

A. Biblical passages:

1. Luke 5:27----a publican, Levi
2. Luke 7:36----a Pharisee's house
3. Luke 10:25---a certain lawyer
4. Luke 19:1----Zacchaeus
5. John 8-----a certain woman

B. Observations

1. The Lord Jesus accepts people for what they are. He does not condone sin, hypocrisy, etc., but sees the person more than the defect. Additionally He sees the person in terms of what God might do with that one. The lepers, the blind, etc., are not objects of pity but people who can be helped by the grace of God.
2. The Lord speaks to the real needs. With the "lawyer": of Luke 10 the Lord knows His real problem is not that of deciding the most important laws but living with his neighbors. With the woman of Samaria (John 5) he avoids the technical ethnological problem and goes directly to her moral needs. With the Gadarene (Mark 5) the Lord deals with the demonic possessor as the first part of the ministry. He is the friend of sinners but he does not beat around the bush in dealing with their problems.
3. The Lord welcomes them to Himself. Note the acceptance He gives to the woman in Luke 7 whom Simon knows to be a sinner. Matthew's career as a publican means nothing to the Lord when Matthew will follow Him. They are welcome to come believing and living in Him while at the same time they are turning from their sin of difficulty.

III. Conclusion: And what do we learn? More is gained by love than by condemnation although countenancing of evil does not do much good, of course. We do not become friends with the world, we should be, as He was, a friend to sinners. We distinguish between what is anti-god, the world, and what is a fallen state of the race...a state to which God offers redemption. We can hardly be wrong in following the example of our Lord and Master.