

Epiphany: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner  
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This past Sunday I asked our children during the children's message if they had any strange guests at their Christmas parties. A young girl said she did, but then said it was a family member. So, I corrected strange with 'a stranger' haha. Jesus always had strange guests at his table. Consider the first Christmas. Nearby shepherds, not family members, were invited to Jesus' first birthday party (Christmas). Magi from the East, other religions, other languages and cultures, were invited to Christmas.

The list goes on and on. Wherever Jesus went, and ate, He invited surprising company; thieves and traitors (tax collectors), prostitutes, Roman soldiers who didn't practice Judaism, gentile widows, blind beggars, toddlers (talk about strange), sinners, and even dead people. Jesus' specialty seemed to be drawing people who probably felt like they were the farthest away from God, forgiveness, or hope. He went to them. They came to Him. He did not turn them away. The Pharisees were often shocked by Jesus' company. How could a holy person hang out with unholy people? They obviously didn't think they were unholy. They didn't think they needed a Savior.

Jesus has invited you to His table. Not because you are holy, or even a Christian, but because you need forgiveness and hope. His Christmas party is not for righteous people, but for sinners, unexpected guests. Jesus is not a religion. He is the answer to all religions and philosophies, all systems of thought that strive toward some sort of righteousness or nirvana. He doesn't offer a better way. He gives the prize of Life to those who are tired of trying, to those who have been beaten down by whatever religion they follow. He did religion for us and gives us His life, death, and resurrection, and gives us the outcome: righteousness, holiness, eternal life.

So He says to all across the globe, from every lifestyle, ideology, or religion, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" (Matthew 11:28)

You are invited to God's dinner.