



NO EXCUSES, WE ALL NEED JESUS

Our family doctor in Colorado was Bill Mehos. He was my wife's family doctor before I ever met her. He did the blood tests for our marriage 42 years ago.

When Aaron, our oldest, had a fever of 104-105 one night, Dr. Mehos immediately came to our house. He delivered our daughter, Amilee, on his birthday, and then refused to charge for the delivery.

He was a doctor who cared. We were not simply patients—herded in and out—he spent time and talked with us. He knew what was going on in our lives, and we knew about his.

He and I sometimes golfed together—worked together on community projects. He was the kind of person you couldn't help but like.

But more than that, to us and many others in that little town, he was a competent, caring, loving, and interested in the whole person, doctor. His purpose in life was to care for the sick.

Jesus' purpose is to heal the sin-sick. He, too, is competent, caring, loving, and interested in us. In Luke 5, at the beginning his ministry, Jesus is starting to call his disciples.

Luke 5:27-32(NIV) 27After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi (Matthew) sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. 29Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 30But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" 31Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Dr. Mehos was a general practitioner—He treated all kinds of sicknesses and was available to anyone who came to him.

Jesus is also a general practitioner, inviting all to come to him, but He's also a specialist, knowing each and every need you have.

Matthew was one of the most unlikely persons you can imagine, to follow Jesus. Matthew was a tax collector. He was hated by his countrymen.

He was wealthy because of the exorbitant taxes he collected, lining his own pockets with the excess. Not only was he a cheater, he was a traitor—he sold out to the Romans.

But Jesus saw something in him. Matthew immediately quit his job, but before leaving he gave a big party to introduce his friends to Jesus.

His friends were other tax collectors and people on the fringe. Matthew wanted his old friends to meet his new friend, Jesus.

Now here's why the Pharisees complained. Jesus gladly accepted the invitation. Without any attitude of superiority or contempt, he mingled with Matthew and his friends.

At this point of his ministry Jesus was beginning to be recognized as a teacher, maybe even a genuine rabbi. A good rabbi would not associate with obvious sinners.

Yet here Jesus was—the guest of honor—the party was for him. Jesus was not unaware of their sins, and he did not condone their sins. He simply knew that he must associate with people in order to deal with their sins effectively.

The Pharisees and their kind stayed as far away as possible. They wouldn't even let their clothes brush up against them.

The ever-present Pharisees were watching Jesus' every move. When he befriended Matthew they gasped. When he went to the dinner party, they were shocked!

And when Jesus actually enjoyed food and fellowship with Matthew and friends, they erupted, complaining to Jesus' disciples.

“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” They were strongly implying that Jesus was a fake.

He couldn't be from God. Look at His behavior. He wasn't associating with the good people. He's not with us, so he's not one of us. Don't you love Jesus' response!

1. Jesus came to save

Luke 5:31 (NIV) 31”It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

What a simple analogy—just as a doctor is expected to treat those who are sick, a forgiver should be expected to go among those who need forgiveness.

Jesus left heaven to come to this world to call sinners to repentance. The Gospel is for people who know they are sinners and who come to God for forgiveness and cleansing.

The Greek word behind the word “repent” means a change in one’s mindset—to turn completely away. It’s more than just being sorry.

This is the dual theme of the Bible—we must turn from sin and turn to God so that He can forgive, cleanse, and save us.

Repentance is revolutionary. It cannot be accomplished simply by resolving—it is driven by the power of God’s grace offered to all.

Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. This is the story of the New Testament. John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus by preaching repentance from sin.

Jesus began His ministry by calling people to repent (Matt. 4:17). In His model prayer, what we call the Lord’s Prayer, He taught us to ask God for forgiveness; that’s repentance.

From the very first days, the early church preached repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31). Repentance is necessary to receive God’s forgiveness.

On the other hand, the Pharisees called for reformation and conforming to the law—change yourself. Start keeping all the law and traditions to be right with God.

Jesus calls us to turn from sin to God. This is a change from the inside out. It is more than just being sorry, though that certainly is involved—being sorry at disappointing God.

Matthew and his friends accepted Christ because they knew they were sinners.

A beggar stopped a lawyer on the street in a large city and asked him for some change. Taking a long, hard look into the man’s unshaven face, the attorney asked, “Don’t I know you from somewhere?” “You should,” came the reply. “I’m your former classmate. Remember, second floor, old Main Hall?” “Why Sam, of course I know you!” said the lawyer.

Without further questions the lawyer wrote a check for \$500. “Here, take this and get a new start. I don’t care what’s happened in the past, it’s the future that counts.” And with that he hurried on.

Tears welled up in the man’s eyes as he walked to a bank nearby. Stopping at the door, he saw through the glass well-dressed tellers and the spotlessly clean interior. Then he looked at his filthy rags. “They won’t take this from me. They’ll swear that I forged it,” he muttered as he turned away.

The next day the two men met again. “Why Sam, what did you do with my check? Gamble it away? Drink it up?” “No,” said the beggar as he pulled it out of his dirty shirt pocket and told why he hadn’t cashed it. “Listen, friend,” said the lawyer. “What makes that check good is not your clothes or appearance, but my signature. Go on, cash it!” (Grace, 1447)

The Bible says, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That promise is a “negotiable note” of infinite value. And as sinners, all we need to do is “exchange” it by faith for eternal life.

2. Who Jesus cannot save

Dr. Mehos was a friend and our doctor. But unless I told him I was sick, he couldn’t do anything to make me better.

The one thing God cannot do is found in v. 32. 32”I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” God cannot save someone who won’t acknowledge they are lost.

In this context, the righteous are those who see no need to repent. They shut themselves away from God’s salvation. It isn’t that God doesn’t want to save them—He does!

But until they realize that they need God’s salvation there’s nothing God can do. They won’t accept that they are sinners condemned to hell.

Righteous people don’t think they need salvation. Our culture today is developing more and more so-called ‘righteous’ people. Sin is no longer sin?

We are adept at rationalizing or euphemizing away sin. Abortion is no longer murder. It is simply a woman exercising her right of privacy to her own body.

Homosexuality is merely a difference in sexual preference. Pornography is an expression of free speech. Adultery is “living together” and illegitimate babies are “love children.” (Sin, 800)

There is a great number of people today who don't think that they need God. They're doing just fine on their own, thank you. Or they have the same mindset as the Pharisees—

“Do good, go to church, give money, help the poor, treat my neighbor right, watch my p's and q's, don't beat my wife and kids, don't cheat my fellow man or on my taxes, do an honest day's work—

In the end God will say that I've been a pretty good person and take me to heaven.” We all know people like that! Some of you are like this.

You are here trying to get enough merits to try to outweigh the demerits you've accumulated along the way. You're trying to fix-things yourself.

What is so sad is that there are no righteous people apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ. There are just people who think they are.

A new product called “Disposable Guilt Bags” appeared in the marketplace in 1987. It consisted of a set of ten ordinary brown bags on which were printed the following instructions: “Place the bag securely over your mouth, take a deep breath and blow all your guilt out, then dispose of the bag immediately.” The wonder of this is that the Associated Press reported that 2500 kits had been quickly sold at \$2.50 per kit.

Would that we could dispose of our guilt so easily! There is nothing on this earth powerful enough to dispose of our guilt. We cannot fix ourselves, which is what many of us are trying to do.

That which makes it possible to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be healed, that which makes it possible for us to receive our life back again, fresh and clean and new, is the power of God's Grace in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

But first you must confess you are a sinner in need of the Savior. The Bible tells us that every person is sinful, separated from God, and condemned to hell. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)

The only people who receive God's salvation and enter His kingdom are those who admit their sinfulness, turn away from it, and commit their lives to following Jesus Christ.

Of course Jesus went to those who were sinners. They were the ones who would recognize their need. Do you recognize your need for the Great Physician? He came because of you.

Are you one that Jesus has come to and like Matthew, you have been genuinely saved. Are the things you do, the places you go, the words you say, the witness you give—do these things show your friends, neighbors, and coworkers that you belong to Christ?

Application:

Why did Jesus come? For you! Everyone is a sinner, even though we may not realize it or admit it. He loves you. He died for you. He came to save you. Admit you are a sinner, believe in Jesus Christ, and commit your life to Him. We all need Jesus!