

Jesus Came for Sinners  
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And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. Matthew 9:10

Can you picture the scene above? We may not be able to picture exactly what it looks like because of cultural differences, but we do know who is there. Jesus, the disciples, and “many tax collectors and sinners” are all there sharing a meal together. It must have been a large home to fit all those people (maybe it was Matthew’s house). Sharing a meal with someone was a big deal back then. The Pharisees couldn’t understand how Jesus (a Jewish Rabbi) could allow Himself to be connected to “sinners”.

The Jewish religious leaders would have never allowed themselves to be connected to “sinners” because it would have made them unclean. Their entire religious system was rooted in the Mosaic Law which included all the sacrifices, cleansing rituals, and prayers that had been given to them by God and had been practiced for centuries. Doing these things made them “right” with God. Don’t make the Pharisees out to be horrifically evil here; they might have just been completely confused.

If we keep reading in the text Jesus tells them that He has come for sinners. He tells them to go and learn what the words mean, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” All the sacrifices of the Old Testament were put in place to point God’s people ahead to the sacrifice that would make them right with God. Jesus, the Lamb of God, did not connect Himself with sinners to condone sin. He connected Himself with sinners to take their sin away. It is not your sacrifice that makes you right with God. It is the sacrifice of Jesus, His precious blood, and His glorious resurrection that separates you from your sin and connects you to God! Jesus hates my sin, but Jesus loves me dearly! He hates your sin, but He loves you dearly!