

Love, Our Friendship to Sinners

Introduction:

1. As a Christian, can you think of anything more important than: *Walking with the Master?*
 - we've been looking at Love, which should cause us to strive for: **Reaching New Heights in Our Love for Our Savior**
2. The Love of God is the greatest love that there is. As we grow in our understanding of it, there will be dramatic implications for us in the way we live.]
3. If we are going to 'Reach New Heights in Our Love for People', we have to 'Reach New Heights in Our Love for . . . the Lord'
 - > if we really love people the way God does, we won't focus so much on WHERE A PERSON IS IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE OR HOW THEY ARE DOING ECONOMICALLY (good or bad)
 - . . . instead, we will focus on WHERE THEY CAN BE if touched by THE GRACE OF GOD!
5. Key Verses to remember:
 - **Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**
 - **1 Sam. 16:7 Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart."**
6. What we DO NOT need are more programs.....We need a greater passion for God.]
7. I want to begin our time with a question:

Input: What observations did you make about this passage (Matthew 9)?

Input: What are some of the names/titles that come to mind regarding the Christ (His Person and work)?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • King of Kings | • Creator |
| • Lord of Lords | • Son of Man |
| • Master | • Son of God |
| • Redeemer | • Prince of Peace |
| • Messiah | |

8. One title He received was given to Him by a group of people who did not like Him -- in fact, they rejected Him – they called him: **"A Friend of Tax Collectors & Sinners"**
 - Jesus tells us about this in **Matthew 11:16-19**
 - Matthew 11:16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, 17 and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' 18 "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!' 19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they

say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, **a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!**' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

9. While "they" meant it for evil – for criticism and slander – "they" actually paid Jesus a compliment!

- Jesus gave us an explanation for this 'accusation' back in Matthew 9
- Explain the context: Matthew's conversion & desire to reach out to his friends – has a banquet – Jesus and the other disciples were invited as well

'tax-gathers' = social & religious outcasts [basically, many of them were 'crooks' – they had a very bad reputation; doesn't mean they were all dishonest, but a lot of them were]

'sinners' = included thieves, murderers, drunkards, prostitutes, and other irreligious and ungodly people

- Let's READ Matthew 9:10-13!!

"Frequently the unsaved are viewed as enemies rather than victims of the Enemy. Spirituality is viewed as separation from the unsaved. The new Christian is told he has 'nothing in common' with his unsaved associates. Quite frankly, I have a lot in common with them: a mortgage, car payments, kids who misbehave, a lawn to mow, a car to wash, a less-than-perfect marriage, a few too many pounds around my waist, and an interest in sports, hobbies, and other activities they enjoy. It is well to remember that Jesus was called 'a friend of sinners.' *A friend of sinners.*" – Joe Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism

* I'd like for us to study 3 principles from Matthew 9 that tell us why we should seek to find common ground with the unsaved and try to win them to Christ [adapted from MacArthur, Matthew 8-15]

#1: It's Logical to Be a Friend of Sinners.

- Jesus said, *"It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick."*
- I think it interesting that . . .

A. Jesus makes a simple and 'common sense' statement (even humanly speaking).

- human reasoning, even when cursed by sin, can reflect, to some degree, the image of God
- and here we have the God the Son making a very simple, but clear statement!
- Think about it: A doctor is supposed to treat sick people, right?
 - > What sort of doctor would spend all his time with *healthy* people and refuse to see those who are sick?
- That's would not even be humanly logical
 - > In addition, it would put him out of practice because healthy people don't go to the doctor (sometimes, sick people won't even go for fear of something being wrong)

Point: [Speaking to these Pharisees] If you are really as spiritually and morally perfect as you claim to be, you don't need any help from God or anybody else – **If you are really spiritually healthy, you don't need a spiritual physician!**

- On the other hand, these tax-gathers and sinners – who admit they are sick, and even the Pharisees recognized it – they are the ones who need God's way of salvation presented to them!
- They are the ones who are looking for the spiritual physician – and that's why Jesus was ministering to them

- And that's why you and I ought to reach out to lost people and try to minister the Gospel to them! – [they are spiritually sick and need a spiritual physician]

“Just as a physician is expected to go among people who are sick, a forgiver should be expected to go among those who are sinful. . . . Are you doctors who diagnose but have no desire to cure? Will you tell a person what his disease is and then refuse to give him medicine for it? What an indictment of their self-righteous hardheartedness! Those whom they diagnosed as sinful they were quite willing to let remain sinful.” – MacArthur, p. 64

- This is not a comfortable question, but each of us need to ask it:

B. How much am I like these Pharisees?

- They had outward form of godliness, but no inward holiness
- They had a lot of ritual, but no righteousness
- They loved themselves but not love others (the 2nd greatest commandment!)
- They claimed to teach, practice and defend God's law, but showed not compassion or mercy which the Law required

“Those who claimed to be well, proved themselves to be sickest of all!”

Q: Why should we seek to find common ground on which we can minister to the unsaved, because it's logical – lost people need a spiritual physician!

- but there is another reason Jesus gives us . . . reaching out to the unsaved is not only logical,

#2: It's Biblical to Be a Friend of Sinners.

- Jesus now argues directly from Scripture: *“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire compassion and not sacrifice.’”*

- Jesus cut to their heart with laser precision! – here's why:

- 1) The phrase, 'go and learn' was commonly used in rabbinic writing to rebuke those who did not know what they should have known. So Jesus used their own basis of authority against them!
- 2) Jesus is quoting Hoses 6:6, *“I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings”*

- Jesus was saying. . .

A. God's Word calls you to be merciful and forgiving, not judgmental and condemning!

- The fact that He was quoting from Hosea is all the more convicting

- > Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea (her husband) was a living example of Israel's unfaithfulness to God
- > Hosea continuing love and forgiveness of Gomer was a picture of the continuing love and forgiveness of God toward Israel

“Without compassion, all the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Pharisees were unacceptable to God. Without compassion they proved themselves to be more ungodly even than the despised tax-gathers and sinners, who made no pretense of godliness.” -- MacArthur, p. 65.

- We can be certain of this. . .

B. A person who shows little or no compassion to the lost has little or no compassion toward God. [the truth is, there is no love FOR God, therefore there is not love for people!]

- But you say, “My theology is sound” – “My moral standards are without question”
- But those are NOT the greatest commandments . . . loving God and loving others are!!
- Greek word for ‘**compassion**’ is a rendering of the Hebrew word for = ‘**covenant loyalty**’
 - > It is a loyal love to God demonstrated by acts of mercy and loving-kindness
 - > Something about which the Pharisees knew nothing!

“Ritual separated from righteousness is sham and an affront to God” – MacArthur, p. 67

***Amos 5:21-24** READ – a great passage revealing God’s thoughts about self-righteousness

Q: *Why do we need to build bridges of relationship with the lost* – it’s biblical!

Input: What other biblical commands or admonitions could you give for us as believers seeking to win people to Jesus Christ? (various answers)

#3: It’s Christ-like to Be a Friend of Sinners.

- Jesus defended His ministry to the ‘tax collectors and sinners’ on the basis of his Own authority:
‘I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’

A. He associated Himself and identified Himself with these groups because they were the one’s who needed Him!

- For us, it’s always easiest to minister to the ‘beautiful people’ – the one’s within our ‘comfort zone’
- But not Jesus – that’s not *logical*, it’s not *biblical*, and He declared by His own authority that it would be contradictory to His plan and purpose
 - ‘**Call**’ = was often used of inviting a guest to one’s home for food and lodging – in this context, we’re talking about a **Divine summons**
- Jesus didn’t come to call the self-righteous to salvation for the same reason He didn’t call the Pharisees to eat dinner with Him!
 - They were too proud and didn’t see their true condition of their heart // they looked good on the outside (‘beautiful people’) but inwardly: *“full of dead men’s bones”* // they honored Jesus with their LIPS, but their **HEARTS** were far from Him!

- Jesus made it very clear to the Pharisees, and to us, that . . .

B. He is in the business of calling a person who recognizes his/her sin and desires to turn FROM the sin and TO Him!

- The self-righteous person shuts himself off from God’s mercy because he refuses to acknowledge his need it
 - > if you don’t think you’re sick, why go to the doctor

“The kingdom of God is for the spiritually sick who want to be healed, the spiritually corrupt who want to be cleansed, the spiritually poor who want to be rich, the spiritually hungry who want to be fed, the spiritually dead who want to be made alive. It is for ungodly outcasts who long to become God’s own beloved children.” -- MacArthur. p. 67

- Reaching others is about seeing people where they are (sinners) and helping them get to know Jesus!

- We will never be effective in reaching others until we see ourselves as dirty, wicked, rotten sinners who are in need of spiritual physician – and if you've seen the 'doctor', then don't be selfish and fail to tell others of the cure!

Conclusion:

1. **We need some ask some personal questions:** – do a little examination:
 - > **What bridges are you building to the lost? // What is keeping you from building the relationship? // Are you more like the Pharisee than you would really like to admit? // What needs to change?**
2. **Key verse: Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**
3. **Think about the ETERNAL consequences of NOT being like Jesus in this area:**

Christian: God's love is not just a truth to be learned, it is a transformation to be experienced.

If you do not know Christ, I have good news for you today – JESUS IS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

Reaching New Heights in Our Love for People
Walking With the Master Matthew 9 – Jesus: A Friend of Sinners

Introduction:

Reaching New Heights in Our Love for Our Savior – John 18-21

- **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- **1 Sam. 16:7** Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.”

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Input: What observations did you make about this passage (Matthew 9)?

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*** Matthew 11:16-19**

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#1: It’s Logical to Be a Friend of Sinners.

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* If you are really spiritually _____, you don’t need a spiritual _____!

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#2: It's _____ - to Be a Friend of Sinners.

A. God's Word calls you to be _____ and _____, not _____ and _____!

"Without compassion, all the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Pharisees were unacceptable to God. Without compassion they proved themselves to be more ungodly even than the despised tax-gathers and sinners, who made no pretense of godliness." -- MacArthur, p. 65.

B. A person who shows little or no _____ to the lost has little or no compassion toward God.

'compassion' = 'covenant loyalty'

*Amos 5:21-24

Input: What other biblical commands or admonitions could you give for us as believers seeking to win people to Jesus Christ?

#3: It's _____ to Be a Friend of Sinners.

A. He associated Himself and identified Himself with these groups because they were the one's who _____ Him!

'Call' = a _____

B. He is in the business of calling a person who recognizes his/her sin and desires to turn _____ the sin and _____ Him!

"The kingdom of God is for the spiritually sick who want to be healed, the spiritually corrupt who want to be cleansed, the spiritually poor who want to be rich, the spiritually hungry who want to be fed, the spiritually dead who want to be made alive. It is for ungodly outcasts who long to become God's own beloved children." -- MacArthur. p. 67

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