

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Why don't sinners like us ?

Why don't sinners like us ?, on: 2006/3/23 23:42

Why Aren't More People Getting Saved?

by Melody Green

Something has really been bothering me. How come so many sinners liked Jesus—but they don't like us very much. They liked to hang out with Him. Jesus got invited to their homes for dinner, to their parties... people even hung in trees just to get a glimpse of Him—and Jesus wasn't even good looking!

Well, you might say, "But Jesus was God and we're not! He was full of charisma and anointing." True. But I think it's more than that.

Nobody preached a harder message than Jesus. Remember His eat my flesh drink my blood comments? And yet, Jesus had something we are lacking. Something we could have if we wanted—but many of us don't. Not really. I think it's called something like a compelling, compassionate love for people..

We might say we love people, but do we really? Do we really have compassion for the lost like Jesus did?

After 17 years of living in the "Bible Belt" of Texas, I moved back to California. I had been asking God for more of His heart for the lost, and California was the perfect place to go. Not that there aren't a lot of believers in California, but it's also full of people who seem proud to distance themselves from the church and from Christians. Some wear it like a badge of honor.

After being in California for awhile, and striking up conversations with lots of random people, I began to remember how I felt before I met Jesus. I didn't like Christians either. They appeared to be narrow minded, judgmental, and worst of all, lacking in true compassion. Their answers to life seemed trite and unrealistic. Their theology, prehistoric. Their pie in the sky philosophy quite frankly turned me off. In the days when I was looking for "the truth" I was positive Christians didn't have it.

Things haven't changed much since then in the minds of unbelievers. The world still thinks we're out of step with the times. Obviously, we do march to a different drum—which is for the most part, a very good thing. But some of our ideas and attitudes actually push people away from the Lord—instead of drawing them in.

I want to share one area I feel we can improve in when it comes to reaching the people around us. Jesus called us to be fishers of men; but it seems we often forget how fishing works, so I'm going to lay out a quick refresher course.

First you study the kind of fish you want to catch, figure out it's favorite thing to eat, and get bait that's hard to resist. Then you put floaters or sinkers on your line depending on what level it feeds at. Then you cast in your line and wait patiently to feel a nibble—and when you do, at the right moment you "set the hook." Then you have to reel your fish in very carefully. Often there's a big tug of war—two feet forward one foot back, two feet forward, one foot back. Big fish can take hours to reel in. Then when you're within reach of your fish, you might scoop him into a net to be sure he doesn't wiggle off the line. Even a caught fish can flop its way back into the water if you're not careful. Then you put your fish into a bucket of water to keep him fresh... and after all that effort, through each stage, you finally get to clean your fish.

But what do we do with people? We forget the process. We're usually worrying about how to clean them up before they're even caught! We want people to stop smoking, stop doing drugs, stop wearing clothes we don't like, dye their hair back from purple to brown, take the metal out of their faces, and generally clean up their act before—or shortly after—the y've had an encounter with Jesus. We want a clean tidy church, clean tidy disciples, and clean tidy friends.

If Christians would have treated me this way, I don't know if I ever would have gotten saved. But I met people who put up with my ignorance, my immodesty, my bad language, and my spiritual hodge-podge theology—and reached out to me in genuine love. They saw beyond my messy exterior and looked into my heart. A heart that was hungry for God. I got loved into the kingdom, by real flesh and blood people who showed me, in practical ways, how much they cared about me. I gave my heart to Jesus because I could see Him in people who said they loved Him. I wanted to be like those people.

e. I wanted to know the God they knew.

After Jesus really got a hold of my heart, sure I changed some things... but it took awhile. Jesus had to fully win my heart before I was willing to make big changes for Him. But sometimes we expect people to make those changes before they are fully won. We want them to "prove" they love Jesus before they're fully convinced. It's putting the cart before the horse.

One of our problems is, we want to clean our fish before we get them into the bucket. And then we wonder why they wiggle off the hook! Why they leave angry. Why they don't like us anymore. Maybe it's because they've grasped a basic principle we've forgotten. Perhaps they instinctively know that if there really is a God somewhere, He is going to care about their heart, not their hair color. This God will see their true value even when they're a mess on the outside. That's the kind of God this generation is looking for. But what kind of God are we giving them?

We need to remember that Jesus put up with all kinds of stuff—even from His own disciples. Mistakes. Arguments. Unbelief. Jealousy. I bet those guys didn't smell very good either. But Jesus loved them—and they knew it. And they followed Him at the cost of their own lives.

We forget how spiritually hungry the lost really are. We forget that they pray and cry out for help to a God they don't know. We forget how seekers think and feel. We tend to look at the outside of the cup while Jesus looks deep into the heart. We get annoyed and judgmental when people show up to church looking like they're going to a party—instead of rejoicing that they came to hear about God at all.

Why aren't more people getting saved?

Maybe the walls around the churches are as high as the walls around our hearts. Perhaps the walls are so high we can't see beyond our own little world, into the hearts and hurts of people in our communities, our schools, our work places—and yes, literally—our streets. God hears their cries. Do you?

Maybe it's easier to ignore them because if we don't it will cost us something. Maybe that's why we often choose judgment over compassion. It's safer.

Judgment distances us from people—which means we don't have to give them any part of ourselves. Compassion draws them to us—which means we need to give them some of our time and our energy and our love.

So why aren't more people getting saved?

<http://www.lastdaysministries.org/streets/peoplegettingsaved.html>

Re: Why don't sinners like us ? - posted by Greenquality, on: 2006/3/24 0:19

Well I would say Jesus did not come to judge the sinner's, and they seen that he came to save the sinner! like the woman at the water well, he told her how many husbands she had including the man she is living with at the time. he did not condone her for that, but told her to bring all the people from the town, so he could talk with them. I became Christian when i was working and living at a night club, I was a cook and bartender, I had a lot of friends there i did not look at them as sinners, or judge them. those were some of the best times. now Christian pastors had problems with me because I worked in such a place, but I had to do to make ends meet. I got along with every body there.!

Re: Why don't sinners like us ? - posted by murdog (), on: 2006/3/24 0:22

Annie,

That is a good article isn't it. I read it on Keith and Melody's website about six months ago and I hadn't forgotten it. I know it is a lot easier to judge and want people to be cleaned up five minutes after conversion. When I think back to my own salvation which is being worked out daily with fear and trembling, I didn't just immediately drop all my bad habits and then have a full crop of fruit of the spirit.

It takes a lot more to be compassionate and love people into the kingdom than it does to reason or argue them into the kingdom. (Which doesn't seem to work by the way, LOL.)

Thanks for sharing the article.

Murray

Re: where is our compassion? - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/24 5:12

Annie, this is a very good article - kind of hits home.

Greenquality said,

Quote:

-----now Christian pastors had problems with me because I worked in such a place,

I suspect that if Jesus were on earth today he would go there. He went where the sinners were - the lost sheep. Think of the women who searched for her lost coin. She searched in every crack.

Some of our most destitute people hang around in pubs. Their hearts cry for some kind of connection. Maybe that's why they are there - not just to drink.

We avoid so many "cracks" because we want to maintain a good reputation with the "Pharisees", and treasure with our sense of righteousness.

It was the Pharisees who couldn't handle being in places of ill repute because they were obsessed with 'defilement' - symbolized in the lepers.

Jesus taught us to be in the world, not of it. We need to learn the difference. As we grow in Christ, we will be less inclined to embrace the ways of the world. Instead we will go into all the world and live the gospel. (ie preach it)

Murray said:

Quote:

-----It takes a lot more to be compassionate and love people into the kingdom than it does to reason or argue them into the kingdom. (Which doesn't seem to work by the way, LOL.)

For years I thought I was "witnessing" when really I was trying to reason with them.
Diane

Re: - posted by Greenquality, on: 2006/3/24 6:06

funny thing is, that God sent, a mother and son, who moved in to that place, the son was the same age as I, we had a lot in common, Steve and his mother were Christians, the mother was a traveling pastor from Ca. I will never forget them, what joy and life they brought with them to that Bar, latter the son married his girl friend in one of the banquet rooms. which I had to cook that day, but I popped in a few times. to wish my best, that Bar never knew what hit them. more and more Christians were moving in that place. they even had church worship in their apartment which was above the Bar, wow those were some great times.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/24 9:49

Greenquality said,

Quote:

-----funny thing is, that God sent, a mother and son, who moved in to that place, the son was the same age as I, we had a lot in common, Steve and his mother were Christians, the mother was a traveling pastor from Ca. I will never forget them, what joy and life they brought with them to that Bar, latter the son married his girl friend in one of the banquet rooms. which I had to cook that day, but I popped in a few times. to wish my best, that Bar never knew what hit them. more and more Christians were moving in that place. they even had church worship in their apartment which was above the Bar...

What an awesome story!!!!
Diane

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2006/3/24 9:52

I am a sinner and I like you. :-?

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/24 11:21

Quote:

----- i did not look at them as sinners

If you didn't look at them as sinners needing saved, then what was your view of them?

Re: Why don't sinners like us ? - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/3/24 11:59

1 John 3:13

13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

John 7:7

7The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

John 15:19

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

yes, i agree that many christians lack compassion, but i also see that many christians confuse Christ's compassion with worldly compassion. today's churches try to be too much like the world to win the world, they are more sensitive about being careful not to hurt the world's feelings that they compromise the WORD.

remember that many came surrounding Jesus because of miracles. He even rebuked the crowd because He knew they came only to be fed physically and not spiritually. He had many who hated Him. yes, Jesus hung out with sinners, but remember, He did not hang out to fellowship with sinners, He hung out with them to speak the truth, not to just eat and dine with them.

remember when He saved the adulteress from being stoned? remember what He told her after her accusers left? SIN NO MORE. how many churches tell their people that after they come to Christ? many leaders are so afraid of losing numbers that they allow them to stay in their sins, by focusing on good works never dealing with the heart of the person where the evil motives lie. making the believers believe that good works will outweigh your wicked adulteress heart. we have so many people coming professing to believe in Christ cleaning only their outward appearance, but never cleaning inside the cup. leaders have adopted compassion like the world. many christians do not understand true compassion in Christ. true compassion will not leave someone wallowing in their sins, but will help them see their evil heart by shining the light (God's word) into their life, exposing their sin that they may see their need of a SAVIOR.

we got a problem if sinners like us. that means we are being too much like the world.

the reason why many people aren't being saved is because christians are too much like the world. look at today's churches. melanie green says churches have a problem accepting the lost outward appearance. i disagree. today's churches have no problem in accepting purple hair spike face people. they have no problem in allowing them to stay with their old self for quite a long while. they're not trying to clean them up first and then bring them to Christ. they will allow even their women to dress like prostitutes until she is ready to be clothed, not caring that other men will stumble. today's churches are showing a lot of compassion, a lot of worldly compassion that is. using much flattery and worldly goods to try to talk them into joining their church. the reason why many hate christians is because their hypocrites. that's what i hear a lot of what the lost say. we are not winning many is because we are not walking in the power of Jesus. and the only way to win

alk in His power is to die to flesh. we are not crucified to the flesh, we have idols, we are a bunch of talkers and not walk
ers of the word. we MUST DIE in order to bring life to others! if we want to walk in true love of Jesus, NOT the world, wi
th true compassion and brokeness then we must die in order that Christ will truly live in us. it is Christ that draws not us.
so are you willing to die that others may live? are you desperate for souls? then die. theres no formulas on how to cat
ch fish. you just gotta die .

i really like a lot of what keith green says. he teaches a lot on finneys stuff. finney was use to bring revival. he won ma
ny not because he was compassionate, but because he was willing to count the cost and die. finney won many who tho
ught they were christians by exposing their evil motives/ heart, that they may not be deceived by their good works. thats
compassion. helping others to see their need to be saved that they may cry out to the One who can save them.

Re:, on: 2006/3/24 12:27

Quote:

-----I am a sinner and I like you.

If you claim to have been born of His Spirit, than you cannot be a sinner. I ask you, who are you?

Re: - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/3/24 12:29

""After being in California for awhile, and striking up conversations with lots of random people, I began to remember how
I felt before I met Jesus. I didn't like Christians either. They appeared to be narrow minded, judgmental, and worst of all,
lacking in true compassion. Their answers to life seemed trite and unrealistic. Their theology, prehistoric. Their pie in the
sky philosophy quite frankly turned me off. In the days when I was looking for "the truth" I was positive Christians didn't h
ave it.""

yeah, i'm sure thats what a lot of the people and pharisees thought of Jesus too.

""Things haven't changed much since then in the minds of unbelievers. The world still thinks we're out of step with the ti
mes. Obviously, we do march to a different drum—which is for the most part, a very good thing. But some of our ideas
and attitudes actually push people away from the Lord—instead of drawing them in.""

we shouldn't be concern what the lost think of us. we should be more concern about what jesus thinks of us. because o
f many christians being concerned of what the lost think they have compromise the word and have catered to the wants
of the lost. they have water down the gospel for those who are enemies of the cross.

MyFirstLove - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2006/3/24 13:10

I agree.

Re: MyFirstLove, on: 2006/3/24 15:42

I wish I had known that there were those here that are **better** then Melody and Keith Green ... but I know now.

Guess that's why I'm not Holy enough to be here.

See ya's on the streets gang.

Annie - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2006/3/24 15:45

When did anyone say they were better than anyone else?

Re: Annie - posted by murdog (), on: 2006/3/24 16:02

All right people, let's not get in offense here. I personally like the article but on the other hand My First Love makes a good point. You have to know when you are being tolerant, compassionate and when you are watering down the gospel so as not to hurt anyone's feelings.

When was the last time people walked away saying "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"

Lord, give us the courage to preach the word fearlessly and give us the love to make a difference.

Murray

Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/3/24 16:20

I think a bigger problem, at least in much of the West, is that there are no real differences between those that say they are Christians and those who are not. That's been a recurring theme in some of the Barna polls. So it's been something I have taken to the Lord regarding my own heart, Lord am I like the world?

Once people begin to see Jesus in us and not simply oracles of some religious doctrine, that's when others will come to Christ. They will then see true agape love, not some cheap sentimental emotional experience but a true self-sacrificing love that esteems others above themselves.

I'm not taking a swipe at anyone here but that's the cry of my own heart. (2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?)

Re: - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2006/3/24 16:22

Quote:

habakkuk3 wrote:

I think a bigger problem, at least in much of the West, is that there are no real differences between those that say they are Christians and those who are not. That's been a recurring theme in some of the Barna polls. So it's been something I have taken to the Lord regarding my own heart, Lord am I like the world?

I'm not taking a swipe at anyone here but that's the cry of my own heart. (2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?)

I am in agreement with you. It is something I am conscious of as well.

Re: - posted by murdog (), on: 2006/3/24 16:26

Habbakuk,

I think you are exactly right. That is the biggest problem today. I heard someone say, ask your children if you are like Jesus? I know someday I probably wouldn't want to hear the answer. We need to start walking like Jesus walked or else just pack it in.

Murray

Re: - posted by TonyS (), on: 2006/3/24 16:42

The thread's question is:

Quote:

-----Why don't sinners like us ?

I don't have an answer for us, but for me the answer is because of Tony's hypocrisy. Having preached one thing, yet practiced another. I wish the clock could be turned back... All I can do now is forget those things that are behind and press forward towards that high calling.

Much easier to write that word "forget" than it is to practice. We blaze a trail of destruction when we partake in that which is forbidden, and the fallout affects sinner and saint alike, make no mistake about that. We desperately need consistency, integrity and accountability among ourselves.

Robert sings a beautiful song titled "Let the Blood of Calvary speak for me". What else is there?

Tony

TonyS2 - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2006/3/24 16:44

I too stand guilty of this.

Re: TonyS2 - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/3/24 16:55

I think also that it is hard for us to balance holiness/righteousness with love and compassion. The more 'holy' we feel we are (from whatever personal definition of 'holy' we are using) the more arrogant or self-righteous we can become if not careful. It has to be the full package of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

I hesitate to say this but I really have to be honest, I have met some really mean acting Christians that seemed to be somewhat. But, we need to be loving and compassionate as Christ is and not go too far overboard with the whole "God hates sinners" thing. We have to consider all of God's counsel, but we need to focus on God's willingness to save sinners and when they tread that under foot it's on their own heads. We can't get a bad spirit because of folks' actions towards God as if it were God feeling through us. He is much more longsuffering than we will ever be.

If I am hated as a Christian may it be because I was walking in the Spirit, yielding the fruit of the Spirit.

RobertW - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2006/3/24 16:59

Quote:

RobertW wrote:

If I am hated as a Christian may it be because I was walking in the Spirit, yielding the fruit of the Spirit.

Amen.

Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/3/24 18:01

Quote:

I don't have an answer for us, but for me the answer is because of Tony's hypocrisy. Having preached one thing, yet practiced another. I wish the clock could be turned back... All I can do now is forget those things that are behind and press forward towards that high calling.

Me too Tony. The Lord has been dealing with me about this very thing, particularly when I was younger. Those who came to Christ did so not because of me but rather in spite of me. I praise God because he wants to restore what the locusts have eaten (my locusts from Joel 2:25).

Is the fruit of the Spirit manifest in my life? If not, then I need to know why. I've seen in my own life where I've taken this question to Him and He's been very direct with me in providing responses. It's the Holy Spirit that brings conviction, not a critical spirit.

There's such a fine line (the Lord seems to be making this clearer but it's still very delicate) between walking in the Spirit

versus walking in the flesh, it requires that we allow the Holy Spirit to continually search our hearts for our motives and to speak only as we're given utterance.

Re: Sinners: Not OUR fix-up project - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/24 20:06

Melody Green writes

Quote:

-----How come so many sinners liked Jesus—but they don't like us very much.

Even today, unbelievers know that Jesus wasn't stuck on himself, and he wasn't looking for power, fame, and status. They also can spot pride or self-absorption in professing Christians, and they abhor by it.

We are to called present Christ's nature — and people do respect that.

“And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.” 1 Sam. 2:26

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.” Lk 2:52

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone.” Romans 12:18

“If your enemy is hungry feed him.”

“Use your worldly wealth to gain friends so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” Lk. 16:9

The sinners liked what Jesus did for them. His miracles were not showy arrogant displays, but were always acts of compassion for them.

Later on, when they became aware of the cost of following him, many turned away. But at least, they had a chance to experience his mercy and love. No doubt God would later bear that on their conscience.

Once, near the beginning of my ministry in a church, the Lord spoke to me in a dream, saying “They like you, but they don't like the Jesus in you.” It turned out be true: They liked what I did for them, but they were unwilling to count the cost and put him ahead of their self-life. And they sure did not want to hear about any need to commit their lives to Christ .

But what do we do with people? We forget the process. We're usually worrying about how to clean them up before they're even caught! We want people to stop smoking, stop doing drugs, stop wearing clothes we don't like, dye their hair back from purple to brown, take the metal out of their faces, and generally clean up their act before—or shortly after—the y've had an encounter with Jesus. We want a clean tidy church, clean tidy disciples, and clean tidy friends.

This is such a turn off. People hate feeling like they are someone's project. They hate the subtle constant insinuations that they should change. Let's face it, think how we feel if our spouse was always telling us to change.

In our evangelical zeal, we also have to preserve the boundaries of respect and love. The “sinner” on is not OUR fix-up project.

Diane

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2006/3/24 22:39

Quote:

Healingwaters wrote:

Quote:

-----I am a sinner and I like you.

If you claim to have been born of His Spirit, than you cannot be a sinner. I ask you, who are you?

OK I am not a sinner I am Perfect! :-)

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/3/24 23:43

This is such a difficult thing to figure out. To not be so full of goodwill, and compassion that we become humanistic in our presentation while at the same time not being so separated from the world that we lose touch with humanity. True that many followed Christ after they saw miracles, but read John 6, and look at their reaction when Jesus begins to speak "hard sayings."

Unfortunately it seems that many in the church today expect failure in their walk, rather than victory. So when the world looks at us they see those who are really no different than they are.

I remember my boss asked me once about Christianity, and I began to tell him how we could be free from sin through Christ. He asked "well what if you do sin?"

I said "you can be forgiven"

He said "oh so it's just like the catholics going to confession but living however they want?"

After this, I then began to ask GOD about this, because we should be a holy people free from sin, and death.

Bottom line though is to love people enough to tell them the truth about their soul, and their destination outside of Christ for "faithful are the wounds of friend" and to love them enough to help them physically as well.

Re: sinners, sin, - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/3/25 6:21

Quote:

-----If you claim to have been born of His Spirit, than you cannot be a sinner. I ask you, who are you?

Woowow here! The bible doesn't say anywhere that born-again are no longer sinners. Some may think they are no longer sinners, but they are in denial. The world can see that, and that's why they mock the faith. Think of the prodigal son. He came to the Father still smelling like pigs. In the same way when we come to Jesus, we still have some of our bad habits, rotten thinking, fears, worries, old ways. They don't all immediately disappear. That happens through the sanctifying work of the Spirit over the course of our lives.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 1Jn 1

No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. 1 Jn 3:6

This verse is talking about those who are still eating the pig-husks of this world, and haven't repented -- ie turned around, faced a new direction, decided to follow Christ. They just THINK that they are.

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him
yet walk in the darkness
we lie and do not live by the truth.

I believe that one of the biggest turn-offs to non believers is the unwillingness of Christians to look honestly at themselves.

Quote:

-----OK I am not a sinner I am Perfect!

I suspect that you are just throwing out an off-the-cuff response to a close-ended question. I challenge you to think this through a bit more.

As we grow in our faith we become more and more conscious of our fallenness. And that keeps us close to our Lord. We see our need of his mercy daily. That makes us more merciful toward others, more humble, and in the long run- a good testimony of our Lord.

There is an "if" in the following verse:

7But if we walk in the light,
as he is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all **sin**.

Notice, it does not say, "if you asked Jesus into your heart 30 years ago... or something about one's distant PAST.

It's all about how we walk now. 1 John shed a lot of light for us.

The proof is in our walk.

Diane

Re: - posted by murdog (), on: 2006/3/25 6:51

Diane,

I guess the difference is sin is no longer our master.

Murray

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2006/3/25 9:30

Quote:

roadsign wrote:

Quote:

-----If you claim to have been born of His Spirit, than you cannot be a sinner. I ask you, who are you?

Some may think they are no longer sinners, but they are in denial.

Diane

There you go you win the gold star for the correct answer. :-P

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/3/27 14:04

Can you be a sinner and a saint at the same time? Can a 'sinner' be holy?