

JESUS, FRIEND OF SINNERS

Pastor Lucas Almeida—Central Baptist Church—August 7th, 2022

Mark 2:13–17

(ESV)

[13] He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. [14] And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

[15] And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. [16] And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” [17] And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

INTRODUCTION

There is no greater need we experience in life than to have our sins forgiven by Jesus.

JESUS MEETS THE SINNERS

The heart of Jesus’ teaching—repent and believe the gospel.

Levi the son of Alphaeus = Matthew, the writer of the first gospel

Tax collectors

- Often Jews who purchased the right from the Romans to tax their fellow Jews
- Paid a flat rate to Rome
- Profit was basically whatever they could extort beyond the amount they were due
- Considered unclean
- ‘Tax collector’ was often used as a synonym for the filthiest sinners

Jesus can associate with sinners because Jesus has the power and authority to give to sinners that which they most need—forgiveness.

Isaiah 9:2—*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*

“Follow me!” = a command to forsake all else and pursue Christ alone

Philippians 3:8—*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

When cancel culture meets Christ, Christ wins every time.

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.*

—O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing, **Charles Wesley**

Romans 4:5—*And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness...*

JESUS MEETS THE SINNERS UNAWARE

One of the most entrapping powers of sin is the power of blindness.

2 Corinthians 4:4—*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

A sinner unaware is blinded to his greatest need—Christ.

Scribes were teachers of the Law and believed the messianic kingdom would come through their obedience and purity.

Jesus always comes for those who recognize their need for him.

Luke 18:10–14—*[10] “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.*

We need Christ because we can't be Christ.

Romans 5:20—*Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more...*

Grace is a completely unmerited favor we receive as a gift from Christ.

Grace is only given to those who know and understand their desperate need for the forgiveness that can only be found in Christ.