

The Good News

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I've only come for sinners - Jesus



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In a major scoop that many world news outlets seem to have missed, Jesus of Nazareth declared he had no interest in calling

who are well have no need of a physician, but only those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus was ministering in Capernaum, North of the

Some commentators have suggested Jesus was being intentionally ironic whilst others have vehemently disagreed. In typical Jesus style no

Those with some knowledge of the Jewish scriptures were quick to cite various parts of the Old Testament. One commenta-

all have become corrupt". Another pointed out that the flood was brought on the earth because of God's disgust at the

You really are self-righteous!" How's that for a top rate insult? It means you think you're morally superior, that you're better than others. Only proud and arrogant people think that way. So who gets called self-righteous? Well, often religious people. Some of them really seem to think they're pretty good, more righteous than others. Which is ironic if it's true because Jesus hated self-righteousness. That's right, he really hated it.

In first century Israel there was a clear class distinction between the clean and unclean, the acceptable and the outcast, the righteous and the unrighteous. Then along came Jesus, a prophet of God, healer, preacher and by all accounts a holy man who worked miracles. Except he didn't behave as he was expected to. He healed people on the Sabbath (the Jewish day of rest), talked to prostitutes, touched the unclean and ate with the ones you'd least expect: 'sinners.' Worst of all, Jesus offered forgiveness to these 'sinners' while constantly rebuking and accusing the religious leaders of hypocrisy, self-importance and self-righteousness.

The established religious leaders were outraged. How dare he offer forgiveness! Only God can forgive sins and anyway, his offer only seemed to be available to those who agreed they were sinners. Unfair. What if you've never done anything wrong? What if you've never lied, or cheated or stolen?

To those who knew their wrong, who were humble enough to concede their sin, Jesus's offer of forgiveness was the greatest news one could possibly hear, but to the 'sinless' it was offensive.

Jesus said; *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

It's not that Jesus thought there really are such 'healthy' people. It's that he is only interested in those people who have humble hearts and who acknowledge their sin before God. Unless we first see ourselves as the needy sinner that we are, we cannot hear Jesus's call to follow him and be forgiven. When we do this, God clothes us in the righteousness of Christ. Which is why Christian self-righteousness must always be plain wrong.

So, self-righteousness or Christ-righteousness, which is your choice?

Prayer:

*Dear Jesus,
Forgive my self-righteousness. Open my eyes to see that I am indeed a sinner in need of forgiveness. Please help me to follow you in humility. Amen.*

Bible verse: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
Mark 2:17