

The Man Who Welcomes Sinners

“Now the tax collectors and ‘sinners: were all gathering round to hear Him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ (Luke 15:1-7)

Why are these people speaking against the Lord Jesus Christ? They were condemning Him because He welcomes sinners and eats with them! For how could a good man like Jesus goes to sinners and even eats with them?

When we love, we could love those who love us. We extend our love to those who are loveable or in other word, to those who look beautiful to us; to those who could help us, to those who support us, to those who with us could have a reciprocal affair. This is how man by his nature loves. But our Lord Jesus Christ said: ***“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you only greet your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:46-48)***

In another passage the Lord Jesus told us this: ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: ‘Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.’” (Matthew 5:43-44)***

We are called to love perfectly. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is our model for this perfect love. He is God. He is the image of the invisible God. Yet He came down from heaven, He became like man, and He came to search for the sinners – those who live a life away from God, those who live against God. He came not only for the good but for the bad. He came not only for certain people but for all people who believe in Him. Jesus had the perfect love; He had the unconditional love: ***“Who, being in very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death- even death on the cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)***

Jesus became man and died on the cross. He was buried and then rose from death on the third day to give eternal life to everyone who believes. Jesus died to pay the price for all the sins of the world. He is without sin but He died to pay the penalty of sin and to save sinners from death. ***“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)***

This is the perfect love of Christ Jesus our Lord so that we can love perfectly as well:

1. ***Perfect love is unconditional:*** In front of us, there are different kinds of people; it is not for us to choose whom to love and who to hate. In fact we are created in the image of God and God wants us to love the people as He loves them. Many times we have opinion and we put conditions before we offer our love to people. We want them to be changed before we love them. But we find from Jesus’ example that His great unconditional love changes the people. If we truly love the unlovable, they will be changed. Jesus, when He went to the sinners like the prostitutes, drunkards, thieves and tax collectors, He accepted them even they were doing wrong things. He went to them to show His love that naturally changed them. In fact He could have changed them in a glance because He is powerful and He is the One who created them, but He came to the world to search for them and to bring them back to Him.
2. ***Perfect love is sacrificial love:*** Jesus taught that love is giving first and emotional second. Jesus, not only He gave what all He had but He gave Himself to buy the people back from the hand of death, and to release them from Satan’s snare who took them captive to do his evil schemes. The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross brought us back from death to the true life; His love brought us back from darkness to the bright light.

Jesus has the power to change the people. He reaches the sinners to save them from death and to transform their lives to be holy like Him. He welcomes the sinners who repent. To be useful and become a channel of blessing to other people around them. The criminals, murderers, immoral, homosexuals, and all who live filthy lives, when they meet Jesus and accept His offer of eternal life that comes through believing in His death on the cross, Jesus will start to change them and use them to be instruments of righteousness. Ultimately, they will serve God and they will tell other sinners about Jesus and the grace and the new and blessed life they are living and enjoying as they believe in Him and follow Him.

My dear and beloved: The message that we received encourages us not to condemn the sinners who are around us like the drunkards, the drug addicts, the prostitutes, etc., but to love them more. Jesus hates sin but He loves the sinner. Let us be the same mind and attitude of Jesus – to love the sinners and to share with them the sacrificial and unconditional love of Jesus Christ displayed by His death on the cross.

My Prayer: *“Heavenly Father, I come before You in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for the sins of everyone. Forgive me, Lord, my sin. Guide me by your mercy and love. Lead me to reach those who are away from You. Enable me, Lord, to open my mouth to share with them your great sacrifice on the cross, so that they may believe and be saved. Thank You, Lord. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name, Amen.”*