

January 16th – Friend of Sinners

*“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”*

*(Matt. 11:19)*

It’s no secret that the religious establishment of Jesus’ day did not like him. I’m sure there were a variety of reasons, but they all seem to swirl around selfishness. If the Pharisees and Sadducees had accepted Jesus as God’s Messiah, they would’ve lost their power and prosperity in Israel. Why? Because they had ceased teaching the true Word of God and had started emphasizing the traditions of men. Sadly, some “churches” are still doing that today – usually the ones closest to dying.

In today’s verse, Jesus quoted the religious leaders, and of course we know they meant their words as an attack. But in this case, their words have some manner of accuracy. Of course, Jesus was not a glutton or a winebibber – He was the one and only Son of God and a Man of great self-control. But the last clause in their criticism is true – Jesus is a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Just think of all those He impacted – Levi, Mary Magdalene, lepers, harlots, etc. Even me and you!

No one was too wicked that Jesus was not willing to befriend them and reach them with the Gospel. Jesus never participated in sin (Heb. 4:15), but He did meet sinners right at the point of their need. Sadly, too many churches have been preaching to the lost without meeting them where they are. I’m convinced that if we will join Christ in befriending tax collectors and sinners, more and more of them will be transformed by the Gospel of Christ. Let’s be in the world, but not of the world.