

# Love, acceptance, & forgiveness

---

Part 5 of the *I'm In* Series

By Rich Warriner. Sept 25, 2016

*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."*

Matthew 9:9-13, NIV

Jesus is friends with people who are...

- Drastically different than him.
- Social outsiders.
- Disliked and even hated.

Christ-like compassion is not wishing people well from a distance; it's sharing your life with people & loving them up close.

Jesus doesn't go where he's most liked or most comfortable, he goes where he's most needed.

The three minimal guarantees we must make to people: (*Jerry Cook*)

- Love under every circumstance – no exceptions.  
*The kindness of God leads you to repentance.* Romans 2:14, NASB

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*  
Romans 5:8

- Totally accepted, without reservation.  
Religion says behave – believe – belong.  
Relationship says belong – believe – behave.
- Unreserved forgiveness no matter how miserably you fail or how blatantly you sin.  
*Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* Colossian 3:13

Next Steps...

Take some time to answer the following questions with your spouse, children, or small group...

- Read through Matthew 9:9-13. Who do you relate to most in this story & why? What strikes you most about Jesus' interaction with Matthew & his friends?
- When it comes to people who are far from God, do you tend to be someone who wishes them well from a distance or someone who shares your life in an up-close way? Explain.

- What are some ways in which you could share your life with unchurched people whose lives intersect with yours?
- Read through the three guarantees we must make people. Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Which of the three do you need Jesus to help you with the most?
- Pray for one another.