

For the One Everybody Hates

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[0 : 00] All right, if you got your Bible, go to Mark chapter one, Mark chapter one, while you're turning there, let me just say thank you for your singing. I love to hear you sing. It doesn't matter how you sound, just the fact that you are singing. I wasn't pointing anybody out with that, all right? Some of you are like, wait, he was talking about me. Just the fact that we together raise our voices in praise to the Lord who is worthy. And so what an encouragement it is to me just to hear you sing. So if you got your Bible in Mark chapter two, did I say Matthew? I meant Mark chapter two. So Mark chapter two is where we're going to be this evening. This is our third week of our For the One series, which is a series we started just a few weeks ago. And we've been looking at the fact of how Jesus is the shepherd who is willing to leave the 99 to go after the one.

That's the kind of shepherd, that's the kind of savior that Jesus is. Last week we talked about how Jesus is for the prodigal. He's the one that goes after the one that's made a complete mess of their life and embraces them and receives them. And what we're going to do over the next several weeks as we continue in this series, and you're going to notice this theme over and over, is that these are the kinds of individuals that Jesus does ministry to, that he loves, that he eats with, that he calls. Jesus is for the one. And that is good news for us because we are that one that has gone astray. We are that one that has run away. We're the prodigal son, whether you're the one that stayed home or the one that ran away from home, and yet Jesus is for us. And I want us to see the beauty of his grace in this series. So Mark chapter two and verse 13 is where we're going to be this evening. And I'll ask you if you're able to do so to please stand as we honor the reading of God's word. Mark chapter two. If I say Matthew, it's because I'm talking about Matthew. So Mark is where our passage is. Verse 13, it says, and Jesus went out again beside the sea and all the crowd was coming to him and he was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus sitting at a tax booth and he said to him, follow me. And he arose and followed him. And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, you're noticing a theme now by week three, they said, why to his disciples, why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners? And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. This is God's word.

Let's pray together and ask God to teach us tonight. Lord, here we are. We're eager and we're ready to hear from you. We want to learn your word. We want to understand more of the depths of your heart and your love, your grace towards us. Just when we think we've got that figured out, you show us how much we really don't know, how much yet we don't understand about just how gracious you are towards us. So Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, come and guide us tonight to help us understand these things.

And I pray this in Jesus's beautiful name and God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. With the 17th pick in the 2000 NFL draft, the Oakland Raiders select.

And what happened next shocked everyone. You see, for those of you that don't know that much about football, what you need to understand is that a team, an NFL's team's first pick, a first round pick is extremely important. It's an opportunity for a team to kind of have a chance at a fresh start, a chance to rebuild. So like, for example, if you're missing that franchise quarterback, this is your opportunity to draft him. If you need that defensive pass rusher that your team has been lacking, well, now's your chance to get one. Or if you need that explosive game-changing wide receiver and God's people said, I figured I'd get a few amens. Here's your time. This is your opportunity.

[5 : 11] But no matter what, whatever you do, nobody should, and no one ever would, except for the Raiders, use their first round, their first round draft pick on a kicker. A kicker. The Patriots did

that this year in the fourth round and they got laughed at. Imagine doing it in the first round. And that is exactly what the Oakland Raiders did. With the 17th pick in the 2000 NFL draft, the Oakland Raiders selected Sebastian Janikowski. Oh, no, no, this can't be happening. No. That's right. This Sebastian Janikowski. That, Faith Family, is your first round draft pick right there. It's the first time anyone has selected a kicker in the first round since 1979, and it hasn't happened since 2000. Why?

Because you got to be outside your mind to use your first round draft pick on a kicker. And not only did the Oakland Raiders, I know it's the Las Vegas Raiders now, but the Oakland Raiders then, not only did they use their first round draft pick on a kicker, albeit a talented one, this was a kicker who had problems with the police when he played college ball at Florida State. Here's what I'm getting at. Everybody look here. Faith Family, have you ever looked at the choice that someone else has made? And you think to yourself, what an idiot. What are you? An idiot sandwich. Idiot sandwich what?

An idiot sandwich, Chef Ramsay. Have you ever looked at someone like that? Like maybe you didn't say it out loud, you're an idiot sandwich, right? But you thought, what a stupid decision. That is so ridiculous for you to do something like that. Maybe for you, your best friend started dating a complete loser. And you thought, what are you doing? Or maybe your cousin convinced you to invest all your money in Kmart. And you thought, what a terrible choice. Or it's the thought that runs through your mind when your dad decides he's going to dress himself and pick out his own clothes. You know what I'm talking about?

Or it's the feeling that everybody gets the moment you're finished eating at Denny's. What a terrible decision I just made. Right? All of us can relate to that, right? Either in someone else's life or your own life, that feeling of that decision is a really bad decision. It's a ridiculous choice. That's exactly how the Pharisees view Jesus. They look at the decision that Jesus makes here in Mark chapter 2, and they think, he's lost his mind. They think he's crazy. Let's set the setting here. Look at verse 13. Jesus went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. So here's what's taking place. Jesus has just finished a series of miracles. The healing of the lepers in chapter 1, the healing of the paralytic earlier in chapter 2. And as was Jesus' common practice, oftentimes after a long stretch of ministry, he will withdraw away, spend time with the Father, and get away from the crowd. The crowd, as it often did, would find a way to find Jesus. [8 : 57] And so they find Jesus, and in verse 13 of chapter 2, he begins to teach them, listen to me, about the kingdom. He's teaching the crowd about the kingdom. That is really, really important. And it's important because what Jesus is about to do, are you listening, is to illustrate what he's teaching them about the kingdom. So he's teaching them about the kingdom, and then he does something that illustrates the kingdom. Verse 14. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, that is Matthew, sitting at a tax booth, and he said, follow me. So here at his tax booth, collecting income tax, is a man by the name of Levi.

And again, we know him as Matthew. It's the first gospel in the New Testament. As you know, Matthew is a tax collector, and he's at his booth there at the Sea of Galilee, because when fishermen would get done fishing on the Sea of Galilee, they would have to pay taxes, like an income tax, based on the fish that they had caught. And so there he is in his little tax booth, collecting his taxes, and Jesus does something outrageous. And I'm trying to get you each week to feel the emotion of this, to get into the context of this. Like these people think Jesus is crazy. Do you know why? Because with his first round pick in the disciples draft, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords selects Matthew, the tax collector.

Oh, no, no, no, this can't be happening. No, it's outrageous. It's unthinkable. Now, it might not seem that outrageous to you, because you're not living in this context. That is, listen, let's be honest. Most of us don't enjoy paying taxes. How many of you show of hands like paying taxes?

All right, get out. All right. No one likes paying taxes. That's a given. But listen, we don't typically hate IRS agents. We may not like paying taxes, but we don't typically hate the tax person.

Well, in Jesus's day, and I know that some of you know this, but in Jesus's day, the tax collector was the most hated person on the planet. Why? Well, because tax collectors were Jews. Tax collectors were Jews that worked for Rome, and they collected taxes from the Jewish people on behalf of Rome, and they would collect two types of taxes. First were known taxes. By known taxes, it's taxes that you know you're going to have to pay. These are things that you just expect. Here's some examples.

[11 : 55] You pay taxes on just being alive. If you're alive, you've got to pay taxes. If you own a field, or if you sell a product like oil or crops, if you have income off of fishing, like what's happening here in Mark chapter 2, these would be known taxes that you know you're going to have to pay.

But what made tax collectors hated by so many of the Jewish people is that they would collect random taxes. Random taxes was a tax for anything at all, anytime they wanted. That is, they could pull you over in their camel with the lights flashing anytime they wanted and say, listen, stop. I want a tax for that, and there's nothing you could do about it. So if they want to tax you for pulling your boat in the harbor, they can. If they want to tax you for driving down a particular road, they can. And they could do anything they wanted because they had the authority of Rome.

So you can imagine tax collectors took advantage of this power and privilege all the time. And they were hated. I mean, like think, maybe you shouldn't think about the person you hate the most, right? But think about somebody in society that is so hated by people. That's the tax collector. They're greedy. That is, they take more than what was required. They're thieves. They would skim stuff off the top.

They were traitors. They're doing this to their own people. And they were sinners. Why? Because they're breaking the Old Testament law of oppressing the poor. If there's one thing in the Old Testament you are not to do, it's to take advantage of the poor. You are to serve the poor and give to the poor and help the poor not feed off them. And so the Pharisees in particular would look at these tax collectors with fuming hatred because they saw them as sinners and violators of the law of God. And this is what makes the situation in Mark chapter 2 so shocking. Listen, Jesus doesn't just say, hi, Matthew. He doesn't just speak to him. He says this, come follow me. I want you. I pick you to be my disciple. Remember Jesus told the disciples, you didn't choose me, I chose you. Jesus chose Matthew of all of the first round picks he's got. He puts it on a tax collector. And the reason why this is so scandalous, notice this on the screen, is how are you going to have a reputable ministry, Jesus, when you're calling reprobates? It's very hard to have a respectable ministry when you're calling and drafting people like Matthew. Jesus, you pick disciples like the Oakland Raiders draft players. Like, it's ridiculous. But here's what we need to know. Notice this on the screen. Jesus isn't conforming to the culture. Jesus is constructing a kingdom. A kingdom. That's why I said he's teaching about the kingdom and then he's going to show them what the kingdom's like. And what's the kingdom like? Notice it on the screen. In the kingdom, Jesus is for the one that everybody hates. Jesus is for the one that everybody in society despises. And the call of

[15 : 32] Levi gives us insight exactly to what the kingdom of God is like. And now it gets even more shocking. Look at verse 14 again. And he passed by and he says to Matthew, to Levi, in his tax booth, follow me. And Levi rose and followed him.

Mother of a son with talent like yours should be proud. She's ashamed that I could use a talent that God gave me against God. Next. You're good at something. You found a way to make a living doing it. It's that simple.

Must be nice to live in a world so simply ordered. We live in the same world, Matthew. Next.

Besides, what else are you going to do with a mind like yours? Matthew.

Matthew. Matthew, son of Alphaeus. Yes.

Follow me. Me? Yes. You. Whoa, whoa, whoa. What are you doing?

[17 : 02] You want me to join you? Keep moving, street preacher. Do you have any idea what this guy has done? Do you even know him? Yes.

Listen. Listen. I said to you.

What are you doing? Where do you think you're going? Guys? Let me go. Have you lost your mind?

You have money. Quintus protects you. No Jew lives as good as you. You're going to throw it all away. Yes.

Yes. I don't get it.

[18 : 04] You didn't get it when I chose you either. But this is different. I'm not a tax collector. Get used to different. And all God's people said, amen.

Get used to different. I mean, even the disciples think Jesus has lost his mind. I mean, it's one thing to call fishermen. The tax collectors? But the reason why I showed that clip is not, we've already talked about how crazy it is in the eyes of others for Jesus to call somebody like Matthew.

But it's also crazy from a worldly perspective that Matthew says, I'll go. I mean, I think about this from Matthew's perspective for just a moment. You want me to leave a life of personal gain for a life of personal sacrifice?

You want me to leave a good paying job to follow a man who sleeps in a van down by the river? You want me to leave the authority that I have over other people to be under the authority of someone else?

In other words, why would I leave the comfort of my booth to carry a cross? And I submit to you, faith family, this evening that saying yes to Jesus didn't make any sense then and it doesn't make any sense now.

[19 : 20] It's foolishness to the world, but it is the wisdom of God. Oh, this is shocking. It's shocking that Jesus is using his first round draft pick on Matthew.

It's shocking that Matthew's willing to say yes. And then it gets even more shocking because after this conversation, Matthew wants everybody in his network to know about the grace that he has just experienced by Jesus.

And so he calls all his rowdy friends over tonight, right? Q Hank Williams Jr., right? And you can imagine the A-list people that come to this party.

I mean, this is going to be the who's who party in Galilee. I mean, Denzel Washington, I'm sure, shows up. He's there. That kid from Growing Pains probably made an appearance. I think even Kirk Cousins dropped by.

I mean, this is the A-list of Christian celebrities, right? Verse 15. And as he reclined at table in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclined with Jesus and his disciples.

[20 : 27] Why? For there were many who followed him. This party is not filled with A-list Christian elites or celebrities.

This party is filled with what? More tax collectors, prostitutes, yuppies, bikers, thirsty hitchhikers. It is a whole bunch of losers.

In the eyes of the Pharisees, in the eyes of the culture, in the eyes of the world, these are the rejects of the rejects. These are the people everybody hates and no one wants anything to do with. I take that from the term sinner in verse 15 because that term sinner, it's not just something, this is so important, it's not talking about someone who commits sin.

That's true. But the word sinner, you hang out with tax collectors and sinners. It's got that kind of self-righteous arrogance to it, like the outcast, the reject, the people who do the worst of worst things.

[21 : 31] In other words, what you have gathered around this table in Matthew's home is an island of misfit toys. These are the ones that everybody ignores.

They go to the other side of the street to avoid. And listen, Jesus not only goes to the party, he eats with them.

No! No! No! This can't be happening! No! No! That's your last even A for the night, okay? Somebody call a PR firm.

Somebody help this Messiah with this image thing. He really needs some rebranding. And as you can imagine, the deacons, you know, the Pharisees, they aren't happy at all, verse 16.

And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that Jesus was eating with these sinners and tax collectors, they say to his disciples, why?

[22 : 31] This is crazy! Why does this man eat with tax collectors and sinners? So Jesus here gets scolded. You can almost hear the judgmental tone of them saying this.

How could he do something like this? Why would he do something like this? The Pharisees are mad because Jesus is identifying with lawbreakers. Here the Pharisees, all this will preach, here the Pharisees are doing everything they can to try to get people to follow the law, and Jesus is hanging out with all the people who break the law.

It's crazy! And they're mad, and they're angry, and they think this is offensive. Here's why. Notice it on the screen. It's because the Pharisees reject Jesus because Jesus accepts rejects.

The Pharisees reject Jesus. Why? Because he accepts rejects. Now let me ask you. Let's get into your heart for just a moment.

Listen to me. What person or group in your life would you find it appalling if you saw Jesus befriending?

[23 : 46] It would anger you if you saw Jesus eating with them. What if you walked into a restaurant and you saw Jesus eating with your ex? What if, Republicans, you walked into a restaurant and you saw Jesus eating with all the left progressives?

Or you Democrats, what if you walked in and you saw Jesus eating with the Republicans? The good news is Jesus eats with Democratic and Republican sinners. You can email me over that. I don't care, right? Because listen, if Jesus eats with anybody, he eats with sinners. If Jesus doesn't eat with sinners, guess what? He eats alone.

There's nobody else to eat with but sinner. And I love the fact that you feel that tension. I love the fact that I feel from some of you like I wish he wouldn't have gone there.

Now you know how the Pharisees felt. Because it's that, don't touch that. Don't go there. Don't eat with them. Not that kind of person.

[24 : 53] And so who is it in your life? What if you saw Jesus wearing a Packers jersey? Or a Vikings jersey. We all know he would wear a Bears jersey. But anyways, because he identifies with the losers.

Come on, alright? And I say that as a Bears fan, right? Now let's get a little more serious. What if you saw Jesus forgiving the drunk driver that took your teenage daughter?

What if you saw Jesus receiving the worship of someone who ripped your heart out? Who is it that if you knew they'd be in heaven, you'd question whether or not you want to go?

I'll put it in Jonah's terms. You remember Jonah, who's your Ninevite? Who is the person that if God were gracious to them, it would make you want to run the other way?

And until you go there in your heart, until you go there emotionally, you won't get this text. You won't understand how crazy it is that Jesus is doing what he's doing and how gracious it is.

[26 : 05] I've told you this a thousand times. Until you get angry at the grace of God, you don't understand the grace of God. It's appalling. It's outrageous.

It's insane. Peter doesn't have a problem if you're calling fishermen. But once you start calling tax collectors, it's an entirely different category. And Jesus says you might get used to different.

You don't understand what you think you understand when it comes to the grace of God. Brendan Manning, who I quote frequently, wrote this before he passed.

Something is radically wrong when the local church rejects a person accepted by Jesus. Preach, preacher. Jesus came for the corporate executives, the street people, the superstars, the farmers, the hookers, the addicts, the IRS agents, the AIDS victims, and yes, even the used car salesmen. Jesus not only talks with these people, he dines with them fully aware that his table fellowship with sinners will raise the eyebrows of the religious bureaucrats who hold up their robes of their authority to justify their condemnation of the truth and their rejection of the gospel of grace.

[27 : 21] Here's what I'm driving at in our own hearts. It's this. Notice this on the screen. Listen. Your level of excitement at God's grace to your enemy will reveal just how much self-righteousness is in your heart.

Let me say that again. Your level of excitement at God's grace towards your enemy, the person you hate, and you justify your hatred, reveals how much self-righteousness is in your heart.

Why? Why are the Pharisees not rejoicing over sinners who have come home and tax collectors that has found Jesus? It's because, listen, here's why.

Here's why. The Pharisees forgot they belong in the same category of sinner. Sinner becomes that person. Sinner becomes what someone else has done rather than what we have done.

And, listen, the irrationality of self-righteousness is that it puts sin and sinners in all these different categories. Like, we actually have the terrible theology of thinking this way.

[28 : 32] There's good sinners and there's bad sinners. Listen, everybody's a sinner. I get that. All have sinned for us for the glory of God. I get that, Pastor. Everybody's a sinner.

There's just good sinners and there's bad sinners. And guess what? I happen to be one of the good sinners. I don't know about you. I mean, there's a lot of bad sinners out there. But I'm one of the good sinners. There's no such thing as a respectable sin.

Hello? Oh, I don't care if it's pride or prostitution. They're both sin against God. Again, this is Jerry Bridges writes, Many conservative evangelicals have become so preoccupied with the major sins of society that we've lost sight of the need to deal with our own more refined sins.

Like worry, ingratitude, pride, selfishness, impatience, anger, envy, the use of our tongue. We can be orthodox in our theology and yet tolerate in our lives the most subtle, acceptable sins.

Every sin we commit, regardless of how insignificant it seems, is an assault on God's infinite glory. In other words, notice this on the screen, Faith Family.

[29 : 48] The issue isn't the greatness of your sin. The issue is the greatness of the God you sinned against. The issue isn't the greatness of your sin.

It's the greatness of the God you sinned against. And that means whether you're the Pharisee or the prostitute, the tax collector or the scribe, you belong in the category, apart from Jesus, of sinner. And the Pharisees forgot that. And that is why they looked down their self-righteous noses as to how Jesus could dare to use a first-round draft pick on Matthew.

And to eat with people like this. Well, all of this sets up a statement that Jesus is going to make, which is at the very heart of this whole series that we're doing that will last us the next seven years. Verse 17. I feel like I could preach it that long. Look at verse 17. And when Jesus heard, that is, he heard what the Pharisees said, he says to them, and by the way, like, don't try to whisper in the room that Jesus is in.

[30 : 58] He'll hear you, okay? Just so you know. This is proof right here. And so Jesus hears them, and he says, hey, those who are well, this is the heart of his ministry, those who are well have no need of a physician.

It's those who are sick. I came. Listen in. Listen in. Jesus is saying, this is why I came. This is at the heart of the kingdom, the heart of my ministry.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. That's why I called Matthew, and not you.

That'll preach. What is Jesus saying here? Okay, watch, watch, watch, watch, watch. He's saying, remember, he's enjoying a meal, and out of that he says, this is why I came.

In other words, notice this on the screen. This meal represents the mission. The meal, just like he's teaching about the kingdom, and then he calls Matthew, because the calling illustrates the teaching, Jesus sharing this meal says to the Pharisees, this meal represents the very mission that I came to do.

[32 : 12] In other words, I didn't come just to forgive sin. I came to fellowship with sinners. Would you just stop and think about that for a moment?

No, I mean, like you. Lord, help me communicate this. Jesus is saying to you, I didn't come to make a transactional relationship.

Hey, your sin's forgiven. Go on about your business. Jesus is saying, I came to forgive your sin so that I could fellowship with the sinner. I want to know you.

I want to eat with you. I want to have a relationship with you. I don't just want to forgive your sin. I want to fellowship with the sinner.

Isn't that good news? That you're the one, and he's for you, and he's after you, and he's inviting you into a relationship, a fellowship with him.

[33 : 17] Now, let me make a couple of comments because there are misconceptions. Imagine this. This verse often gets quoted out of context. That is, that he came to call the righteous, but he did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners, or those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

Let's understand this. Two misconceptions. First of all, these are not two categories of people. In other words, Jesus is saying, there's healthy people that don't need Jesus, and there's sick people that do.

That's not what he's suggesting, okay? This statement here is meant to expose the self-righteousness of the Pharisees. In other words, Jesus is saying this. It's not that there are 99 sheep that stay home and one goes off.

His point is, he goes after the one. In the same way, he's not saying there actually are righteous people that don't need him, or there actually are sick people that don't need, or healthy people that don't need a physician.

He's saying this. As long as you don't see how sick you are, you'll never go to Jesus. Until you realize you're not healthy, you're not well, you're a mess, you'll never see your need for a Savior.

[34 : 30] That's the point. The point is to expose the self-righteousness of the Pharisees. It's not you're healthy, and people like Matthew are sick. It's that the good thing about Matthew is he realizes how sick he is.

And you think you're okay. And that's why you won't get the kingdom. And that's why I don't call you. Because I came for the people who know they are sick.

I'm the father of the prodigal who's running home in need and knows he's in need of his father's grace. Secondly, in terms of the misconception of this statement, is that we don't take from this that we are spiritually sick rather than spiritually dead.

You're stretching the metaphor. Jesus is just using a metaphor here. He's using the physician sickness metaphor. The reality is we are not just sick people.

We are dead people. And we don't just need a physician. We need someone who can resurrect the dead. The good news is that's what Jesus specializes in.

[35 : 36] Is raising life from the dead. The gospel of Christ is found here and that is that Jesus came for this purpose. The good news of the gospel is the great physician makes house calls.

Think about that. This is not the gospel. Get well and then come to me. The gospel is you're sick and I came to you.

You're dead and I came to you. Jesus says, I came not to call the righteous but the sick. He's not asking us to make ourselves healthy.

He's asking us to acknowledge our sickness and find grace in the great physician. Amen? So how do we apply this and we're done?

Two quick implications or applications for us and then we're out of here. First of all, what my hope for us would be is that we would personally, each and every one of us, personally experience the grace of God.

[36 : 37] Personally experience the grace of God. The good news of the gospel means that we can stop lying to ourselves. It keeps us from denying that though Christ was victorious, the battle with lust and greed and pride still rages.

Listen, grace allows me to acknowledge that I am often unloving, irritable, angry, resentful with those closest to me.

When I go to church, I can leave my white hat at home. God not only loves me as I am, He knows me as I am. Because of this, I don't need, listen, I don't need to apply spiritual cosmetics to make myself presentable to God.

To live by grace means to acknowledge my whole life story. The light side and the dark side. In admitting my shadow, I learn what God's grace means.

Tonight, would the fact that Jesus is for someone like Matthew and for someone like you free you, free you from putting on spiritual cosmetics?

[37 : 53] That you've got to be and put forth an image to make everybody impressed. No, you don't. No, you don't. Jesus will eat with you just as you are.

Amen. And I want you to embrace that and I want you to experience that. The good news is Jesus isn't going to leave you the way you are.

He's going to keep changing you until one day you are glorified and He will complete the work He began in you. The good news is He's going to do that. It's not by our works, it's by His grace.

Here's the last application and I'm done because we will clap and amen the grace of God to us.

Right, Peter? Right? Hey, it makes total sense that you would call fishermen but not tax collectors. It is not enough that we personally experience the grace of God. Faith family, we need to personally express the grace of God because every single one of us has a little Pharisee on the inside.

[38 : 55] that little bit of self-righteousness or that whole lot of self-righteousness that looks down our noses at people and what Christ is calling us to is listen, if this is what the kingdom is about and you're going to be about this kingdom, then you need to love this way and show grace this way.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote this and I'm done. Pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and others.

We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteousness.

Or among the righteous. You're a sinner? Oh, you mean you struggle? Oh, you mean you have bad days? So we remain alone in our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy.

But it's the grace of the gospel which is so hard for the pious to understand that it confronts us with the truth and says, you are a sinner, a great and desperate sinner. Now come as a sinner that you are to the God who loves you.

[40 : 05] He wants you as you are. He does not want anything from you, a sacrifice, a work. He wants you alone. This is the message of freedom. You do not have to go on lying to yourself and your brothers as if you were without sin.

