

Audio Transcript of Sermon
October 8, 2022
Jesus and Sinners

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus had no issues socializing with sinners, and yet the religious establishment of His time had problems with the optics of that practice. Move forward thousands of years to the present time, and some who read about this practice of Jesus draw some very unusual conclusions.

There are several instances of Jesus being with sinners and we will start by examining a few of these. One famous account involved a woman taken in the very act of adultery and brought to Jesus. Missing from the account is any mention of the other person. If the woman had been caught in the very act of adultery, there would have been two people there, and only the woman was brought to Jesus. The man was nowhere to be found. Today we might solely focus on the double standard of what happened, and a double standard was applied to this situation.

In the eyes of God all are equal before him, and sin is sin regardless of gender. The scribes and Pharisees who had brought the woman to Him wanted to know if Jesus would agree that this woman be stoned according to the Law of Moses. In part they were likely also trying to entrap Jesus. Jesus was not going to take the bait and replied telling them that those who in the group who were without sin should cast the first stone, and then he began writing on the ground.

We have no idea exactly what Jesus wrote on the ground, but we do know whatever Jesus wrote caused the scribes and Pharisees to leave one by one until Jesus was left with only the woman remaining. Perhaps Jesus was writing the name of the man, and the fact that only the woman was brought in the very act of adultery could indicate a high profile member of the community was the other participant. Maybe Jesus was writing the names of women with whom the scribes and Pharisees had committed adultery themselves. Whatever Jesus wrote is of less significance to the fact that when writing in the dust, one by one the scribes and Pharisees left. John eight verse two.

John 8:2-11

- 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.**
- 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**
- 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**
- 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?**
- 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.**
- 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**
- 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.**
- 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**
- 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?**
- 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

Jesus told the woman to leave when her accusers were no longer there, asking her about her accusers, asking her if any man had condemned her, and the woman told Him that no man condemned her. To that Jesus replied that He would not condemn her either. He told her to leave telling her to go, and sin no more.

People today sometimes get so excited about Jesus hanging out with sinners, that they forget about the go and sin no more part of what Jesus told the woman. When Jesus socialized with sinners, He did not become like the sinners, because then He would have become a sinner unable to offer Himself for our salvation. Jesus did hang out with sinners but never became like them, and that is the difference between what the Bible records and what some people in the modern era think about Jesus. The Jesus of the Bible who socialized with sinners is not the Jesus of pop culture sometimes portrayed as being a sinner.

Back when Jesus was walking the earth, people didn't like people who held certain governmental positions, like tax collectors. While politicians try to sell taxes as an investment in society, most people today still have an unease with people who work as tax collectors. A knock on the door by a tax collector is not normally a social situation, so even back in Jesus' Day, most people sought to avoid them.

The religious elite thought poorly of Jesus and asked the disciples why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus intervened explaining that he came not to socialize with the righteous, but to bring the sinners to repentance. Matthew nine verse nine.

Matthew 9:9-13

9. And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

12. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

If you notice what the Pharisees said about Jesus, they didn't claim that Jesus was a sinner, just that He associated with sinners and tax collectors. A parallel account is recorded in Mark where the same information is shared. Mark two verse fifteen.

Mark 2:15-17

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.

The concept of redemption for a sinner and tax collectors was a novelty for the scribes and Pharisees. Based on how they approached sinners and tax collectors, they saw how Jesus treated these same groups as scandalous, something to talk about. Of course, if you are an upright person and are seen talking with a known drug dealer today, people would probably assume you were either dealing drugs or had a problem with drugs. If the police would have been running any type of surveillance on this drug dealer, you would probably show up on their radar, too. What happened during the time of Jesus is still happening today, and we should not look down on the scribes and Pharisees for what they did as we would probably jump to similar conclusions today, not having all of the information. That is how our minds are wired-for sin.

Jesus found the concerns of being linked to sinners and tax collectors worthy of a parable and explained to them that even a shepherd will spend a good deal of time to go after a lost sheep, and be very happy when that sheep is recovered. Jesus told them there is even more joy in heaven when a sinner repents. Luke fifteen verse one.

Luke 15:1-32

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.

3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Jesus changed the context of the example from sheep to silver to expand on the concept. Verse eight.

8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Jesus continued with another parable. As a retired educator that would tell me Jesus sensed the group just didn't get it, so Jesus was busy reteaching the concept in another way. This time He gave a parable about a man with two sons, one who did what was expected, and the second who didn't do what was expected who became a lost cause, until the son returned home realizing he had blown it knowing he was no longer worthy to be considered a son. Verse eleven.

11. And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

The father had a different reaction in seeing his son who was returning home and decided to have a celebration. Verse twenty.

20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The other son who had always done what was expected of him was out working when his brother returned home and was surprised to come home to a party, and when he found out the party was thrown in honor of his no-good brother, it made him angry. His father had to explain that while he was always with him, the celebration was being held because the brother who was lost, was found and returned home. Verse twenty-five.

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Jesus never was a sinner and was always able to socialize with them. His goal was not to become a sinner or find favor with a sinner, but to bring the sinners to salvation. Paul wrote of sin and how through Jesus Christ the righteousness of God comes to sinners through faith in Jesus, knowing that all have sinned and have come up short of the glory of God, probably one of the largest understatements in the Bible. Paul also explained that it is through Jesus Christ we are redeemed, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is through faith that we are justified, or adjudicated to be not guilty of sin. It is through faith that the law of God is established. Romans three verse twenty-one.

Romans 3:21-31

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30. Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

In another section of Romans, Paul asked a rhetorical question about sin, asking if we should sin because we are under grace and not under the law. Paul then went on to explain that we should not sin. He added that if practice a lifestyle of sin, we become servants of sin, but that through Jesus Christ we are able to become servants of righteousness. He concluded by explaining that all that we can earn through sin is death, but that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Romans six verse fifteen.

Romans 6:15-23

15. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In writing to the Galatians, Paul again contrasted sin and righteousness, this time using a comparison between spirit and flesh, encouraging readers to walk in the spirit so that the lust of the flesh is not fulfilled. He added that if we are led by the spirit we are not under the law, and then compared the works of the flesh to the fruit of the spirit.

The difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit, is that works is a process and fruit is a result. When Paul writes of the works of the flesh,

Paul is saying that those who are carnally minded will be doing these things, and those who develop the fruit of the spirit, will mature into those things. The things that carnally minded people do reads like a cheesy soap opera, and the fruit of the spirit seems tranquil and peaceful. Galatians five verse sixteen.

Galatians 5:16-25

16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The Greek word for fulfil in verse 16 is *teleo*, and while it can mean fulfil, finish, to bring to an end, it can also mean pay for. If we walk in the spirit we are not under the law, but under grace. We also will not conclude our lives in the same manner as a person would who is not being led by the Holy Spirit.

In verse twenty-four we are told that if we are of Jesus Christ, we will walk in the spirit meaning we disregard the flesh with the affections and lusts. Strong's Greek word 4717, *stauroo*, meaning to impale on the cross, to extinguish is translated as crucified. Where this word is translated as crucified, the helping verb that appears with it in the English is a translator's insertion. When we see phrases such as, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," it is accurate to translate this as, "And they that are Christ's crucify the flesh with

the affections and lusts.” The tense of the sentence, past, present, or future, is not indicated by the Greek word itself.

Having the Holy Spirit and belonging to Christ does not make us without sin, though it does mean whenever sin rears its ugly head in our lives, we crucify it. Getting rid of sin is not a one and done operation. Getting rid of sin is a life-long endeavor through the end of our physical life.

Having the proclivity to sin and having the truth coexists within each of us. If we see ourselves as being without sin, John tells us the truth is not in us. That logically can only mean truth and sin can coexist within each of us who are called who have the Holy Spirit. Let’s notice what John wrote in First John one verse eight.

1 John 1:8-10

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

John also writes of a sin that leads not to death, and a sin that leads to death, defining sin to be all unrighteousness. By design, anything that is not righteous is unrighteous, and sin. In our minds we tend to think of sin and righteousness as being opposites, sort of like on a number line where righteousness is seven and above, and unrighteousness is negative seven and below. In our minds we tend to organize the space between positive seven and negative seven as a grey area. What John shows is anything that is unrighteous is sin, meaning on a number line, anything less than seven would also be sin. Sin and righteousness even though they seem like opposites exist closely together, meaning we must be diligent to preserve righteousness in our lives.

When John writes about sin not leading to death, he is writing of sin that can be forgiven, and when John writes about sin leading to death, he is writing of the unpardonable sin. What John says is that if we see another Christian who has sin, not the unpardonable type of sin, but forgivable sin, we are to bring this to God’s

attention through prayer, and that sin will be forgiven. How many of us do this or revert to the mindset of the scribes and Pharisees? First John five verse fourteen.

1 John 5:14-17

14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

In his second letter, Peter writes that God is able to deliver the godly from temptations while keeping reserved the unjust for the day of judgment to be punished. What is interesting about Peter's words is how he describes the unjust as those who walk after the flesh, instead of walking in the spirit as Paul described. These people who walk after the flesh also despise government. They are presumptuous, self-willed, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Think about the times in which we live. Do you know people who despise government? I'm not talking about people who disagree with government, but despise government. These are people who have contempt for the government.

In the United States when Donald Trump was President, there were people on the other side of the political aisle who despised him. When Joe Biden became President, there were people who despised him. Ask people in the United States what they think of Congress or the Supreme Court, and despising government will be a common theme in the response for many. The take-away for Christians today is despising government is rampant and real. Again-we do not have to agree with government, but despising government is well beyond disagreement bordering on hate. When we have disagreements, is it just a disagreement or are we actually despising? Those who despise are carnally minded. Second Peter two verse four.

2 Peter 2:4-10

4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

- 5. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;**
- 6. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;**
- 7. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:**
- 8. For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;**
- 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:**
- 10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.**

When it comes to what our perspective on sin should be, we should look to the example given to us by Jesus Christ, who taught that even imagining sin makes us guilty of sin. As Christians we are held to a higher standard. Matthew five verse twenty-seven.

Matthew 5:27-30

- 27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:**
- 28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**
- 29. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**
- 30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that we are judged by Jesus Christ, whether we are judged for doing good or for doing bad. Through Jesus Christ we are no longer focused on the flesh but on the Holy Spirit. It is through Jesus Christ we are not only reconciled to God the Father but become ambassadors of Christ, that through Jesus we can be made the righteousness of God. Second Corinthians five verse nine.

2 Corinthians 5:9-21

9. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

14. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

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.

Paul recognized the continuing conflict that each of us face. Within each of us is a battle of the Holy Spirit verses our mortal body, sort of like the choice Adam and Eve had between the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Paul came to a point that his body and spiritual mind were at constant disagreement with each other and Paul was frustrated by this. Paul recognized that when these frustrations arose it was of the body not of the Holy Spirit. He knew within his physical body there was nothing good that could be found because the physical body always seemed to come up short. Paul also recognized that it is through Jesus Christ that through the Holy Spirit we serve the law of God even when our body succumbs to the flesh. Romans seven verse fourteen.

Romans 7:14-25

- 14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.**
- 15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.**
- 16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.**
- 17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**
- 18. For I know that in me that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.**
- 19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.**
- 20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**
- 21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.**
- 22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:**
- 23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**
- 24. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**
- 25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

Jesus did socialize with sinners and tax collectors. The religious elite did question Him about it and their hypocrisy regarding sinners was on display with the woman who was caught in the very act of adultery. Jesus Christ did socialize with sinners not because He was a sinner, nor did He allow Himself to become a sinner while socializing with them, but socialized with them in a desire to bring them to repentance. When the Kingdom of God is established on earth, sin itself will finally be put to death, and we will be celebrating the Kingdom of God as we celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

God-willing we'll get together next time tomorrow evening for the opening night of the Feast of Tabernacles. Until then, thank you for joining us today.