

“Jesus, The Friend of Sinners”

One evening a woman was driving home from work when she noticed a huge truck behind her that was getting uncomfortably close.

As she stepped on the gas to put some distance between herself and the truck, the truck sped up also.

The faster she drove, the faster the truck drove.

Now very scared, the woman exited the freeway, but the truck also exited with her. The woman turned up a main street, hoping her pursuer would not be able to follow.

The truck even ran a red light to stay up with her. Reaching the point of panic now the woman quickly turned into a service station and bolted out of her car screaming for help.

The truck driver sprang from his truck and ran over to the car.

He yanked open the back door of the woman's car and pulled out a man that was hiding in the back seat.

The truck driver had seen the would be rapist enter the woman's car and hide there just before she had gotten into the car herself.

Unknown to her that the rapist was in the seat behind her, **she had run from the wrong person. The truck driver wasn't chasing her to harm her, he was chasing her to save her...**

Many people do not understand that the reason that Jesus is pursuing you, chasing after you, is because He loves you so much.

Jesus is pursuing you, not so He can condemn you, but so he can save you.

[Matthew 9:11,13](#)

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

13 Jesus said to them: But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Timothy 1:15

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Jesus is the ‘Friend of Sinners’, He knows everything that you have done in your life, and He still loves you!!!

This morning, we are going to see this Love that Jesus has for sinners just like you and me...

Matthew Is Called To Follow Jesus

A little background on Matthew: Matthew is a Jew who works for Herod Antipas under the Roman government as a tax collector.

- ⊕ **Most of the people at this time** had at least 3 different names a Jewish name a roman name and a Greek name.
- ⊕ **You will hear Matthew referred to** here as “*Levi*”, his Jewish name, but “Matthew” was his Roman name.

As the people would pass from other towns through Capernaum where Matthew lived and where the roman customs station was located they would be required to pay a fee or tax on any merchandise they brought in to town as well as a tax on each citizen that passed through this area occupied by Rome.

- ⊕ **Tax collectors** hired by the roman government **were paid a commission** on the taxes they collected so the collectors usually **overcharged** the travelers and kept the profits.
- ⊕ **As a result** of the reputation that tax collectors had as over chargers of taxes supporting the roman government and their constant contact with the “unclean” gentiles, Matthew was undoubtedly a hated and despised man .
- ⊕ **The tax collectors booth** was an elevated platform where the people had only a heads view of the top where the tax collector sat.
- ⊕ **Because Matthews booth** was located at the entrance to Capernaum everyone knew who he was.
- ⊕ **Matthew was responsible** for collecting the taxes of the commercial fishermen who fished the sea of Galilee nearby so Jesus had most likely seen Matthew several times as he passed through Capernaum where he lived with peter.

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

The question here for me is “**Jesus why are you asking someone like Matthew to come and follow You?**”

“Jesus if you want to get people to follow you and listen to you, then you had better pick men who have good reputations or you are going to lose your credibility with the people.”

☞ **Mathew was considered** to be the worst of the worst in this society but Jesus said to Matthew “*follow me*” and Matthew did so immediately .

One morning at the close of the Study, the pastor gave an invitation for any there, to come forward and receive Jesus as their Savior.

A man stood from the back of the church and made his way forward, tears flowing, and he took the pastor by the hand.

It was obvious that he was in a deep sense of conviction over his sin and he was trembling as he began to speak to the pastor.

What he meant to say was “**Pastor my life is full of sin...**”, what came out though was “**Pastor my sin is full of Life...**”

As soon as he had spoken he realized his mistake, but the pastor took that opportunity to remind everyone there that day that this was the reality of all of us...Our sins are full of Life.

Matthew is right out there in the middle of life, living large as a Tax collector, and apparently not ashamed of it at all.

At night he parties with his friends and thinks nothing of it, His sin is full of life...**OR SO HE THINKS...**

- ☞ **That is until** Jesus come by the tax collection booth and tell Matthew to “Follow Me”.
- ☞ **From that moment on**, Matthew begins to understand that his life was not real living, truly living life large is following after Jesus Christ.

The message for us is that Jesus will accept you no matter who you are or what you have done he looks past your imperfections and inadequacies and sees the person you can become if you give yourself to his lordship.

- ☞ **The cost of following Jesus for Matthew** was tremendous. Tax collectors were very wealthy individuals.
- ☞ **Matthew not only lost his fortune** financially he also would be forever prohibited from serving the roman government again.
- ☞ **When Matthew got up from his booth as a tax collector** and followed Jesus it cost him everything but when he was called he went immediately and never looked back **what about us?**

Matthew 9

10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, **many tax collectors and sinners** came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

Notice the response that Matthew has to Jesus call to follow him he gathers all of his tax collector friends to meet Jesus.

- ☞ **He has a sit down dinner** for Sinners and Reprobates with Jesus, at Matthew's home.
- ☞ **These were a group of people** that the religious Jews and most of society would have nothing to do with they were outcasts.
- ☞ **All tax collectors** had been excommunicated from the synagogue, so **Jesus could never have met any of these men** if it had not been for Matthews invitation to dine with him and Jesus at Matthew's home.

The word "Sinners" here is "**Hamartalos**" in the Greek (**ham-ar-to-los**) literally someone who's entire life is devoted to sin.

- ☞ "**Hamartalos**" was used of the immoral people, the pagans and even the common people who did not know the law of God or keep the rigid standards the Pharisees had placed upon themselves.

Matthew 9

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

For the religious Jew eating a meal with someone was the most intimate thing a person could do.

- ☞ **They believed** that as you both partook of the same elements and **the elements became a part of your body** you were becoming a part of the other person also having taken the same food together.

This is the chief meaning behind why we take Communion together on the first Sunday of each month.

- ☞ **The bread represents** Jesus Body, the Juice His blood.
- ☞ **We are saying** as we eat them together, "*Jesus I want your life and your sacrifice to become a part of me in every way...*"

But don't miss the Importance of this: For Jesus to sit down in the home of a despised tax collector and other sinners and eat a meal was unbelievable to the religious leaders.

- ☞ **The religious leaders** are probably very confused. Jesus spoke and taught the scriptures with such authority in a way they had never witnesses before and he had the power to heal every disease.

The Harmony of the Gospels Bible Commentary by Rob Robinson

- ☞ **But If Jesus was sent by God** how could Jesus associate himself with these men they had always been taught to separate themselves from the “**Unclean**” the “**Gentiles**” and the “**Sinners**”.
- ☞ **The answer** is found in the next verse:

Matthew 9

12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

- ☞ **Notice in verse 12** that Jesus “*heard*” the conversation of the Pharisees the results are recorded for us here in verse 12.

Here is the most important part of today’s study: Jesus came to save people who have messed up their life, and those who others have messed up their lives.

- ☞ **When Jesus looks at you and your life**, He doesn’t come and shake His head in disgust, He nods it up and down, as if to say to you; “I understand how you feel. And I can to do something about it!”
- ☞ **If you have an awareness of your own failures**, and you are ashamed of them, then Jesus is the one for you, that is why He came, to take away your guilt and your shame and take it upon Himself.
- ☞ **In exchange** for you giving all your failures and guilt to Jesus, He given back to you a perfect, clean record with not one failure on it

Now In verse 13 Jesus answers the religious leaders from one of their own proverbs about the healthy and the sick.

Matthew 9

13 "But go and learn what this means: `I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

A doctors office is filled with people who are sick they know they have a need they have come to someone they believe can make them well.

- ☞ **The doctor only spends his time** trying to help those who want to get well.
- ☞ **This is the reason Jesus came:** to help those who know they are sick those who know they have a sin problem and they have come to Jesus the great physician for help.
- ☞ **Jesus never spends time** on people who don’t want to be helped.

The religious leaders just don’t get it!

- ☞ **Then Jesus** tells the religious leaders to “*Go and learn what this means*”.
- ☞ **Whenever a rabbi** had a student that was just not grasping what he was teaching he would say to the student “***Go and learn...***”
- ☞ **The student** needed to go back and study the scripture the rabbi was teaching until they grasped the meaning behind it.

The religious leaders thought they knew the scriptures but Jesus is telling them to go back and learn “you have missed something guys...”

You know sometimes, I have people in the fellowship who cause problems within the body of Christ.

- ⊕ **They come up** with all kinds of off the wall statements and many times stir up hurt within the fellowship.
- ⊕ **I have to go to that person** and say to them, *“You need to spend a little time away from the fellowship, studying the Bible and seeking the Lord on your own, so that He can show you what is wrong in your heart.”*

Now, if we ask someone to do this and their heart is right, they will gladly take the time, seek the Lord and come back with a new attitude.

- ⊕ **But if they get bent out of shape** when we ask them to do this and instead give us a hard time about it, then it become very obvious that what we feared was wrong, is wrong, the persons heart is not right to wards the Lord, and there are some wrong motivations there.

Here Jesus has this exact problem with the Pharisees, they don’t get what Jesus is saying, so He tells them to go and spend a little time alone and seek the Lord through the Word of God.

- ⊕ **Jesus is referring to** the correct meaning of the scripture from Hosea 6:6

[Matthew 9](#)

13 "But go and learn what this means: `I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance

[Hosea 6:6](#)

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

This verse of scripture speaks of the importance from the Lord’s viewpoint that He despises thoughtless mechanical sacrifices, what He really desires is things done with all of our hearts.

- ⊕ **Religious rituals** are completely empty to the Lord if they are carried out with our actual heart being far from God.
- ⊕ **None of us** wants **robotic mechanical artificial love**, we all desire genuine from the heart love and affection.
- ⊕ **We want to know** that the person that we love, also loves us with a genuine, heartfelt love that is sincere and committed to us.



We are created “In the Image of God”, that means that the same genuine love that we desire from each other, is the same kind of genuine love that the Lord desires from us.

In the Book, *“The Fire of your life”*, **Maggie Ross** tells the story of **Emma**, a survivor of the Holocaust, who everyday at 4 pm, stood outside of the Manhattan Church and screamed insults at Jesus.

Finally the pastor, went outside and said to Emma, *“Why don’t you go inside and tell Him?”*

She turned and went into the church and was in there for over an hour before the pastor became worried about her and went inside to check on her.

He found Emma face down at the altar of the Cross, not moving a muscle, but sobbing.

He reached down and touched her shoulder, she looked up and with tears in her eyes said to the pastor, *“I didn’t realize how much he loves me...”*

When you come face to face with Jesus Cross, and see Him hanging there and see how much he is suffering, and realize that He is doing it all for you, because He loves you so much, **IT CHANGES EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE.**

Why are you here this morning?

- ⊕ **Is it out of habit** or religious duty?
- ⊕ **Or have you fallen in Love with the man Jesus**, who you discovered loved you so much that he was beaten to death and hung in a **cross to pay for all the wrong you have done?**
- ⊕ **If any person** has truly seen Jesus on His Cross, and how much it cost Him, it will change your life.



The religious leaders were just going through the religious motions but did not really have a heart after God.

- ⊕ **Something else:** these religious leaders had separated themselves from the people that they should have been ministering to those in physical and spiritual need.
- ⊕ **They separated themselves** because they believed that people were “unclean” and that they should not fellowship with the unclean.

We see here in verse 11 and 12, -the doctrine of “**separatism**” separating yourself from everyone who does not look like you or worship like you.

- ⊕ **The Pharisees practiced it** and **the church has practiced** it in the past but we do not see Jesus practicing “separatism” anywhere in the scriptures.
- ⊕ **In the 1950’s** the protestant church would not have fellowship with dr. Billy graham because **he had leaders from the catholic church** and also leaders **from the black church on his podium**, that was wrong!

The Harmony of the Gospels Bible Commentary by Rob Robinson

Listen, there is only one Church of Jesus Christ. It is not made up of any one church, but it is made up of the entire Body of Christ of all believers everywhere.

☞ **We should be seeking opportunities** to have fellowship with all believers, all of the time.

☞ **This is what myself** and the pastors here in town are working towards.

As far as non believers, and those who lead a reprobate lifestyle:

☞ **As Christians** we are called to live a different lifestyle but **we cannot separate ourselves from the world** if we ever hope to reach others with the message that there is a better life and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Jesus met with the reprobate, and witnessed to them of Gods love for them and their need to Repent and be saved, but Jesus never participated in their sin...

☞ **It is very dangerous** for a believer to go to a place where these kinds of people are at, without the support of 1 or 2 other believers.

☞ **You are not strong enough** by yourself to go into there places by yourself, no matter what you might think about you maturity level.

☞ **Always take 1 or 2** other believers with you, like Jesus sent out the disciples...

Luke 10:1

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

9 Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.

10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion

Let's compare Matthews account of this story with mark and Luke:

There are 2 additions in mark's account 1 in vs 13 1 in vs 14:

Mark 2:13-17

13 Then He went out again by the sea; and all **the multitude came to Him, and He taught them.**

☞ **Mark adds the detail** that there were also a multitude an uncountable amount of people who were also listening to Jesus as he tried to instruct the religious leaders.

Notice that what people are attracted to is JESUS.

☞ **Not the disciples**, or their church, they are attracted to Jesus.

☞ **We are in the business** of promoting only one thing here: JESUS.

☞ **We are not to promote Calvary Chapel**, our style of worship, or any other part of this church, we are to Lift up and point people to Jesus.

When we do this, then Jesus will build His church.

John 12:32

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

You are not here to promote yourself or your ideas, you and I are here to only lift up and promote Jesus.

- ⊕ **It says** that the crowd of people “*Came to Him*”.
- ⊕ **The word** “*came*” to Jesus in the Greek is “**Erchomai**” (er’-khom-ahee) which in the Greek language, is what is called an “**Imperfect tense**”, meaning that ***the people kept on coming to Jesus in a steady stream.***

Don’t miss the fact here that there was a huge crowd of people constantly coming to hear Jesus teach.

- ⊕ **Whenever just the Word of God** is taught, people will come to hear it.
- ⊕ **That is all that people need is to hear** the Word of God, not a pastors opinion or pet sermon.
- ⊕ **People need** what God has to say to them, and that is all.

Jeremiah 23:29

“Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

Jeremiah 23:28

“The prophet who has ... My word, let him speak My word faithfully.

We are to speak what Gods word has already said, not what we think or what we feel...

Matthew 9

14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

- ⊕ **That is all** that Jesus said to Levi, or Matthew, “Follow Me”.
- ⊕ **All that Phillip did** was bring people to Jesus and say, “here He is...”

John 1:45-46

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” ¶ Philip said to him, “Come and see

Just invite people to church to come and hear the Word of God about Jesus, and that is enough, the Holy Spirit will do the rest...

The message that the Holy Spirit is bringing to us this morning is subtle, but it is powerful:

The Harmony of the Gospels Bible Commentary by Rob Robinson

- ☞ **You don't have to run and hide from Jesus**, He is not mad at you, He does not want to condemn you.
- ☞ **He loves you** and He wants to help you by cleansing you of all of your guilt and sin, so that you can live you life with peace and real Joy.
- ☞ **Jesus is not afraid** to hang out with sinners, because that is the reason that He came to earth, to reach you right where you are right now.

And then after you come to Him with all of your guilt and your shame, and Jesus makes you clean and takes the guilt away, and you finally have peace and genuine joy...

Your job now is just to bring people to Jesus and introduce them to Him.

Exalt only Jesus, not Calvary Chapel or any other church, or pastor Rob, but just lift up Jesus and people will be saved and the church will grow.

And remember that Jesus lives now inside of you, and He is always near, never far.

If you feel far from the Lord this morning, guess who moved?...you, but you can come back this morning and be accepted and start all over with Jesus again, if you ant to...

James 4:8

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

One morning on the way to school, two kindergartners were talking to their mother as she drove...

"Mommy, right now Jesus lives in my heart, but when we get to heaven He's going to get to come out and play with me..."

What a wonderful reality: Right now Jesus lives within the hearts of every person who has invited Him into their life.

The reality is though that very soon, we are going to meet the Lord in the Air at the Rapture of the Church, and then we will always be with the Lord, and **He will be able to come out an play with us every day...**

This is a day to draw near to Jesus and renew that love for Him that we have, and get back to the place of a simple trust and sincere love for Him...