

## ARE WE THE FRIEND OF SINNERS?

Mark 2 <sup>15</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

<sup>17</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

For the past several weeks we have discussed the subject of relationships. Jesus was a master that touching the lives of people. He came on a mission from the Father.

### I. The purpose of Jesus coming

Luke 19 <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

1. He seeks the woman at the well. John 4
2. He seeks out Zacchaeus in Luke 19
3. He is sought the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15 24
4. He is seeking to save the world.

John 3 <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

### II. The mission of the church is the great commission.

Mark 16 <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Matthew 28 <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

We have spent our mission dollars sending missionaries, building churches, purchasing vehicles, and printed materials around the world.

It is exciting to see the returns of our mission's effort overseas.

### III. Our mission is the United States and Beebe first.

Acts 1<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The pattern is to reach home first (Jerusalem) the surrounding country (Judea), those near by (Samaria) and then the ends of the earth.

People were asked, **“Who or what was mostly responsible for your coming to Christ and into the life of your church?”**

The following were the responses:

1. Door to door 1-2%
2. Revival or TV program 1%
3. Special church program 2-3%
4. A special need they had 1-2%
5. The pastor 5-6%
6. The Sunday School 5-6%
- 7. A friend or family member 85%**

The scriptures reinforce this truth.

#### ANDREW

John 1<sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.<sup>41</sup> **The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).**<sup>42</sup> **And he brought him to Jesus.**

#### THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,<sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”<sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Acts 16<sup>31</sup> They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

Household implies not only family but those over which you have influence.

**BELIEVERS HAVE A TENDENCY TO DESIRE TO SEEK THEIR OWN.  
BE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.**

WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY LIKE NO ONE ELSE TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE FOR THE LORD.

Our most opportune time is when a person is first born again.

**The average sinner** that gets saved has **up to 12 that he can reach** in the realm of his influence.

The longer we stay in church the more tendencies we have to make the church our only circle of friends.

**The average Christian has 4-8 non Christian friends.** Our friends have changed and we are coming out of the world.

\*It takes a combined effort of 85 Christians working over a full year to produce one convert.- Thomas Rainer

JESUS HAD TIME FOR THE SINNER, DO YOU?

DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR THE LOST?

\*The United States has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest population of non Christians in the world, second only to China, and India!

Our culture has changed.

\*There are 170,000 churches in America.

\*Half of all churches in America did not add one new person through conversion growth last year.- Tom Clegg & Warren Bird

\*Every hour a church closes in America. They are refusing the great commission.

\*During the last decade in the USA protestant denominations declined 9.5%. That is a loss of almost 5 million people.

\* 60% of born again Christians attended church last week.

\*The number one preference of denomination when a person is checking into the hospital is “none”.

\* 1 out of 20 churches in America is growing by conversion growth.

\* 1/4 of the Assembly of God churches reported no conversions in 2001.

\*If you lined up all the lost in the USA there would be a line going around the world 2 ½ times. The line grows ½ mile a day.

In our county we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest number of “meth labs” in the United States.

We have the world’s highest divorced population.

We are the largest producer of pornography in the world.

Arkansas ranks second only to California for teenage pregnancy.

Mark 2 15 states that the Pharisees asks, “Why does Jesus eat with sinners?” That’s who he came for! If Jesus came for them why do we act like Pharisees when we get around sinners?

They make us uncomfortable.

Could it be that we make them uncomfortable?

It says of Jesus that “many tax collectors and sinners ate with Jesus”. Jesus had a way about him that they would desire to be with him.

How many sinners have you had to eat at your home lately?

How many sinners have we taken to lunch with the sole purpose of just being a friend?

### HOW DO WE REACH THEM?

1. Pray for them systematically
2. Ask God to show you who may be most receptive.
3. Pray for receptive opportunities.
4. Make other Christians aware of the person you are attempting to win, and ask for their support.

III. A church consisted of 7 retired people. They were about to lose the church. They began to pray and ask God to give them a vision. After prayer

one of them said, “I believe God wants us to go to the school and make friends with the youth”. After some discussion they all went.

They went for 4 weeks asking the kids for “their story”. After 4 weeks the kids didn’t have any more stories so they ask the elderly saints to share their story! After 8 weeks their church had grown from 7 to over 100.

They had only 2 gifts: time and they could listen.  
That is exactly what Jesus did!

Do you have time for a sinner?