

## HE EATS WITH SINNERS

A Lesson from Jesus for the Church Today

From Matthew 9:9-13 and 11:19

Matthew—How was he seen through the eyes of those around him?

A member of a hated, despised group  
 Considered an enemy  
 A cheater  
 A traitor

People's natural reaction

Withdraw from him, ostracize him  
 Insult him, at least behind his back  
 Consider themselves better than him, above him

Matthew—How was he seen through Jesus' eyes?

Wanted  
 Included  
 Able to become a disciple  
 Worthy to become a disciple  
 Invited to discipleship  
 Valued

Jesus called one—Matthew, but many came.

The key to the many is often giving attention to the one.

The Pharisees were offended. Why?

What are they assuming in their attitude?

1. They are assuming there was no good reason for Jesus to be calling Matthew. They assume that Jesus is making a big mistake. Not true.
2. They are assuming that Jesus is showing his real nature as one who loves sin. Not true.
3. They are assuming that Jesus' mission was to compliment good people (like themselves, of course) on their uprightness—maybe even to encourage them in looking down on others who are not as good.
4. Jesus is ignorant, unaware. He doesn't realize who He is eating with.

Jesus heard and answered their question.

With a parallel illustration

With an illustration in harmony with OT teaching, in which the Pharisees claimed to be experts.

He said His mission was **MERCY NOT JUDGMENT**.

His mission was not to overlook sin, but to call sinners to repentance.

Questions for the church:

Does Jesus intend us to follow His example of associating with sinners?  
 To what group do we say, “There’s no need to come?” or “Why do YOU come to eat with US?”  
 How do we convey this message?  
 What are we really saying? (WE’RE better than YOU!)  
 What would Jesus have us to say and do?

Are you willing to sit down with Jesus, knowing that tax collectors and sinners will also be at His table? (Karimojong? Beggars? Street kids? Trokosi? Former fetish priests? Former prostitutes?)

Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” Jesus saw His church as a hospital for the sick, not as a country club for the social elite.

Do you see the church more as for US (Beckon others to come in, making a big circle), or as for <sub>us</sub>? (Hug yourself.)

Matthew 11:19. By what title was Jesus known (and ridiculed)?  
 He was called a “Friend of tax collectors and sinners.”  
 He will be happy when your church is known as the same.

Why don’t we welcome sinners?

1. We want to put them down hoping it will make us look good.
2. They don’t give big money in the offering, and let’s face it, big offerings are more important to us than the eternal salvation of people’s souls.

Let’s look at the context of this passage:

Just before this, Jesus had been doing great miracles (Matthew 9:5-6).  
 Many of our churches like to imitate Jesus in that, but they don’t like to imitate Him in calling sinners, in welcoming sinners.  
 In the midst of doing miracles, Jesus stopped to welcome one lost and needy sinner.

Note Matthew’s quick response vs. 9

Many of those we consider “undesirable” would be quick to respond to Jesus if we gave them the chance.  
 Note that others came, even without an invitation, when they saw that Matthew was welcome.  
 Today, Jesus most often calls through us. Are we letting Jesus use our voices, our arms?