

# Who are the People the Lord Won't Save?

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Matthew 9:9-17

**1 Wait a minute! Doesn't God accept you just the way you are; sin and all? How can we have a message entitled, "Who are the People the Lord Won't Save?" Doesn't God want everybody?**

**Have you ever been told, "I don't need that religious stuff. I'll take my chances on getting to heaven. After all, I live a pretty good life."**

**A Christian doctor spoke at an outdoor evangelism meeting one night.**

**He said, "While I was in residence at the Mayo Clinic, a lady who had suffered for many years came for an examination. We found she could be helped through surgery and proper medication."**

**"Before leaving the clinic she suggested that her husband have a checkup, although he appeared to be in good physical condition. At first, he refused, saying, 'I'm not sick; I'm pretty healthy. I don't need a doctor.' But at his wife's insistence, he finally yielded and received the tragic news that he had a cancerous**

tumor in his chest which would soon end his life. Since it had not affected any nerves, he experienced no pain. Yet he was a dying man.”

“Many sinners are likewise deluded into thinking they are spiritually healthy when actually they are inflicted with the deadly disease of sin that can doom them forever.” <sup>1</sup> <sub>2</sub>

The point here is we are all sinners whether we feel sinful or not! This passage answers two questions. Who is accepted in the Kingdom of God? And what should your attitude be as a result?

The answers to these two questions should become very important to you. <sub>3</sub>

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<sup>1</sup> Our Daily Bread, “The People Jesus Won’t Save”, Matthew 9:1-13.



# **I. Who is Accepted in the Kingdom of God? - v9-14**

**Who is Accepted in the Kingdom of God? <sup>4</sup> Is the gospel invitation selective or universal? <sup>5</sup>**

**From Matthew, chapter 9, verses 9 through 13 we read, As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."**

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<sup>2</sup> v9-13.

First consideration is **the moral perspective**.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish Law of Moses was the best moral code of the ancient world.<sup>8</sup> The Jewish people, compared with everyone else, were the beacon of morality to the rest of the world. The Lord's criticism of the Jewish religious leaders was of their legalistic implications and distortions of the Law, not the Law itself.<sup>9</sup>

Because of this high moral code, **prostitutes were considered the worst of sinners**.<sup>10</sup> They were in rebellion against the clear teachings of the Bible.<sup>11</sup> Besides, they were not only sinning themselves, but they were also soliciting and tempting godly men and leading them into sin.<sup>12</sup>

But **the Lord didn't automatically reject anyone who had a bad reputation**.<sup>13</sup> For instance, He told a prostitute she was forgiven of her sins.<sup>3</sup><sup>14</sup> He allowed a prostitute to worship Him.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John 8:1-11.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 7:36-56.

**But would you be as gracious? I heard the story once of a prostitute in a small town who had decided to give up her profession and change her life. She decided that the first step to cleaning things up would be to go to church on Sunday. As she approached a church the next Sunday morning, she was recognized by some of the men inside the building. They immediately met her at the door to tell her that her kind was not welcomed there. She had to leave!**

**They were very righteous people, right?**

**The Lord didn't automatically reject anyone because of their race, nationality or former religion either. <sup>15</sup> In fact, the Lord rebuked James and John who wanted to send fire down from heaven upon a Samaritan town because they rejected Him. <sup>5</sup> They probably wouldn't have requested that if it were a Jewish town! <sup>16</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 9:52-56 - And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village.



Who were Matthew and his friends? <sup>17</sup> They were tax collectors; Jewish traitors who sold out to the Romans! <sup>18</sup> They were crooks who had the authority of Rome to extort their own people; and they did! <sup>19</sup> Because of this they were social outcasts who could only find acceptance among their own kind. <sup>20</sup>

The **big difference between them and the Pharisees was they came to Jesus!** <sup>6</sup> <sup>21</sup> You've got to realize that you're sick before you can call the doctor! <sup>22</sup>

Lord Jesus told a story about the general attitudes between the two groups. <sup>7</sup> The Pharisee's attitude was to thank God that he was such a good guy relating all his good characteristics. The tax collector's attitude was to beat his breast and beg God, "Have mercy on me, (the) sinner!" <sup>8</sup> <sup>23</sup>

What was the Lord's response to each of these people who approached Him? <sup>24</sup> To the tax collector He said,

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 9:10 - While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 18:9-14.

<sup>8</sup> ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.

**Follow Me!** <sup>9</sup> <sup>25</sup> To the Pharisee He said, **Go and learn.**

<sup>10</sup> <sup>26</sup>

So, **who is accepted in the Kingdom of God?** <sup>27</sup> Those who recognize their lost condition and choose to do something about it. <sup>28</sup> The Lord is not as much concerned about what you've done in the past as He is about what you plan for the future. He expects a repentant heart! <sup>29</sup> The Lord was not implying that the Pharisees didn't need Him. His implication in verse 13 was, "I'm doing what you should have been doing!" <sup>30</sup>

## **II. What Should Your Attitude Be Then? - v14-**

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**What Should Your Attitude Be Then?** <sup>31</sup>

From Matthew 9, verses 14 through 17, **Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"**

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<sup>9</sup> v9 - As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> v13 - But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.



**Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast. “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”** <sup>11</sup>

**Let’s look at fasting. <sup>32</sup> Why fast in the first place? There are good reasons for going without food. <sup>33</sup>**

**There are **physical reasons**.**

**You can lose weight. But it must be done wisely to keep from hurting your body. <sup>34</sup>**

**Another reason is to clean out body toxins. It is often a natural cure for some diseases. <sup>35</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> v14-17.

Then there are **spiritual/mental reasons**. <sup>36</sup> Verse 15 says it can help you **emotionally**. **Jesus answered,** “**How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.** When you are mourning, in grief, you might not think of food, and it might even make you sick. <sup>37</sup>

It can help you **volitionally** by taking control over your desires. You can rule your desires instead of having them rule you! <sup>38</sup>

It can help you **mentally**. After fasting awhile, clean oxygenated blood reaches your brain allowing you to be more alert for important decisions. You can mentally focus on the Lord in prayer easier. <sup>39</sup>

There are instances when fasting became important in the Bible. Acts, chapter 13, verses 2 and 3, records, **While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands**

**on them and sent them off.** Fasting helped them be sensitive to the Lord's direction. <sup>40</sup>

Then, in Acts, chapter 14, verse 23, **Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.** Here, fasting helped Paul, Barnabus and the elders focus on the Lord! <sup>41</sup>

So, **what was the wrong attitude here?** <sup>42</sup> Although the Pharisees were the bad guys and John's disciples were the good guys, both groups focused on the Law of Moses. They fasted because their religion demanded that they do! <sup>43</sup>

You see, you can't mix your Christian faith with a legalistic attitude. Lord Jesus illustrated this in two ways. <sup>44</sup>

In verse 16, <sup>12</sup> the old garment is the law of Moses; the new patch is your faith. The patch will shrink when the

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<sup>12</sup> v16 - No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.



**cloth is washed making the rip worse. Christian faith doesn't fit into a legalistic system! <sup>45</sup>**

**In verse 17, <sup>13</sup> the old skin was the law of Moses; the new wine is your faith. When the wine ferments a new skin will expand but an old rigid one will burst. Christian faith can't be crammed into a legalistic system!**

**Now, let's see a couple of examples of looking at a problem through the eyes of legalism rather than the eyes of love. <sup>46</sup>**

**There is the "Defiling my Body" issue seen in First Corinthians, chapter 6, verses 19 and 20, Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. You can defile your body by drinking alcohol, smoking, overeating, lack of exercise, etc.**

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<sup>13</sup> v17 - Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

A **legalistic attitude** would be, for instance, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, right? So, if you mistreat it the Holy Spirit will not dwell in it. <sup>47</sup>

This attitude continues with, let's say, to be a part of God's kingdom you must worship the right way on the right day. <sup>48</sup> You must abstain completely from the world (the church will tell you what that means). <sup>49</sup> You must evangelize; invite at least one person to church services each day. <sup>50</sup> In short, God will not accept you until you conform completely to "His standards"! <sup>51</sup>

Now let's view this same issue from the **love attitude** rather than the legalistic one. I should not engage in any practice that might hinder my total life witness to others. My life is the only Bible some people will read. I want to keep my body as pure and as free from vices as I can. <sup>52</sup> Out of gratitude for the cross and my love for others, I want to get the most effective and favorable response from my witness. <sup>53</sup>

Then there is the “Getting to Heaven” issue. <sup>54</sup> The **legalistic attitude** is: what can I get away with, as far as worldly living is concerned, and still get in?

A few years ago there was an episode of the popular television series “Touched by an Angel”, in which a con artist discovered he had an incurable disease and was shortly going to die. He began frantically doing good things to show God that, all of a sudden, he was a good guy and deserved to go to heaven. Maybe he could do just enough good stuff to get in. He had to be shown by the angels that he really couldn’t con God.

<sup>55</sup>

The **love attitude** is this; because I already am in (the kingdom of God), what can I sacrifice in my relationship to others to show my appreciation to the Lord for what He did for me on the cross? <sup>56</sup>

You see, God accepts you just as you are; sin and all! But He accepts you only with a repentant attitude. That way, He can begin conforming you into the image of His Son!



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