

THE TAINTED ONES, 2

How could Jesus call Matthew, a corrupt tax-collector, to be His disciple? Or others with personality handicaps that would make them unfit to represent many of our fine churches? Like impetuous Peter for example.

And why did He choose a woman from the red-light district as a special friend? Didn't He know her history and how it could put His reputation at risk?

HE KNEW

Jesus knew by the Spirit what was in the heart of people. And as Samuel said (I Sam. 16:7), God doesn't look at the outward appearance but at the heart. That's how He could use those tainted figures in Jesus' lineage. He knew their hearts.

Jesus is ready to be close to all whose hearts are toward Him regardless of their outward appearance, and that includes you and me.



TODAY

Does the typical Christian community focus more on the inside or the outside?

Even more personally - - what does your church's expectations motivate you to be most concerned about? Challenge me if you wish, but I'd guess that many saints feel more pressure about how they "look," than about what's on the inside.

INSIDE AND OUT

Jesus is scary-clear on that topic in Matthew 23. I doubt that He had a smile on His face when He said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean." Mt. 23:25-26 niv

He also said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (Mt. 5:8 niv) He welcomes all whose hearts are washed by His blood, and as we come close to Him, He'll take care of the rest!

Let's come close and invite Him to do that! He's ready to risk His reputation for us.

Next up - - Part 3.

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