

Title: The Friend of Sinners

Scripture: Luke 15:1-2; Matthew 11:19

Speaker: Vic Redding

Event: Sunday Morning Service

Date: May 24, 2015

Luke 15:1-2 *"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."*

Matthew 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."*

We have lots of acquaintances – not friends. We have people in our lives who will be our “friend” as long as we have money, status, and earthly possessions. The true meaning of the word friend means “a person who you like and enjoy being with.” Another place said that it means “a favored companion”. The scripture is very clear about having friends. God called Abraham his friend. He also called the disciples his friends. In John 15, it says “if you keep my commandments, you are my friend.” One man once said, “I went out to find a friend but could not find one. But then I went to be a friend and found many.” Proverbs 18:24 *"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* You don’t get a friend by being scornful or ill-mannered. You get a friend by showing yourself friendly. If we are going to talk about a friend who comes in but doesn’t leave with the world, there has to be scripture to prove it. Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend loveth at all times. Do you have a friend who stays with you always and loves you always? Do you have someone you call a friend that knows your strengths and weaknesses. Everyone loves someone until they show weakness or failure. Do you have a friend who loves you even when you fail? Do you have one who loves you even when you encounter storms in your life? Do you have one who will stick by you even when you don’t treat them right? If you are saved this morning, you have a friend like that. You have one who will stick to you and with you in all situations. He is a great divine friend. Proverbs 18:24 says that he is closer than a brother.

Three Things We Need to See About Having Jesus as a Friend:

- 1. We need Jesus because of our past:** Satan loves dragging up our past – especially those who are children of God. If given the chance, we would probably go back and redo it. We make bad relationships, bad decisions, and wrong choices. Sometimes we can see one wrong move we made after another. Romans 3:10 says *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"* Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* Our past is worse than the things we bring to memory. Our past begins with the day we are born. We are born into sin – just as the scripture says, all have sinned and none are righteous. In Matthew 11:28-30 we are given a great guarantee for a heavy heart: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* Christ can erase our past sins and when we surrender all to him, his blood that was shed for man’s sins washes our hearts clean. What do you feel like the blood of Christ won’t cover in your life? Hebrews 7:25 *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*
- 2. We need Jesus because of our present:** Matthew 6:34 *"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."* How is your life going right now? Is everything just perfect? Most are thrilled that they don’t have to work Monday. They’ll wake up happy and joyful. What about on Tuesday? The way you wake up will probably be the complete opposite. Life doesn’t go the way we want it to. When Christ said “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”, he says that we have enough to concentrate on in our daily walk that we don’t need to be fixated on the past. John 10:10 *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* What Christ offers is worth more than money and earthly goods. He can give you the

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ability to live in abundance. This is not measured by the world's standards, it's by the goodness of knowing him. It's knowing that you have a friend who will be with you no matter what.

3. We need Jesus because of the future:

- a. We need him in the future because there is death. Hebrews 9:27 *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"* One day, each one of us will pass away. We have been appointed to die. This means that we have been chosen to experience a real death. Death is the end of our human body, but not our souls. We have a choice to make about where we will spend eternity when we pass.
- b. We need him in the future because there is judgement. The verse in Hebrews 9 says that after death comes judgment. People are terrified of being judged on this earth, but have no concept of the judgement that is to come once we die. They live this life with no thought for the actions they do and the situations they get themselves in. If you are without Christ this judgment comes upon you. You will stand before God and no mercy will be shown. You need him before your time to die comes.
- c. We need him in the future because there is eternity. With all of the technology we have, man still cannot count all of the stars in the sky. Will you spend eternity with the greatest friend you've ever had or will you spend eternity in eternal torment? The bible speaks more of hell than of heaven. This is important to note because he is warning us that hell is a real place and we are at risk of going there.

Where is Jesus in your life as far as a friend? You will never experience real joy until you call on him simply to tell him you love him.