

# LWML *Texas* District

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Meditation

## Friend of Sinners

Who are your friends? Who have you been friends with over the years? What characteristics do your close friends possess that are different from you?

People often say there are short-term and lifelong friends. Which of your friends have stood the test of time? With the advent of social media, it has been significantly easier to keep up with people we once knew in person. Social media has also enabled us to judge others from afar.

In three of the Gospels, we have the story of Jesus calling Matthew, also known as Levi, a tax collector (Matthew 9, Mark 2, Luke 5). They all record the Pharisees grumbling at the disciples for eating with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus' response in every text is the same. *And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance"* (Luke 5:31–32).

When we see the same story in each of the Gospels it points to its importance for us today. Have you ever considered yourself to be the righteous person, or do you view yourself as the sinner?

It is amazing how Jesus ate with the people who were the outcasts of society. He called mere fishermen and a tax collector to follow Him, to be His disciples, His pupils, His closest friends. He didn't go to the synagogue to choose the brightest students. He didn't look at their genealogy to choose the people with the most pristine lineage or those with the most political clout.

Jesus chose the common man to follow Him. He chooses us today. He did not choose us because we were righteous or good on our own. We are part of those He came to save, the unrighteous, the sinners. Just like the Pharisees, we like to sit behind our screens and judge those we do not know, or gossip about those we've heard about from so and so. Frequently, we misjudge a situation or share what we do not know firsthand.

Jesus came for all of us: Pharisee, sinner, tax collector, gossip, and judge alike. May His righteous blood cleanse us, and lead us to follow Him more closely instead of continuing on in our sinful judgements of others.

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