

Friend of Sinners

Of the 144 hymns Mary Bridges Canedy Slade wrote this one is my favorite:

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,

Come, follow Me!

And we see where Thy footprints falling

Lead us to Thee.

Refrain:

Footprints of Jesus,

That make the pathway glow;

We will follow the steps of Jesus

Where'er they go.

Matthew 9:11-13

11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 7:33-35

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' **34** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' **35** But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

Isaiah 53:12

"He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

John 15:20

Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

1. Presumptions that must be Dismantled

1. Godly people keep your contact with the ungodly at a minimum.

Jesus went to their homes, 'go and tell', not come and hear'

2. Your witness is damaged by the company you keep.

Apparently it didn't bother Jesus.

3. Your religious commitment gives you the authority to judge others.

2 kinds of sinners: lost sinners, saved sinners

4. Your occupation is a reflection of who you really are.

You can't read a book by its cover.

5. Religious people have an inside tract to God.

'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.'
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' Hosea 6:6

2. Path to be Followed.

Isaiah 53:12

"He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The greatest compliment for any believer is to be identified with Jesus in everything! For the last several months, I've been enamored and drawn to the phrase, "Jesus, friend of sinners..." I want it said about me, about you, about our church that we were 'friend of sinners.' I want to walk like Jesus, be like Him in every way, on every day...don't you? If so, we are going to have to make peace in our hearts and minds, get to the place where we are ok, alright with 3 different things:

1. Like Jesus, identify with transgressors..."numbered with the transgressors"

Sadly, we wrestle with this one greatly. To many of us, image is everything. Appearance trumps intention. Our testimony becomes the thing we protect rather than the thing we actually do. Jesus ate with tax collectors, was in the company of broken up people, known for their indiscretions and mistakes...and was blasted by the religious right for so doing. Did it bother Him? Not in the least...He made no excuse, but to state His purpose:

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

To administer the medicine of heaven, Jesus chose to be in close proximity to those who were sick with sin's maladies. He chose to direct His voice toward those who knew full well of their terminal illness, rather than those to were wearing the garments of denial.

To be numbered among the transgressors is to describe two things:

1. To be assigned by others in persecution and death with those who deserved judgment.
2. To be intentional in socially reaching out to those whom the religious right strictly avoided.

2. Like Jesus, bare the pain of hurting people..."and he bare the sin of many."

On the cross, Jesus took all of our sin. But He reached out lovingly to those who others considered unacceptable.

Wikipedia

Mother Teresa (26 August 1910 – 5 September 1997) also known as **Teresa of Calcutta**, **MC** was a **Roman Catholic religious sister** and **missionary**. After having lived in Macedonia for some eighteen years, she moved to **Ireland** and then to **India**, where she lived for most of her life.

Mother Teresa founded the [Missionaries of Charity](#), a Roman Catholic [religious congregation](#), which in 2012 consisted of over 4,500 sisters and was active in 133 countries. They run hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's and family counselling programs; orphanages; and schools. Members must adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as well as a fourth vow, to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor".^[10]

Mother Teresa was the recipient of numerous honors, including the 1979 [Nobel Peace Prize](#). In 2003, she was [beatified](#) as "Blessed Teresa of Calcutta".

Like Jesus, do what you are uniquely gifted and compelled to do for others...Jesus bore our sins on the cross. No one else could do that for us! Be willing to engage with others in pain, especially the pain caused by their own sin...don't leave them to pay the price for their mistakes or feel like they deserve what's coming for them. Where would we be, if Jesus would have taken that attitude toward us? In our sin...wallowing, even now, is the answer!

Maybe the examples of Jesus and Mother Teresa are far too removed for you...but you can:

1. Take up the cause of the marginalized.
2. Refuse to imagine yourself above anyone.
3. Mentally 'walk in the moccasins' of the struggling...and
4. Do what you sense God calling you to do for them right now, not mindful of who is watching.

3. Like Jesus, become a prayer warrior for people indifferent to prayer..."and made intercession for the transgressors."

I don't claim to fully understand the intercessory prayer of Jesus...how He prayed for others then, much less now...but I know He did and He still does. Prayer is the best thing, the highest thing, the greatest thing you can do for someone. Even after you have done something for someone, keep praying for them.

What does Jesus intercession look like?

Romans 8:34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

3. Principles to Guide your Friendships

- 1. Expect to be misunderstood.**
- 2. When challenged, give a reason why you doing what you are doing.**
- 3. Don't withhold friendship based upon performance or behavior.**
- 4. Choose to love the heart sick instead of being liked by the heart hardened**
....don't waste your time on those who don't know they are needy and sin sick.
- 5. Prepare for gossip behind your back**
....they asked the disciples, not Jesus.
- 6. Develop your friendships with purpose.**
...toward Christ and following Him
...be careful you do not manipulate, only being friends to win them.

7. Evaluate the result of your friendships. Luke 7:35, ‘wisdom is proved right by her children.’ Got any converts? Making any spiritual headway in the lives of others? Any changed lives in your wake?

8. Keep yourself spiritually and emotionally healthy

...know who you are in Christ and walk securely

...if unable to deal with your life, going to have a hard time balancing yourself to take on others and their issues.

9. Let friendships develop naturally

...don’t push, shove, and manipulate them to occur. Just watch God put you in the right place at the right time

10. Live as a recovering Pharisee, not a proud card carrying one.

11. Speak the gospel, not just live it.

III. Eden, Texas and the beer joint.