



## He Ate with Publicans and Sinners

One of the criticisms that Jesus' enemies so often employed was that He ate with the publicans and sinners. We find this criticism recorded for us in the following passages: Matthew 9:10, 11; 11:19; Mark 2:15, 16; Luke 5:30, 7:34, 15:1. This criticism was no doubt leveled at Jesus due to the fact that he associated with these people in order to teach them the gospel. The Pharisees had a strict standard with whom a "faithful Jew" could and could not associate. In essence they labeled out particular people in society and forbade the "faithful" to have relationships with them. These people included publicans, harlots, Samaritans, and "sinners."

Publicans were basically the tax collectors of the day, and carried out the will of the Roman Empire by collecting from the Jewish people. From their frequent association with gentiles alone, this made them "off-limits" to the "faithful" Jew. Publicans also had a practice of taking more taxes than the government required. John the baptizer told these tax-collectors that they needed to repent of this practice (Luke 3:12, 13).

Samaritans were half-blood Jews and that made them impure in the mind of the Pharisees. The Samaritans were descended from the Jewish people who were left behind during the Babylonian captivity. These married the pagans who were already in the land and intermingled themselves so as to violate God's requirements under the Old Law regarding marriage (Deut.7:3; Ezra 10:2).

The harlots of the day were what we would consider prostitutes today. They sold their bodies for money. The Pharisees did not associate with them, no doubt, to maintain their sparkling reputation of "righteousness" among the Jewish people. Sinners were just any other kinds of people that no doubt,

sinned, but also, that the Pharisees would not associate on account of their "reputation." These sinners might have been adulterers, thieves, or even other harlots and publicans. It was an all-inclusive category.

First, it should be clear to all that Jesus did not associate with these people in order to engage in their sinful practices. Jesus was the sinless Lamb of God (1 Peter 1:19). He never once committed a sin nor even spoke an inappropriate word (1 Peter 2:22). Second, it should also be clear that Jesus did not associate with these people in order to legitimize their sin. Jesus called upon these people to repent (Matthew 9:13). He taught them that they needed to give up their sin and give their life to God (Luke 15:1-32). Third, it should also be clear that Jesus did not associate with these people to aid them to further commit sin. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Jesus (John 8:2-11) Jesus did not condemn her to death; however, Jesus told her to "go, and sin no more." His refusal to condemn the woman to death was not license for her to continue to commit adultery.

Jesus did associate with these people in order to teach and preach the gospel (Matthew 21:28-32). What ought we to conclude from Jesus' association with these classes of society? First, we need to be out associating with those classes of society as well for the same purpose. As Christians, we need to be in the world, but not of the world (1 Cor.5:10). What does this mean? It means that we associate with people who are steeped in sin, but we don't participate in that sin. If we were to stop all association with anyone who had sin in their lives, then we would have to go "out of the world." While such may be possible (that is, to practice some bizarre type of isolationism); it is certainly not feasi-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## He Ate with Publicans and Sinners (cont.)

ble.

Second, we ought to be telling these lost sinners about the gospel. More than anything else, these classes of society desperately need the power of the gospel (1 Cor.6:9-11). We ought to focus our efforts upon bringing these to salvation through preaching a message of repentance and love, not through shunning them and isolating them from the rest of society. This means that we have to spend time among them and get to know them personally (as did Jesus) so that we can call them to repent in those areas of life where they need to repent.

Third, we ought not to criticize those who are trying to do such.

Such displays a true Pharisaical attitude toward teaching and preaching the gospel to the lost. I'm opposed to homosexuality, but I want the homosexual to repent and be saved. I'm opposed to adultery, but I want the adulterer to repent and be saved. I'm opposed to mur-



der, but I want the murderer to repent and be saved. I'm opposed to immodesty, but I want the immodest person to repent and be saved. If that means that I have to be involved in wholesome community events where these people are at, then I will be there. When we oppose those, who are associating with these kinds of people in order to help them come to the gospel and repent, we are really saying that a certain class of people are

not worthy of the gospel. God is no respecter of persons (Rom.2:11; Acts 10:34), and neither ought Christians to be.

We have a great challenge before us today to take the gospel to the lost. Instead of discouraging the hands of our

brethren by criticizing (in the above way) their efforts at doing that job, we ought to be supportive and uplifting. It is not inconsequential that those who discourage others in this way, are often the least involved in evangelistic efforts. Such criticism is not only discouraging, but hypo-

critical. These would do well to heed the advice of Jesus in Matthew 7:1-5. Let us always remember the words of Paul the apostle to the evangelist Timothy, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim.1:15). Let us obey our Master; go into the world, and preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Kevin Cauley

## Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 3/21/04

Morning .....	Immorality Today
Scripture .....	Titus 2:11,12
Evening .....	Lessons from the Life of Daniel
Scripture .....	Daniel 1:8-14
Sunday Morning Bible Study .....	The Book of Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study .....	How to Study the Bible

## Weekly Record

Week of 3/14/04

Sunday Class .....	55
Sunday A.M. ....	61
Sunday P.M. ....	60
Wednesday .....	52
Contribution.....	\$1790.24
Budget .....	\$1760.00

## Wisdom

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**Q**s the story goes ... There was once a philosopher who was well known for his wisdom. One day the great man came upon an acquaintance who said excitedly, "Sir, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?"

"Wait a moment," the teacher replied. "Before telling me anything I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test.

"Triple filter?"

"That's right," the teacher said, "before you talk to me about my student, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "actually I just

heard about it and ..." "All right," said the teacher, "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?"

"No, on the contrary ..."

"So," the teacher continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true. You may still pass the test though, because there's one filter left: the filter of Usefulness.

Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really."

"Well," concluded the teacher, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?"

Is it true? Is it good? Is it useful? The story was attributed to Socrates. I

don't know if Socrates really came up with this three-point test, but somebody did and I like it. I could have avoided a few embarrassing moments for myself through the years if I had always applied it.

This test is a good commentary on a verse we are familiar with. God said, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29 NKJV).

When we set out to damage the reputation of another person we do much more harm than we realize. Not only are we hurting another person, we are hurting ourselves. Others may never know the gossip we spread, but the person we tell will, we will know it about ourselves, and God will know.

So before you say it, test it: Is it true, is it good, is it useful?

Warren Baldwin

## Kevin's Korner

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**S**will have to say that it has been quite an eventful week. The boys were out from school all week due to Spring Break, and it has truly been a good week. We didn't go golfing this past Monday as we had planned because the weather did not cooperate. Instead, the boys decided that they wanted to go to the mall. So we drove over to Springdale and had a good time.

Tuesday was really crazy. I spent most of the morning helping set up the community center auditorium for Miss Arkansas. She came and presented a good and wholesome message for the youth of our community. It was a pleasure to be able to help with that event. Several people at the community center also commented on how they ap-

preciated the work that was put into that event as well. Please keep praying for me as I work there in my efforts to teach others the gospel.

Additionally on Tuesday, my parents as well as three other couples from Austin, TX dropped by on their way to Branson. We had a good visit and were able to help them get some discounted tickets through the radio station. However, I think I might have given them wrong directions to Kimberling City. I haven't heard the rest of that story yet.

Mary Lynn's parents also came to town Tuesday evening, and we were so busy running around that afternoon, that we were not even home when they get here. They finally hooked up with us and everything was fine. They went to Stark City, MO to be with J.R. and Joy Burr until tomorrow when they leave

to go home.

Thursday we had a wonderful time visiting the nursing home with them, as well as visiting with John Gass. He took us to several places to see some of the beauty of this country. Thanks for your hospitality, John!

### **Elders:**

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,  
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn  
Quigley

### **Deacons:**

Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,  
Rusty Windle.

### **Preacher:**

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

# News, Notes, and 'Nouncements

- We are truly thankful to God for the wonderful new Lord's day that he has given us today to worship him in Spirit and in Truth!
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Gary Bragg, Michael Collins, Jimmie Forehand, Justina Goucher, Hulen Penn, Charlene Pinkley, Chris Pinkley.
- Remember our shut ins: Curtis and Opal Hull, Edith Mischler, Mary Paterson, Art Roberts.
- Our youth devotional is tonight at the Cauley's house. Please bring chips, drinks, and chocolate. And yes, I guess it's ok to bring some for Rusty too.
- Our monthly potluck has been postponed to the last Sunday of this month (that's next Sunday) due to the carpet work downstairs.
- Next Sunday afternoon from 1 to 4 P.M. there will be a birthday celebration at Raymond Kime's house. Raymond will be 85 years old. All are invited.
- Now is the time to get Friends and Family day put on everyone's schedule. We have some invitations in the back. Be sure to pass some out and invite all you know.
- On the table in the foyer is a special issue of The Spiritual Sword dealing with the subject of instrumental music in the church. Each family is encouraged to take a copy.
- There are a few openings on brother Art's lunch list if you would like to sign up to serve in that capacity.
- The pantry item for this week is Trash Bags.



## Welcome!

To the Berryville church of Christ.

### Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:..... 9:30 AM  
 Sunday Morning Worship: ..... 10:30 AM  
 Sunday Evening Worship: ..... 6:00 PM  
 Ladies Bible Class: ..... 10:30 AM  
 Wed. Evening Bible Class: ..... 7:00 PM

### Serving Each Other

	March 21st, 2004	March 27th, 2004
<b>Sunday Morning</b>		
Songs:	Ken Smith	Bill Fort
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bruce Foster	Dan Hand
Scripture Reading:	Sandy Nieves	Ray Duncan
Lord's Table	George Eddings	Matt Bassing
	Rusty Windle	John Gass
(assist)	Jerry Roller	Ray Duncan
	Brandon Foster	Perry Foster
Closing Prayer	Glenn Williams	Rusty Windle
<b>Sunday Evening</b>		
Songs:	Larry Elliott	Rusty Windle
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Brent Stevens	Ken Smith
Scripture Reading:	Brent Moore	Bruce Foster
Lord's Table	John Gass	Dale Pinkley
	Ray Duncan	Brandon Foster
Closing Prayer	Dale Pinkley	Brent Stevens
<b>Wednesday</b>		
Songs:	Kevin Cauley	Sandy Nieves
Opening Prayer:	Leon Duncan	Glenn Williams
Invitation:	Bob Moore	Brent Stevens
Closing Prayer:	Perry Foster	Cody Moore

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