It's okay, Mike.

Mike: *(getting up and moving to the SL table.)*

I can see the car better from over here.

You can't be too careful in this neighborhood.

Barry: *(explaining to LaRoue who collects the water and follows Mike.)*

He's a little nervous; his car broke down. We're waiting for the tow truck.

LaRoue: *(She sets the water back out on the second table.)*

Well, you better make yourself comfortable,

'cause you're gonna' be here a while.

Mike: Why?

LaRoue: Only tow truck in town is up working on Charlie's place.

Seems his septic tank's been sliding down that old hill of his for quite some time before anybody really noticed.

Mike: No! *(Mike collapses into his hands.)*

LaRoue: *(She tries to console Mike)*

Look on the bright side. Let me run the specials by 'ya.

Barry: Okay, what do you have?

LaRoue: The "fresh catch" of the day is....

Mike: *(loosing his composure and pointing back to the kitchen)*
...in the kitchen, I know...
(panicked) We have got to get out of here!

Barry: *(taking the menus from LaRoue)*
Give us a minute.

LaRoue: Sure thing. I'll be right back. *(She leaves them.)*

Mike: *(looking at Barry in disbelief.)*
I am dying here, Barry!
This is not a real place! These are not real people!
People like us don't belong with people like these.
I can't even breath this air! *(He takes a puff on his inhaler.)*

FREEZE #1: *(Mike freezes, holds his head in his hands.)*

LIGHT: **CHANGE TO SERMON LIGHT AS BARRY STEPS INTO CENTER STAGE**

SERMON PART 1:

The stigma of "Samaria."
No place for prejudice in the Gospel?

LIGHT: **RETURN TO "CAFÉ" LIGHTING**

THE PASTOR RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AND THE ACTION RESUMES

Barry: *(returns to the table and puts his hand on Mike's shoulder.)*
You've got to see these people through different eyes, Mike.

Mike: No, I don't have to see these people ever again.
(He moves a third time to the table at DC.)
But, I do think I can see the car better from this table over here.

LaRoue:
(enters with her notepad in the direction of where they were, but turns to follow them to the third table.)

You boys ready to order?

Barry: I'll have the tuna sandwich.

LaRoue: *(to Mike)* And you?

Mike: *(looking at the menu, then at LaRoue, then taking a second look at her apron.)* Don't you have a clean apron?

LaRoue: What? Of course this is a clean apron!

Mike: No it's not! It's all smeared.

LaRoue: You're not seeing what's really there, mister.
(She holds out her apron.) These aren't spots. They're handprints.
It's just me and my kids at home now.
They made this apron for me to remind me to miss them as much as they miss me when I have to go to work,
but I guess some people only see stains.

(She turns to Barry) I'll be right back with your tuna.

Mike: I haven't ordered.

LaRoue: Yes you have. You'll have the "rude-a-baga." *(She exits)*

FREEZE #2: *(Mike looks off in the direction of LaRoue's exit.)*

LIGHT: **CHANGE TO SERMON LIGHT AS BARRY STEPS CENTER**

SERMON PART 2:

The "stained" Samaritan Woman.

Don't focus on outward stains; people have "eternal" value.

LIGHT: **RETURN TO "CAFÉ" LIGHTING**

THE PASTOR RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AND THE ACTION RESUMES

Barry: *(returning to Mike.)* So, I guess you do have a pretty good view of things from here, right Mike?

Mike: *(still in disbelief)* She didn't take my order.

Barry: No, that's one thing she didn't take from you.

LaRoue: *(enters, sets Barry's tuna sandwich in front of him.)* Here you go.
(turns to Mike) I'm sorry I didn't take your order.
You hurt my feelings, and I wanted to hurt you back, but that just lowers me to your level, and I think more of myself than I think of you, so what do you want to eat?

Mike: *(in disbelief)* I don't think I want anything!

LaRoue: (*catching herself*) Oh I'm sorry, there I go again, shootin' my mouth off. Please don't say anything to Barney; he's my boss. I really need this job. Money's tight enough as it is without me having to stand in the unemployment line.

Barry: We won't say anything to your boss.

Mike: (*to Barry*) Why not?
(*to LaRoue*) You've got some attitude problems, lady, and the only way to get past them is to admit them.

(*Mike looks smugly at Barry, and Barry looks bewildered at Mike's pious comment.*)

Mike: (*continuing to lecture LaRoue*) You were passing judgment on me without even knowing me! You have no idea what my life is like. I have withstood enormous shock and disappointment.

LaRoue: (*beginning to feel pity for Mike*) Oh.
(*She puts her hand on his arm.*) I'm sorry.

Barry: (*getting a chair for LaRoue*)
Here, join us. I think Mike is finally beginning to open up.
(*whispering to LaRoue*) This takes a lot of courage.

LaRoue: (*empathetically toward Mike.*) You're a very brave man.
It's hard, isn't it? You get up in the morning, do your best to survive the day, and hope that life will make a little more sense when you go to bed at night.

Mike: (*getting emotionally involved in the difficulty of life*)
Yes, I know exactly what you mean. It's so hard when you face tragedy around every corner, when you're just trying to....

LaRoue & Mike: ...do your best.

LaRoue: That's how I felt when my husband left us. He never even looked back! (*She confides in Mike.*) You know what really scares me, though?

Mike: (*leaning in to her.*) What?

LaRoue: We don't have any health insurance, and I have five small children. I feel like it's raining cannonballs, and I don't have an umbrella!

Mike: Oh...I know how you feel. That sense of impending doom that weighs on your chest like an anvil.

LaRoue: (*reaching for Mike's arm again.*) Oh, I'm sorry...here I go again.
If it's not money trouble, it's health problems, and if it's not about fevers, it's about the electrical problems in the house. I'm sure we're going to burn up in our sleep the way that house is wired...(catching herself) ...but this is about you.

Mike: (*piously*) Yes. It's time for me to be honest.

LaRoue: *(standing up and coaching Mike)* Go on...just start talking.
The words will come.
Come on...*(she motions to him to begin)* Life isn't fair....

Mike: That's right! Life isn't fair. You get thrown into impossible circumstances that you don't deserve!

LaRoue: Good! It's finally coming out! Keep talking.

Mike: And....and....

LaRoue: And don't go talking to me about love. There's a lie on two feet!
All this "happily every after" stuff is just a bad billboard.

Mike: Exactly! *(caught up in the emotion of the moment)*
I love by car. How can it be stranded in a town like this?

LaRoue: *(Shocked by the petty nature of Mike's trauma.)* Your car?

Mike: Yes! *(He pulls LaRoue to look out of the imaginary window.)*
Look at it! It's helpless in this perilous environment.
What an injustice! Some of life's questions will never be answered.

LaRoue: *(in disbelief)* All your belly-aching has been about a stupid car?

Mike: *(quipping back)* There you go again, passing judgment!

LaRoue: You're right there!
Call me judge and jury, but I know a nut when I see one.

Barry: *(jumping in to rescue the moment)* I'm sorry. Your troubles are world's more important than Mike's car.

LaRoue: *(growling at Mike)* Shock and disappointment. I'll show you shock....

Barry: We really are sorry that life has been so hard for you, but you're not in this alone.

LaRoue: No? Are you going to come and fix my house?

Barry: No, but we do have an electrician in our church who will be happy to come out and take a look. He's a friend of mine, and he owes me a favor. *(Barry hands her his business card.)*

LaRoue: He'd come all the way out here. *(She studies the card.)*
You're a pastor?

Barry: Yes, we both are. (*motioning to Mike, who looks embarrassed.*)

LaRoue: You'd send help all the way out here from...(*use the name of a nearby town*)?

Barry: Yes, I'm sure Mike will remember how to get here. (*Mike grimaces.*)
But, we have much more important help for you than re-wiring your house.

LaRoue: You do?

Mike: We do?

Barry: Yes. We can help you re-wire your whole life.

FREEZE #3: (*Mike and LaRoue both look at the business card while seated at the table.*)

LIGHT: CHANGE TO SERMON LIGHT AS BARRY STEPS CENTER

SERMON PART 3:

Jesus seized every opportunity to preach.
People are spiritually hungry. "The fields are white"!

LIGHT: RETURN TO "CAFÉ" LIGHTING

THE PASTOR RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AND THE ACTION RESUMES

LaRoue: (*to Mike*) You'd come all the way back out here and bring somebody to help me?

Mike: (*caught in a awkward moment*) Oh, sure...anything we can do to help.

LaRoue: (*sees the tow truck*) Speaking of help. Here comes the tow truck!
I guess that septic tank wasn't so tricky after all.
(*to Mike*) I'll introduce you. Serious trauma is always a little lighter when it's shared
by someone who really cares.
Come on. (*She pulls Mike off the stage in the direction of the door.*)

Mike: Now we can get back to normal!

Barry: (*follows them*) Normal? Tell me about normal, Mike.
What's it like, and where is it?"

The End

Unbiased Compassion “Cheat Script”

(Place this inside Carl and Barry’s legal-sized menus, and tape it to LaRoue’s tray.)

Barry: Wait for tow truck...eat? **SWITCH SEATS W/ BARRY**

ENTER LaRoue

LaRoue: (*Pest gag*) ...on a roll!

Mike:outa' here! **MOVE TO SL TABLE**

Barry: Explains...nervous; waiting, tow truck.

LaRoue: Get comfortable, tow truck, septic ...specials.....fresh catch...

Barry:Give us a minute

LaRoue exits

Mike: ...dying here...not a real place! ... real people! ... don't belong ...

FREEZE CUE 1:

Mike: I can't even breath this air! (*inhaler.*)

SERMON PART 1:

Stigma of Samaria

No Prejudice In the Gospel!

BARRY RETURNS, UNDO FREEZE

Barry: You've got to see these people through different eyes, Mike.

Mike: No, don't see ever again. **MOVES TO DC TABLE** ...See better

ENTER LaRoue

LaRoue:boys ready to order?

Barry: I'll have the tuna sandwich.

Mike: *(Apron gag)* clean apron?

LaRoue: Of course...

Mike: smearred.

LaRoue: seeing what's really there, mister. aren't spots...handprints.
BUT I GUESS SOME PEOPLE ONLY SEE THE STAINS.

Right back...tuna.

Mike: haven't ordered?

FREEZE CUE 2:

LaRoue: Yes, "rude-a-baga." *(She exits)*

SERMON PART 2:

The "stained" Samaritan woman

BARRY RETURNS, UNDO FREEZE

Barry: ... good view of things from here, right Mike?

Mike: **SHE** didn't take my order.

Barry: one thing she didn't take from you.

LaRoue: *(w/tuna)* I'm sorryhurt my feelings.... ... don't say anything to

Barry: we won't say anything.

Mike: Why not? attitude ..I have withstood shock and disappointment.

Barry: join us.....Mike talk about it.... takes a lot of courage.

LaRoue: brave man...**DO YOUR BEST**

LaRoue: **SERIOUS** husband left us..5 KIDS children...cannonballs,

LAROUÉ COACHES MIKE TO TALK ABOUT LIFE'S INJUSTICE

Mike: ... impossible circumstances that you don't deserve!

LaRoué: Good! coming out! ... love.... lie on two feet! "happily

Mike: I love by car. stranded in a town like this?

LaRoué: shocked about car!

Barry: troubles ... more imp. Mike's car. sorry ...life's hard.... not alone.

Barry: Send an electrician from Corona....give card.

Barry: Mike....remember..get here.. **MORE IMP. THAN WIRING HOUSE.**

FREEZE CUE 3:

Barry: ...help you re-wire your whole life.

SERMON PART 3:

**People are spiritually hungry
The fields are white!**

WHEN BARRY RETURNS, UNDO FREEZE

TOW TRUCK COMES...

LaRoué: I'll introduce you...

Mike: back to normal...

Barry: What's normal?