

# Who Needs Jesus?

*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. 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?" 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."*

*Mark 2:15-17 (NIV)*

**O**ur verses today show a group of people highly critical of our Lord. Jesus was hanging out with "sinners". The tax collectors the Jews hated so much were Jews who collected taxes for the Roman authorities. The critical people believed themselves to be devout, holy, and well above the level of the individuals Jesus associated with.

Sadly the self-righteous Jews did not recognize that Jesus had not come to spend His time with people who had a high opinion of themselves. Rather He had come for those who knew themselves to be sinners in God's sight and who desired to change and be different. Jesus had a heart for people in pain—people who were struggling with life and its temptations. He desired to deliver or "cure" those who were "sick" with sin.

Jesus was not afraid of

scandal as long as He could connect with those others scorned. Never exclude yourself from the circle of Jesus' disciples (the church) because of your previous bad behaviour. Your life may have been sadly distorted because of sin but Jesus is in the reconstruction business.

Jesus loves to move into a situation where a person has really hit bottom as far as morality is concerned. He is often pictured in Scripture coming alongside the most miserable failures in life and bringing them to a place of useful service to the Father and His people.

Even the repentant thief has been used for centuries as an example of one coming to Jesus in death and having themselves delivered from the results of sin. So that poor man's few moments of life as a believer prior to death has had a wonderful effect on countless thou-

sands who felt they were too far gone to be redeemed. His conversion story has given hope to many.

Whatever way you have sinned against the Lord—however awful your record is—never doubt Jesus can take you and make a trophy of grace out of you. He can make your life into something beautiful and full of praise to Him Who is the Friend of sinners.

Do you know someone who needs to hear this devotional today? If your life has been transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit go and tell some other sinner that Jesus is the Friend of sinners and has a message of hope and transformation for them. Needy people are waiting to hear the Good News. Go and speak the redeeming word to them today.