

U.H.PC. WORSHIP—SEPT. 15, 2019

SERMON TOPIC: “JESUS BRINGS SINNERS NEAR”

*“...All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Him. (Jesus)---And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying: This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Jesus told them that there is great joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15: 1)*

**WOW!** What is the reason for which Jesus came again? Was it for the righteous, the rich, those who are well and have no need for a physician only? Did He come to kill, to steal, or to destroy? **NO!** To the contrary—Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He came to give life and to give it more abundantly. He came to take thirty-nine stripes upon His back to heal our infirmities, sicknesses, and diseases. **Most of all He came to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.** However, His appearance presented a major problem to the elite, the well- educated intellectuals, and the rich of society. **THE SIN OF UNBELIEF BECAME A CURSE FOR THEM.** He who came from the glorious Heavenly Kingdom was too simple, too poor, and too seemingly unfit to be their long- awaited Messiah. Yet no **one could deny that He was unique, incomprehensible, all wise, amazing, full of grace, mercy, truth, and compassion.** His presence was quite a **REBUKE** to their way of living and of thinking. “**IF HE WERE SO HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS, WHY DID HE ASSOCIATE WITH SINNERS?** –they said. Yet this was His main purpose for coming from heaven to earth wrapped in human flesh. Jesus came to **change the religious world order from a works- based system to a faith- based system of righteousness by grace through faith** in the Son of God. Making that shift would cost Him His life, but it was the Father’s Will for it to be done. So, Jesus taught, preached, and lived the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. Some came to faith, but many would not believe.

**BELIEVE, BELIEVE, BELIEVE!** --was constantly repeated in the Gospel of John. Over and over Jesus urged the people to believe in Him and to believe in the Father who sent Him so that they might **HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE AND ESCAPE THE JUDGEMENT.** For **those who believe would pass from death to life. ...Those who hear the voice of the Son of God will live.** Even the dead will hear and rise to new life. This is because **the Father has life in Himself and has given the Son the power and the authority to execute judgment and to give life.** Therefore, it follows that outside of faith in Christ Jesus, there is no hope of peace with God and rest for our weary souls. Besides all this, there are other reasons for them to believe in the Son of God as Messiah and Savior who came from the Heavenly Father to earth to redeem and to save humanity.

There are and **CREDIBLE WITNESSES** to His deity and purpose. Here are some of the most significant ones:

1. The very works of signs, wonders, and miracles they saw daily: The deaf hears, the blind sees, the dead raised, etc.

2. The witness of John -The- Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" -- John declared at the River Jordan as he saw Jesus approaching.
3. The Scriptures in which Moses wrote of Him: The Passover Lamb, the water from the Rock, the Manna from heaven all spoke of the Christ, the Messiah, the Only Begotten Son of God... But they missed the symbolism and failed to see the connection in His present reality.
4. Over and above all, there is the witness of the Father Himself who spoke from heaven: —"This is my Beloved Son ..." -spoken at His Baptism and at His Transfiguration.

Jesus continued:

"YET YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE MY WORD." He continued by saying that if they did not believe the words of Moses who they revered, and who wrote about Him/Jesus, why would they believe Him? Let it be known that those who believe in Him, out of their heart will flow rivers of living water which is the Holy Spirit. And **those who do not believe in the Son shall not see life and the wrath of God abides on them.**

I invite us to look at some of the sinners who Jesus brought near: -- The woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well, ---The crippled man at the Pool of Bethesda,---The 5000 He fed with five loaves and two fish, --the little children He took in His arms and blessed them and said those who came to Him as a little child will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He brought Matthew and Zaccheus, the Tax Collectors near to Himself, near to the Heavenly Father and into the Heavenly Kingdom. **Jesus brings those who believe back to the Father and to our right place in the heavenly Kingdom of God. He offers Himself as Living Water and Living Bread to sustain us on our Life's Journey.** Those of us who have Christ in us, also have the privilege and responsibility to do for others what He did for us as it pertains to Salvation of souls.

To remind us of what is God's priorities, Jesus told the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. He told how their owners lost them and yearned to find them. So those who were safe were left behind while the owners searched diligently for them until they were found. Then when they were found there was a great rejoicing in the community. Even so it is when a lost soul is saved, healed, and restored to God and brought back into the Heavenly Kingdom. There is great angelic rejoicing in heaven over just one soul that is found and saved. Why is this? Because someone is now the inheritor of ETERNAL AND ABUNDANT LIFE FOREVER. THIS CALLS FOR REJOICING AND CELEBRATION IN HEAVEN. So how important is this to God and how important should it be to us as followers of Christ?

So, therefore, we are being encouraged NOT to be as the FOOL mentioned in Psalm 14 who claimed that there is no God, who goes about doing evil to others; or as those called FOOLS by Jeremiah who are **stupid children who do not know God.** They know how to be wise in doing evil, but do not know how to do good. Jehovah God scanned the earth but could find no one who did good, who revered, loved, worshipped, and

obeyed God. THEREFORE, EVERYTHING WAS BROKEN DOWN and the whole land became a desolation. YET, THE LORD, OUT OF THE BOWELS OF MERCY STILL SAID HE WOULD NOT MAKE AN END OF EVERYTHING. Even though there would be global mourning, darkness and ashes everywhere, people would be climbing over walls and jumping out of windows... still God would offer mercy. Consider the scene eighteen years ago when the terror attack happened on 9/11/2001. Can anyone see any similarity to the times and devastation of which Jeremiah prophesied?

I believe that the LORD God, is calling people more urgently to faith in God through acceptance of His Son, Christ Jesus. - For He is the Way, The Truth, and the Life -the Good Shepherd who leads us to the Heavenly Kingdom. God is calling for a restoration to righteous justice, to human dignity, compassion, and love that cannot be achieved except through Christ Jesus. For He is our Living Water and Bread of Heaven. He came to mingle with sinners and to woo them back to the Father where they belong. So, when we think our church is too good, too clean, too elite... for us to tolerate the poor, the lost, the hungry, the destitute, could it be that we are excluding Jesus and forgetting what His purpose and mandate are? If we only want to “rub shoulders” with the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees are we shutting Jesus out and disobeying His instructions and examples? IF WE WANT TO IDENTIFY AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST JESUS, THEN ARE WE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LOST SOULS AND STRAYING SHEEP? WILL YOU PRAY FOR A LOST SHEEP TO BE FOUND RIGHT NOW? WILL YOU MAKE IT A POINT OF ASKING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD A SOUL TO YOU RIGHT NOW? WOULD YOU / WE CARE ENOUGH TO NOT WANT EVEN OUR WORST ENEMY TO BE CONDEMNED TO HELL FOREVER AND PRAY FOR THEIR SALVATION RIGHT NOW?

I encourage us to take up the mandate and example of Jesus and show some concern for lost souls... seriously.

May God abundantly bless all who care and who believe in the Son Jesus Christ. May God bless those who desire to do so and make the effort to seek and to save the lost. Bless those who try to invite a sinner into the Kingdom of God where eternal and abundant life can be found. We can be sure that Jesus and His Judgement are nearer today than He was yesterday. So today is the day of Salvation for all who will believe. The Bible tells us that those who seek souls are wise. Will you find a lost coin or a lost sheep and invite them to come to Christ and into the Kingdom of God? I PRAY SO! FOR PEOPLE NEED THE LORD. At the end of broken dreams, He is the Open Door.

In Christ Jesus... AMEN.