

Mt. 11:16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,
17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, **a friend of publicans and sinners**. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Last week we observed how that the Bible describes *“Jesus as the Believer’s Friend.”* Tonight, we will consider the accusation that Jesus mentioned regarding His critics, particularly the title...*“Jesus, the Friend of Sinners.”*

I. THE ACCUSATION BY THE CRITICS, Mt. 11:19

Mt. 11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and **they say**, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, **a friend of publicans and sinners.** But wisdom is justified of her children.

Original Word: φίλος **Transliteration:** philos

Definition: beloved, dear, friendly; **Usage:** friendly;
subst: **a friend**, an associate.

phílos – a friend; someone *dearly* loved (prized) in a personal, intimate way; a trusted *confidant*, held dear in a close bond of personal affection.

Note: The root (*phil-*) conveys *experiential, personal* affection – indicating (*phílos*) expresses *experience-based* love.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/5384.htm>

- ❖ Within the context of this passage, Jesus states that the religious crowd criticized John the Baptist for being too rigid in not “eating nor drinking” (v. 18) and then criticized Jesus for too much “eating and drinking.” (v. 19)
- ❖ Being sanctimonious Pharisees, they accused Jesus as being “...a friend of publicans and sinners.” He did not deny the accusation.

II. THE ACTIONS BY CHRIST

- ❖ During His earthly ministry, Jesus DID eat with “publicans and sinners.” (Mt. 11:19)

Jesus Ate With Tax Collectors, Prostitutes, and Other Sinners

Luke 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And **Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.**

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, **Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?**

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark 2:14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that, **as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples:** for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees **saw him eat with publicans and sinners**, they said unto his disciples, **How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?**

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

❖ Jesus ate “with publicans and sinners” which was appalling to the Pharisees.

❖ Jesus also ate with the sanctimonious Pharisees and sinful woman:

Luke 7:36 And **one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.** And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, **behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner**, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

- ❖ Jesus chose to eat with sinners because they needed to know that repentance and forgiveness were available to every person. As Jesus' ministry grew, so did His popularity among the social outcasts of society.

Isa. 56:8 **The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts** of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

- ❖ While the self-righteous Pharisees murmured, “all the publicans and sinners” drew near to Him to hear Him:

Luke 15:1 Then drew near unto him **all the publicans and sinners** for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.**

(Then the Lord gave the parables of the “Lost Sheep” and the “Lost Coin.”)

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

III. THE APPLICATION FOR CHRISTIANS

- ❖ Unlike the Pharisees, Jesus didn't require people to change *before* coming to Him.
- ❖ He sought them out, met them where they were, and extended grace to them in their circumstances.
JESUS IS A FRIEND TO SINNERS!

- ❖ Change would come to those who accepted Christ, but it would be from the inside out.
- ❖ The kindness of God leads sinners to repentance (Romans 2:4), and Jesus was full of kindness.

Rom. 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that **the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

- ❖ As redeemed sinners, believers should have a most sympathetic and welcome attitude toward all “publicans and sinners.” DO NOT BE LIKE THE PHARISEES!

Mt. 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you **observe**, *that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but ***they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.***

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But **he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.**

12 **And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**

Summary

- ❖ We are all sinners and should be most thankful that the Lord Jesus is a “friend of sinners.”

Jn. 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Conclusion

2 Cor. 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For **he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin**; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Mt. 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and **ye gave me** meat: I was thirsty, and **ye gave me** drink: I was a stranger, and **ye took me** in:

36 Naked, and **ye clothed me**: I was sick, and **ye visited me**: I was in prison, and **ye came unto me**.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.**

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, **Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?**

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.**

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

1 Cor. 9:19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have **I made myself servant unto all**, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: **I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.**