

## Jesus Christ: A Friend of Sinners

### Introduction:

1. It is interesting that when Jesus walked the earth, He didn't spend a lot of time hanging out with the religious crowd. You know... the "in crowd." The religious insiders.
2. In fact, **they** are the ones that gave Christ the hardest time. They were always sparring with Him and opposing Him. Luke 5:27-32 is a great example.
  - Matthew (a tax collector) throws a party (in Jesus' honor) and invites his friends (the undesirables of society).
  - Notice the reaction in verse 30. How does Jesus respond? vs. 31-32
  - Later on, in Luke 7:34, we are told that the Scribes and Pharisees referred to Jesus as a friend of publicans and sinners. They didn't mean it as a compliment, but as a term of scorn and contempt.
  - But Jesus welcomed the name! Thank God He is a friend of sinners!
3. But how was Jesus a friend of sinners? The Bible teaches that we have all sinned against God. We all stand guilty (thousands of times over) of breaking God's law.
4. Jesus was sinless. He was the Son of God, perfectly holy and righteous in His character (Hebrews 4:15b). So how is Jesus our friend? Let's look into God's Word and see how Jesus is a friend of sinners. Jesus is our friend:

### First, because He tells us the truth about our lost condition

1. Friends are honest, even when it hurts. Proverbs 27:5-6
  - A good friend doesn't always tell you what you **want** to hear, but what you **need** to hear.
2. When Jesus walked the earth, He was brutally honest with people about what He saw:
  - With the self-righteous, He told them they were hypocrites.
  - With the religious crowd, He told them, "*Ye are of your father, the devil.*"
  - Listen to what He told them in Matthew 23:14-15. This didn't go over real well, but Jesus loved them enough to tell them the truth.
3. Jesus confronted people's sin and told them they needed to turn from their sin to God, or face dreadful consequences (Luke 13:3). He didn't come to pity sinners, or pacify them, or patronize them in their sin. A true friend doesn't do this.
4. Look again at verses 31-32. He basically says, "You are sick with a deadly disease called sin. Repent of it, turn from it. You have offended a holy God."
  - Jesus came as a friend to sinners, telling them where their sin will eventually lead them. Luke 12:4-5
5. After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, He ascended up to heaven, and He appeared from heaven to a man named Paul, and gave him 13 books of the New Testament. Listen to what Christ said about all of us in Romans 3:9-19. This is His commentary on the human race, not mine.

6. Jesus is our friend because He loves us enough to tell us the truth about our lost and sinful condition. We have all turned away and rebelled against God, and our sin is leading us down a path of eternal destruction.

### **Second, because He sacrificed to save us from our lost condition**

1. There is nothing worse than a friend who is always telling you what is wrong with you, but never tells you how to fix the problem or never offers to help.
  - Pharisees were real good at diagnosing the sins of others, but never offered a cure or helped to solve the problem.
2. Jesus isn't this kind of friend. Yes, He tells us the truth about ourselves. He tells us that the problem is sin, and we stand guilty and condemned by a holy God.
  - We all have a massive sin debt, and the payment is eternal death.  
Romans 6:23a
3. But Jesus did everything needed to help us solve our sin problem. This is precisely why Jesus came to earth. He was on a search and rescue mission.  
Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15
4. What was God's plan to rescue sinners from eternal death? Christ died for us (Romans 5:6, 8)! What a friend of sinners! John 15:13
  - He lived in perfect obedience to God's law (He was without blemish and spot), and then He willingly chose to die in our place the death we deserve.
  - He took our judgment, our punishment, the wrath we deserve, the sin debt we owe, and He paid it on the cross.
5. **Illustration:** Imagine a judge pronouncing guilt, and then stepping off his bench, and paying the fine.
  - God is called the Judge of all the earth, and one day there will be a Day of Judgment. Psalm 96:13
  - But do you know what God did? As the Judge, He came to this earth, took on flesh and blood, was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, lived a sinless life, and then paid our sin debt for us on the cross. He died for us! The Judge stepped off the throne and paid the debt for us.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. What if the guilty one would have refused the judge's mercy and said, "No, I will pay this debt myself." The judge would be like, "Okay, if you won't accept my gift of mercy, take him away to prison."
2. There are those who do this with Jesus Christ. I don't understand it, but it is true. Jesus is the Friend of sinners, but one day this Friend will take His seat as the righteous Judge.
  - Those who embraced their sin, and refused His mercy, and would not receive Him (instead of receiving a free pardon) will have to pay full restitution for their sin. Justice must be served.
3. Jesus has paid the sin debt you owe, but you choose to either accept it or refuse it. How do you accept it?

- You must see your sin as God sees it, and your desire must be to turn in faith to Jesus Christ. You turn to Him for salvation and forgiveness. You place your faith in Him and accept what He did for you on the cross on your behalf.
  - The moment you turn in faith to Christ, your debt is stamped “Paid in Full,” and the righteousness of Christ is put on your account. Romans 3:22
4. Do you believe? Have you received Christ (the Friend of sinners) into your heart and life? He will not force Himself upon you.