

**Loving the Lost**  
**Luke 15:1-10; James 2:14-16**

**Introduction:**

**A. Comfortable Christians**

1. It's easy to get comfortable as a Christian living in the Bible Belt of the USA.
  - a) There are lots of opportunities to spend lots of time with other Christians.
  - b) Christian groups fight for our religious freedoms.
  - c) We listen to Christian radio while driving to our favorite Christian bookstore.
  - d) Many of these things are gifts from God, but did Jesus intend us to insulate ourselves to the point where all we feel is annoyed when non-Christian people do un-Christianly things in our presence?
2. We have the mind of Christ and we need to have Jesus's heart for the lost.
  - a) You can see the great love that God has for the lost through a look at the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin in Luke 15:1-10.
  - b) Do I have this kind of love for the lost?
    - (1) Do I notice the lost?
    - (2) Do I seek the lost?
    - (3) Do I rejoice when the lost are found?

**I. A Friend of Sinners**

**A. Who's on Your Friends List?**

1. It's amazing that a lot of Christians don't seem to like non-Christians – aka - the *lost* or the *unchurched*.
2. Often we want to keep away from messy people and that's amazing because our lives are messy too!
3. After coming to Christ and growing in knowledge, too many of us distance ourselves from our lost friends.
  - a) We seem to have less time for the hurting and struggling.
  - b) We've found the thing that meets the need in our lives, but what about those who need the very thing we've found.
4. This separation is usually not intentional, but it happens.

**B. Jesus lived differently.**

1. One of the common criticisms Jesus faced was that he spent too much time with sinners.
2. How many of us could be accused of spending too much time with sinners?
3. Jesus was not just waiting for Paul to write, "Bad company corrupts good morals" in 1 Corinthians.
4. No one better understood the importance of spiritual maturity, scriptural knowledge, a strong prayer life and positive influences than Jesus.
5. But He also knew these things were not for His personal benefit, but they are meant to strengthen us so we can share with the lost.
6. The Christian life is not about safety and comfort!
7. It is about finding yourself in a dangerous place of vulnerable compassion.

**C. Jesus was called "a friend of sinners".**

1. That was the word on the street in first-century Palestine.
2. That phrase — "friend of sinners" — is mentioned twice in the Gospels - Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:34.
  - a) The religious aristocracy, criticized Jesus as a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners."
  - b) They called him this because it was true!
  - c) Jesus still is a friend of sinners!
  - d) Jesus said that he didn't come for the spiritually healthy, but for the sick. "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).
3. Just like he greeted children that others thought were a nuisance, he welcomed sinners that others didn't (Matthew 19:14; Luke 7:37-39).
  - a) Jesus looked at the rich young ruler and He loved him (Mark 10:21).
  - b) Jesus had compassion for lost people.

- c) And most glorious of all, He used His authority to speak those wondrous words, “Your sins are forgiven” (Luke 7:48).
4. This is all very important for us because we are supposed to pattern our lives after Jesus’s example.
5. If Jesus was a friend of sinners, we should be too — somehow, someway.

#### D. Our Goal

1. Our goal in this world is to love others, not to be liked (1 Timothy 1:5).
  - a) Jesus constantly infuriated the culture of His day.
  - b) They knew his teaching contradicted their own, and rather than like him and wrap their arms around him in happy tolerance, they tried to shut him up (Mark 12:12).
2. Jesus wasn’t a favorite of the leaders or the people!
  - a) They crucified Him! The leaders and the people.
  - b) Even after saying “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances . . .” (Mark 12:14).
  - c) This means Jesus didn’t let the crowd dictate his message.

## II. Showing God’s Love

### A. Windows of Opportunity

1. During my quiet time I came across this quote,
2. “*We are given small windows of opportunity to show God’s love in tangible ways.*”
3. Jesus’ mission on earth was to redeem the lost, the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners. (Luke 4:18)
  - a) If you are a Christian, then you were once lost too.
  - b) So how come as Christians we find it so hard to relate to lost people?
  - c) Maybe because *relate* means that we have to develop *relationships*?!
4. One of the most practical ways we might put the gospel to work as friends of sinners is to develop relationships with them!
  - a) With the widows, the blind, the broken, the hurting—whoever has a need.
  - b) If we’re not in relationships with lost people, we sure won’t be able to relate to them easily.
  - c) Don’t forget! We do have a common thread: we are all image-bearers of the one true God.
5. Jesus had the amazing ability of living in this world, yet He was not *of* it.
  - a) He didn’t care who He was hanging out with; sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors, lepers, etc.
  - b) So why should I?
  - c) He developed relationships with them.
  - d) He invested Himself into their lives while on earth, even unto His death!
6. While hanging out with these sinners, He talked about God, sin, eternity, love, hope.
  - a) Jesus knew what they needed in their lives and He talked about those things and they listened to Him because they knew He cared for them.
  - b) Jesus did not play games.
  - c) He cut to the core and dismantled their beliefs and bad choices by asking simple questions.
  - d) Yet He did so with love and humility.

### B. Being Intentional

1. Why was Jesus able to accomplish both?
2. Because everything Jesus did was intentional.
  - a) *Intentional* = “being characterized by conscious design or purpose; done or made or performed with purpose and intent.”
  - b) Never on earth has there been a man of such purpose.
3. Jesus came to save.
  - a) In Luke 19:10 our Lord says He came to seek and save the lost.
  - b) Then He says to us in John 20:21, “As the Father has sent me, I also send you.”
4. Most of us are stuck in a Christian bubble.
  - a) It’s a nice place where you know your friends share the same beliefs.
  - b) You can let your hair down. You can play your Christian music.
  - c) The only time I am in the vicinity of lost people is out in the world, in the community, doing errands - a pretty limited scope of interaction.