

“This Man Receiveth Sinners”

by Bill Crews

One of the accusations made against Jesus by *“the Pharisees and the scribes”* was, *“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them”* (Lk. 15:2). Their complaint was actually a compliment when the whole picture is given. Thank God that Jesus did and still does receive sinners. He did not seek them out for their companionship (see 1 Cor. 15:33). He did not endorse their sins. He did not encourage them to continue to live in sin. He did not join them in their sinful conduct. But, unlike the Pharisees and the scribes, He had not written them off as hopeless wretches to be shunned and avoided. He did not believe that their sin would rub off on anyone who touched them. By the example He set for them in His righteous life, by the words of His Father that He brought to them, by His sacrifice on the cross for them He offered them the divine grace of forgiveness and the hope of life beyond this life. Notice that Luke 15:1 says, *“Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to **hear him**”* (**emphasis mine** — BC). The sinful woman who came into the feast at the house of Simon the Pharisee, sat at the feet of Jesus, wept profusely, washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, was certainly a believing and penitent woman seeking what Jesus freely gave to her: *“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven”* (Lk. 7:47; but read the whole story in verses 36-50). Now go back to Luke 15 and read the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the two lost sons (usually called the parable of the prodigal son) in verses 3-32 and learn that God indeed receives sinners.

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