**THE UNWANTED POSITION**

***Matthew 9:9-13***

Sunday School Lesson 9

*Answers to Questions & Misconceptions About Salvation*

09/15/2019

**Introduction:** One of the lies of Satan is that he convinces people that the Lord does not want them. He tells them that Christians don’t truly care for them. He gives them all sorts of reasons to prove why nobody else cares for them, and he encourages them to live for themselves. There are many people in society who believe that they are not wanted. Certainly, the world does not care for the souls and general well-being of these people. Yet, we know that God does, in fact, want and care for these people. It is our job as Christians to tell them that they are loved and to tell them what Christ did for them on the cross of Calvary. They probably know about Jesus, but they do not know Jesus. They have put up a defense to shield them from further pain. They may even be bitter at the world. They may blame others and even God for the problems and afflictions of this life. However, their condition makes them especially ripe to receive the incorruptible seed. They must only be willing to tear down the wall of hurt and open their hearts to Christ. It is probably not the most wealthy and affluent in society who hold to this position. It is the person who knows his own degenerative condition. He knows he’s missing something, but he needs us to tell him that the Lord desires to have him in the fold. Here are some ways that we can help this person see that they are wanted:

1. WE CAN SHOW THEM WHOM JESUS MINISTERED TO DURING HIS TIME ON EARTH.
2. **He ministered to those who were poor (Matthew 11:5; Mark 12:42; Luke 6:20; James 2:5).** False teachers who prey on the poor to build up their own wealth have caused great damage to the Gospel. We have false religions who literally teach that people can pay and pray their family members out of Hell. As a result, it is not just the wealthy who are skeptical of the financial motivations of churches and their leaders. Many people who are living in poverty assume that we are only witnessing to them because we want them to join our church and start giving. We must show these people that the Lord truly does want them. He made it a point of His earthly ministry to preach the Gospel to them. This was never done for the purpose of becoming wealthy. In the one example of giving, the Lord praised a poor widow for giving two mites. That money was not even going to Him or His disciples. It was money that was being given to the Temple. While we should not discourage giving to the Lord, our message is not one that focuses on a person’s wealth. All people, both rich and poor, will stand before God.
3. **He ministered to those who were known as sinners (Matthew 9:9-13, 11:19; Luke 15:1; John 8:7).** The religious leaders could not believe that Jesus sat and ate with those who were known openly as sinners. These were people who had violated some point of the Old Testament law. The pharisees claimed that they had not violated any part of the law. They lived with a tremendous amount of self-righteousness. While Jesus certainly did not condone sinful behavior, He called out the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. If they were really as righteous as they claimed, then they did not need a Messiah to deliver them. Jesus said that He came to call sinners to repentance. Sometimes, people will say that they cannot be saved before they are just too bad. In their mind, there is no way that God would want to or even be willing to save them. Yet, they are the people that the Lord came to die on the cross for. He did not come to die for those who are trusting in their own righteousness. The major question for sinners is whether they love their sin more than they love God. Certainly, Jesus did not come to die on the cross so that sinners could excuse or justify their sinful behavior.
4. **He ministered to those who were hated and considered lesser people (John 4:9-41, 8:48; Acts 1:8).** Jesus brought the message of salvation to the Samaritans, and then He commanded that the Gospel be brought to all of the Gentile nations of the world. While Jesus’ primary focus of His earthly ministry was to preach to the house of Israel, He had a concern for the whole world. Jesus intentionally went out of His way in order to find a Samaritan woman at the well. This woman was shocked when Jesus spoke with her and asked her to get water for Him. Jesus then proceeded to preach to her. After she believed, she went and called all of the people of her city out to meet with Jesus. The Lord willingly shared the Gospel message with these people. Later, when the Pharisees had heard about the Lord’s preaching to the Samaritans, they accused Him of being a Samaritan. One would think that such animosity does not exist today between nationalities, but there are sadly even Christians who will not share the Gospel with others who they deem to be of a different or lesser social standing. We must show these people that the Lord wants them too. Given that the vast majority of us are Gentiles, we really have no reason to have such a sense of superiority or increased importance in God’s divine plan.
5. WE CAN SHOW THEM THAT THE LORD IS ACTIVELY CALLING ALL MEN TO SALVATION.
6. **The Lord has sent out laborers as evidence that He wants men to be saved (Matthew 9:37-38; Mark 13:10, 16:15; Luke 15:4).** The very fact that you are witnessing to a person who feels unwanted should let them know that God does desire to have them come to salvation. He does not just offer a passive salvation to the few who happen to hear it. The Lord looked out and saw that the fields were ripe for harvest. He told His disciples to pray for laborers. Not only that, but He also told His disciples to go and labor for the Gospel. The Lord does not have to proclaim His Gospel to the world. After all, it is the mankind’s fault that we are on the path of condemnation. It is our rejection of this same God that has put us in this position. Yet, the Lord in His loving kindness, being full of grace and mercy, commands laborers to go and proclaim the good news of salvation. As we know, this is not an easy job. The Lord told His disciples that there would be hostility towards this message, but they were to continue on anyways and find all those who are willing to be saved.
7. **The Bible specifically tells us that it is the Lord’s desire for all men to come to salvation (1 Timothy 2:24; 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16; 1 John 2:2).** As we have observed in some of the other lessons, the Lord’s desire is for every person to be saved. Now, some will look at that and say that if God truly wanted everyone to be saved, then they would all be saved. Yet, we know that the Lord has given man the free will to choose this gift or to reject it. There will not be anyone in Heaven who was forced to be there. There will also not be anyone in Hell who was forced to be there either, outside of Satan and the fallen angels who made their choice of rebellion long ago. We can let the lost person know that the Lord wants them to be saved. He came and died on the cross for the sins of the whole world. The fact that He came personally and laid down His life should be evidence enough to every person that God greatly desires for them to be saved.
8. WE CAN SHOW THEM EXAMPLES OF CONVERTS WHO CAME FROM POOR SITUATIONS.
9. **The apostle Paul is probably the greatest New Testament example of the Lord’s desire for all to come to salvation (Acts 22:1-9; 1 Corinthians 15:9).** The testimony of Paul should provide hope to every unbeliever, no matter how much resentment or hostility they have previously shown towards Christians. Paul was not given over to the terrible vices of sin in the same way that many are today, but he was just as lost as any other unbeliever is. While we cannot say whose sin is worse, we can note that Paul’s conversion probably seemed the most unlikely. He was outwardly defiant against the apostles, and he went so far as to consent to the killing of anyone who preached the message of Christ. Of course, he thought that these were righteous killings, as he viewed all preachers of the Gospel as heretics. Either way, this man certainly would not rank high on our list of people whom we think the Lord would seek out. Yet, the Lord supernaturally preached the Gospel to Paul and gave him an opportunity to be saved. If the Lord did that for His enemy, do we think that the Lord will not call other men to be saved as well?
10. **The thief on the cross is another example of a convert whom the world would probably not choose to be saved (Luke 23:43).** We really know nothing of the life of this man outside of what we find in the Bible just prior to his death. The Bible does not even tell us who this man is. Yet, as Christ hung on the cross, He made a promise to this thief that he would be with Him in Paradise. The Lord was in the midst of great pain and suffering, yet He offered forgiveness to a person who had spent his life robbing from others. There can be little doubt that the thief lived a very selfish life. The crucifixion was a way to publicly discourage others from following in his footsteps. Again, this man would not be society’s choice to receive salvation. Yet, Christ wanted Him to be saved just as He desires for all men. There’s no doubt that the Lord would have offered salvation to the other criminal there next to Him, but that man decided to die in his own bitterness and regret.
11. **Rahab gives us an Old Testament example of someone who was unlikely to be saved (Joshua 6:17; Hebrews 11:31).** During the days of the Old Testament, people outside of Israel were still just as able to be saved. The New Testament sets out to show us that God’s plan of salvation has been consistent from the beginning. Any person who puts their faith on the Messiah – past, present, or future – is saved by the grace of God. The Lord had a certain process by which outsiders could join Israel and worship the true God. One of those outside was Rahab, who was a harlot. She and her family were the only ones to survive God’s judgment on Jericho.

**Conclusion:** As we conclude this thought, we saw in the last point of the lesson that the Lord saved a murderer, a thief, and a harlot. Certainly, this should be ample evidence to any person that the Lord would have them to be saved as well. I can think of few people that I have met in my life who have committed egregious acts of wickedness that society might consider worse or even on par with the aforementioned converts. Let’s go witness to every person!