**JESUS, A FRIEND OF SINNERS (adapted from Steven Tramell, preached June 30, 2019, Mountainview church of Christ, Cumming, GA)**

Sometimes it is a challenge when are commanded to do two things that seem to be polar opposites. In this case separate ourselves from the world and also spend time with sinners (**Matthew 11:19, James 4:4**). It is like when our doctors tell us to exercise more and sleep more. These two ideas are opposite but are both necessary for our good health. So let us look at Jesus our great example.

**Jesus Was Not a Sinner**

**Hebrews 4:15; John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23**

* Did Jesus’ relationships signify his approval?
* His purpose was to live a *sinless* life
* He experienced all of our temptations, yet never sinned
* Our relationship with sinners should never lead into *our sinning* or *accepting the sin of others*

**Jesus was with and Spent Valuable time with Sinners**

**Luke 19:5-10; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; Matthew 5:16**

* Should our Christianity keep us away from sinners?
* Over and over the Pharisees complained about Jesus spending time with sinners
* God doesn’t want us to leave the world, but *influence it* for good
* Jesus invited Himself into the lives of people that others ignored
* It is important for us as Christians to get together regularly, attend Gospel Meetings, etc. But Jesus shows us it is just as important to spend time with Sinners.
* Things can unintentionally segregate us from sinners if we are not careful.
* I know some who work at home. Working at home has many advantages; however we need to try to make time to spend with co-workers. [Neil: once a week lunch for years]
* Focusing too much on a hobby and not spending enough time with friends
* Focusing too much on yardwork and not taking time out to spend with neighbors.
* Home schooling is a relatively new innovation that brings many benefits; but with that should come time spent with folks in our local communities. Many times there are great opportunities to convert young people who are friends of Christian teenagers.
* Or simply keeping to ourselves rather than seeking out those who need to come to Jesus?

**Jesus had A Purpose with Sinners**

**Luke 5:27-32, 7:24-35, 15:1-7**

* Jesus was a friend of sinners for a reason – he wanted them to be saved
* He didn’t share their interests or desires, but used His interactions as opportunities
* Spending time with the saved is important, but spending time with sinners is just as important

**Are you a friend to sinners?**

A few weeks back Brian Chapman preached a lesson where he stressed that we all have failed. And that sometimes people give up on those who fail. But God never gives up and we should never give up when we fail. Jesus was a friend of failures and folks that even society gave up on. While preparing for this lesson, I realized I need to and want to be a better friend to those in the world. Maybe you do too!

To be a really good friend to those around you, you need to be first become a friend of Jesus!