



A Friend To Sinners Tim Canup

From prison, John the Immerser sent two messengers to ask Jesus, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” (Luke 7:20). Jesus answered this by providing adequate evidence that truly He was. After those messengers had left, Jesus turned to the crowd that was present and spoke concerning His imprisoned forerunner. Later in this same chapter, Jesus makes a comparison of that generation; how they had illogically compared Him with John. Concerning their estimation of Jesus, they said, “The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” (Luke 7:34). This was the world’s concept of Jesus at this time. There is an important truth that should be learned from this statement.

A marquee in front of a church building, read, “Jesus, A Friend of Sinners.” If we stop and think about it, this statement is incorrect. Although the self-righteous religious leaders of Jesus’ time looked at Him as a “friend of sinners” does not mean that He is! Words are important, even the little ones. To say that Jesus is a friend of sinners is to say that He associates with and endorses their lifestyle. It would be more accurate to say that Jesus is a friend to sinners.

In a world that is vehemently pushing tolerance, Jesus is a friend to sinners, not because He ignores the sins of mankind; but rather, because He has the solution for the problem. Jesus is a friend to sinners like a doctor is a friend to a sick person. Jesus never approved, overlooked, ignored or “tolerated” the sin of any person. He always cared for and loved the person, but never ignored their sin.

On one occasion, Jesus was having a meal with some of His day, and the Pharisees asked His disciples, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” (Matthew 9:11). Jesus’

response to this should be noted, He said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:12-13). A true friend is not one who ignores or tolerates sin; but rather, a true friend is one who will provide the cure for sin. Jesus truly is the greatest friend to sinners.

If you would like to know more about this true friend to sinners or the commandments that He has given that will wash away your sins and put you into the church that belongs to Him, or if you would like to enroll in an in-home Bible study or in a correspondence course by mail (no cost or obligation to you), please return this coupon to: Back To The Bible; 221 Barnett Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694 or visit us online at: www.wjchurchofchrist.org

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