

**May 2 – 8, 2009**

**LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS - PART 2**

In this lesson you will learn that Jesus received and accepted all people.

- I. The opposite of love, acceptance, and forgiveness.
  - A. We must not show condemnation, judgment, or criticism to the lost.
  
- II. Jesus received and accepted all people – Matthew 9:9-13.
  - A. Verse 9 – Jesus told Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him.
  - B. Verse 10 – Many tax collectors and sinners ate with Jesus and His disciples.
  - C. Verse 11 – The Pharisees asked the disciples why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees were self-righteous and couldn't understand why Jesus would associate with sinners.
  - D. Verse 12 – Jesus' response, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Jesus came for the sick, hurting, broken, despised, rejected, and those who were lost.
  - E. Verse 13 – "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Jesus people accept people where they are and love them into the Kingdom. We should be reaching out to sinners. He is more concerned about how we treat people than doing religious acts.
  
- III. The process is to start where people are, not where you are.
  - A. Jesus didn't lower the standard of purity, holiness, and righteousness.
  - B. We also don't lower our standards, but we are raising the standard of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Many people have had high legal standards, but their love standard has been low.
  - C. If we show love, acceptance, and God's forgiveness, sinners will repent, be forgiven of their sins, experience the love of God, become a child of God, and get in God's family. As a result, they will begin to love God, love others, and be transformed by the renewing of their mind to become like Jesus.
  
- IV. How do we bring people to God?
  - A. Romans 2:4 – The goodness of God leads you to repentance.
  - B. Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Was there a time that you judged, criticized, or condemned sinners?
- How are you showing love, acceptance, and forgiveness to a lost person?
- Do you have a convent mentality or are you reaching out to the lost?

**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

Mother Teresa was teaching in a convent for years and then saw the poor in the streets of Calcutta and said, "I can no longer stay inside." She reached out to the lost of India.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 9:13 – "For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."