

## "The Friend of Sinners"

---

### *Matthew 11:19*

*A television broadcast sermon delivered*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023**

*By*

**GABE STALNAKER**

---

*Kingsport Sovereign Grace Church*

*2709 Rock Springs Rd*

*Kingsport, TN 37664*

Our message today will come from one line in Matthew 11 verse 19. One line specifically, let me begin reading verse 19 and I'll point out which line it is. It says, "The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, behold a man gluttonous and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." And that's the line that I want us to focus on. From Matthew 11 verse 19. The friend of publicans and sinners. What a wonderful statement is made concerning our Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ. This is a glorious truth from God's word. The Lord Jesus Christ is the friend of publicans and sinners. Publicans were horrible people, horrible people. Members of the mafia, they are described as being. But that's what the word of God says about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the friend of publicans and sinners. In James 2 verse 23, God said, Abraham is my friend. That's what he said. Abraham is my friend. Now, who was Abraham? Well, Abraham was an idol worshiper. That's who Abraham was. He was an idol worshiper, until God called him at the age of 75. He was 75 years old before the Lord revealed himself to Abraham and called Abraham to the truth. And I want us to think about something for just a minute here. This is maybe gonna be a little bit shocking, and this may sound a little bit blatantly honest, but let's be a little bit blatantly honest. Okay? Let's really think about something. You know who Abraham is. You know the story of Abraham and his wife Sarah, and their children, and you know the story. All right, let's think about this for just one second, okay? After God called him, all right? We're talking about Abraham. God said, he's my friend. Who was Abraham? He was an idol worshiper until God called him. And after God called him, he was unfaithful to his wife. Can we acknowledge that? He did not believe God. He did not have faith in God's word to him. He did not wait on the Lord. Instead, he took

matters into his own hands and he tried to perform the work of God for him. God promised to give Abraham a son and Abraham said I'll just go ahead and accomplish that work for God, in Ishmael, his son that he had on his own. Ishmael. Isn't it amazing that the man who is called the father of the faithful wasn't faithful, not to God or to his wife? Isn't that amazing? Can we acknowledge the reality of this? I know this is shocking to think about, but can we acknowledge the reality of this? He was not faithful to God or to his wife and he pled his own works to God. This is Abraham we're talking about. He said to God surely Ishmael was the one you were talking about. Surely you were talking about Ishmael, the work of my own doing. Isn't it amazing that the one of whom the scripture says believed God in his own flesh, of his own doing, he didn't believe God. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that interesting? Do you find that at all interesting? Well, if that's the case, why does the scripture say that he was faithful and he believed God? It's because God was faithful for him and God was faithful to him. That's the reason why. God did a work in him and caused him to believe God in spite of himself. God had mercy on him in spite of himself. God showed grace to him in spite of himself. God did all of that for Abraham in spite of Abraham. And then God counted God's own work to Abraham and in Abraham for righteousness, the scripture says. What God did in him, God counted that in Abraham for righteousness. That means good works, good deeds, well done. Now, why would God do all that for Abraham? Why would he do all of that for Abraham? Here's the reason why. It's because he is the friend of sinners. He is the friend of sinners, in Christ and that's the key. That's the key to it all. In Christ outside of Christ, God is angry with sinners. This whole thing hinges on Christ whether we are in Christ or out of Christ. In God's own word, he said and again, this is strong language, but God said this, in God's own word, he said he hates sinners outside of Christ. Outside of Christ he must punish sinners. He must condemn sinners and damn sinners and cast them out. He has to, has to cast them out. Say, depart from me, I never knew you. But in Christ, in the Lord Jesus Christ, all because of what Christ did for sinners. In Christ, redeemed, justified, sanctified sinners can be called the friends of God. That is amazing. If we have Christ, we have something truly amazing. In John 15, he said the Lord Jesus Christ said, "you are my friends." He said, "from hence forth, I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth but I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." How amazing it is to hear, and realize, and know, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the friend of sinners. So amazing. Every sinner that the father chose and gave to him, every single one of them. Now, what we're gonna look at today, this is proof of the fact that our Lord is indeed the friend of sinners. We're gonna prove that today. In this I want us to see how he was the

friend of sinners and I have seven ways for us to look at. Seven ways that we can see how Christ was the friend of sinners, and I'm just gonna go right through these. If you have your Bible with me and would like to follow along, you can do that. Or if you wanna write these down and go back and look at it later, you can do that. Because I have a scripture for each one of these to prove and to show us how Christ was the friend of sinners. Okay? The first one is in Romans chapter eight. If you would like to look with me at Romans chapter eight, verse three. It says, "for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." What could the law not do? It couldn't justify sinners. It could not say, well done. You're worthy to walk through the gates of heaven. It could not do it. Because this flesh is so sinful, so insufficient, so weak for the demands of the law. So it says "what the law could not do and that it was weak through the flesh. God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin or by a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh." Now, how do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? Just think about this. This is so amazing. He came in the likeness of them. How do we know that he's the friend of sinners? He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. He came in the likeness of sinners. Think about that. He could have come in any likeness he wanted to. This is God. He could have come in any likeness he wanted to. If he wanted to. He could have taken upon himself the nature of angels. He could have done that. But Hebrews two tells us that he did not do that. Instead, he chose to take upon himself the seat of Abraham, sinners. He willingly numbered himself with transgressors. That's what the scripture says. He was numbered with the transgressors and he came to this earth in the likeness of sinful flesh. This is God manifest in the flesh. God came down. That is amazing to me. I hope that's amazing to you, because it's worthy for us to be amazed by it. God Almighty came to this earth in the likeness of sinful flesh. That's the first way that we can know he is the friend of sinners. He came in the likeness of him. All right, here's the second way. If you'd like to look at Luke chapter 15. It says in Luke 15 verse one, "then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured." They were not happy. They were the religious people. All the publicans and sinners were just flocking to him and the religious people they were not happy about it. Saying, "this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." He receives them. He hugs them, he gets a plate, and he sits down and eats with them. He spends time with them. How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? Truly, how do we know that? We know it because he spent all of his time on this earth in fellowship with them, in fellowship with sinners. He did not spend all of his time with pharisees and scribes and religious teachers. He didn't do it. He spent all of his time in fellowship with sinners. Everywhere he went, he was in the company of sinners and he welcomed

them and he received them. He walked with them, he talked with them, he ate with them. The religious people were constantly shocked by who he associated with. Constantly. It was sinners. It was publicans. Look up the definition of a publican sometime. It's shocking, that's a horrible sinner. Publicans and sinners, it was the lost. It was the sick. It was the poor. It was the outcast, the forsaken, the shunned. The condemned. That's who it was. Those who had reputations, those who were known, and had reputations for being murderers, harlots. Think about the reality of this. Those who were known and had reputations. Is this good news for you at all? Are you a sinner? Have you committed things that just weigh on you and just horrify you. Our Lord Jesus Christ associated with men who were known to be murderers, women who were known to be harlots? If you know that story in John eight, I love the story when some Pharisees caught a woman, caught in the act of adultery and they brought her to the Lord to be judged according to the law. And one by one he convicted them and he sent 'em away. They felt guilty and he sent 'em away. And then he looked at that woman and he said is nobody left here to condemn you? And she said, no, Lord, they're all gone. And he said, well, neither do I go your way and sin no more. How could he say that to her? Was she a sinner? Absolutely. They were too in their self-righteousness. They brought her and her sins. Well, they were sinners too. How could he say you're not condemned? It's because he was condemned in her place. He bore the judgment of God for her and set her free, and he told her, you're free to go. You're free from the condemnation of your sins. That's glorious, isn't it? That woman at the well in John four, already had five husbands and the man that she was living with at that moment was not her husband. And this is what the Lord said to her. He said, if you knew who was speaking to you right now, you would ask of me and I would give you living water and you would never thirst again. He said, I'll give you eternal life. Eternal life. The Lord is so much more merciful than we are. He really is. He is so much more merciful. Think about Saul of Tarsus. Just think about Saul of Tarsus, how he persecuted God's people. He persecuted the church. He hated the name Jesus Christ. His mission was to get the name Jesus Christ removed from this world. And the Lord said, he's a chosen vessel of mercy to me. How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? It's because while he was on this earth, he was not ashamed to call them brethren. He was not ashamed. He spent his time on this earth in fellowship with them. All right. Number three. Right here in Luke chapter 15, verse two says "the Pharisees and scribes murmured saying this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, what man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the 90 and nine in the wilderness and go after that, which is lost until he find it. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders,

rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors saying unto them, rejoice with me. For I have found my sheep, which was lost. I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over 90 and nine just persons which need no repentance." That's the gospel. That's the good news message of the gospel. How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? It's because he preached the glorious message of the gospel, to sinners. That's who he preached it to. All of the good news that he had was for sinners. It was all for sinners. In Luke chapter four, he stood up to read Isaiah 61 what a glorious passage that is. And he said, "the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." To sinners. He said, I'm here to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives. I'm here to give sight to the blind, liberty to them who are bruised. All of his good news gospel message, all of it, was for sinners. It was all for sinners. All right, number four, Luke 22. Over in Luke 22, this is verse 31. It says, "and the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? It's because while he was on this earth he prayed for them, he prayed for them. He prayed for sinners. In John 17, he said, "Father, I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but I do pray for them which thou has given me for they are thine. All mine are thine and thine are mine, and I'm glorified in them." He said, I pray for 'em. From the cross, he cried Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. He prayed for sinners in a heart of compassion, in a heart of tenderness and a heart of mercy. In a heart of grace He prayed for 'em. He prayed for sinners. You know, people say, pray for me. I'm sure you've said that. Pray for me. Does it not do your heart so much good to think that the Lord Jesus Christ prays for his people. He prays for them in tenderness, kindness. He prays for 'em. Alright number five, John 15, verse 13 says, "Greater love hath no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends." Greater love hath no man than this. That a man lay down his life, lay down his life for his friends. How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? Here's how we know. He died for them. He died for them. While he was on this earth, he died for them. Romans five, verse six says "When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for" you know what the next two words are right there "the ungodly" not the Godly. Which is what people naturally think. Christ died for the godly, godly people. Oh, he's a godly man. She's a godly woman. No, when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. That's what I am. That's what you are. Ungodly in our flesh, ungodly. Go into your mind, go into your heart, go into your thoughts. What's in there? Ungodliness. That's what's in there. While we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us, sinners. First John four verse 10 says "here in his love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." The bloody victim sacrifice, the blood covering atonement for our sins. The Lord Jesus Christ proved his love for sinners by dying for them. A man can say he loves them, but oh, he proved it. He died for them, for them, having loved his own. He loved them to the end, all the way to the end. All right, number six, if you'd like to turn with me to Romans eight. Romans eight, verse 31. It says, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." How do we know that Christ is the friend of sinners? It's because he is right now, making intercession for sinners. Right now. He is right now pleading on behalf of sinners entreating for favor. That's what the word intercession means, entreating the Father. He entreats the Father for favor toward us. Based on what? What is he? What is his plea based on? It's based on his own blood and his own righteousness. For my bloods sake, for my righteousness sake, Father, I plead intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25 says, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." What wonderful news that is. He ever lives. He will forever live to do that for his people. To make intercession for his people. So how do we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly the friend of sinners? How do we know? Number one, it's because he came in the likeness of them. Number two, he spent his time on this earth in the fellowship of them. Number three, he preached the glorious message of the gospel to them. That's who the gospels to, it's to sinners. Number four, it's because he prayed for them. Number five, it's because he died for them. Number six, it's because he arose and he now makes intercession for them. And here's the last one, number seven, if you want to turn with me to John 14, it says in John 14 verse one, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me." He is God. In the beginning was the Word. The word was with God. The word was God. He said, you believe in the Father, believe in me. Verse two, he said, "In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would've told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." How do we know that Jesus Christ is the friend of sinners? It's because he said he would come back to forever receive them to himself. What good news that is, he promised. He came, he accomplished, he ascended, and he has promised that he is coming back to receive his people to himself. First Timothy

1:15 says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". Sinners. Hearing that, knowing that, you know what that makes me wanna cry. I'm the chief. We're the chief, aren't we? We're the chief if he came to save sinners. Lord, save us. We're the chief. Thank God for our friend. Thank God for the friend of sinners, our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior.