

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

April 7, 2019

“Reactions”

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King's Kid's & Communion for all who are Christians

NEWS

Please pray for the Mitchell Family

<https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/whitefish/>

Resurrection Sunday Breakfast (4/21 at 8:30)

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com

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Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, secretary@myaletheia.com, kids@myaletheia.com

1) If Jesus said to you, “Follow Me!”, where would He have to be going for you to hesitate? Leaving family or friends? Home or career? Financial security or good health? A pet sin or lifestyle choice? Dropping everything you know and blindly following wherever He leads?

2) If sin is a communicable disease that all humans have... Do those healed of the disease, stay away from the sick, or help them?

3) If we help the sick, what precautions should we take - how far do we go?

MATTHEW 9:9 ~ ^{9NASB} As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him.

Matthew was known as _____ before he became an Apostle. He was the son of Alphaeus and a tax collector, probably for Herod Antipas.

It was a tiny village - Matthew had a public position and was wealthy. Jesus was the biggest celebrity in the area. They were _____ of each other.

_____ Jesus probably seemed like the right thing, but there was the logical, rational, sensible way to look at it too. Matthew, at that instant, _____ to walk away from everything.

Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27&28

MATTHEW 9:10&11 ~ ^{10NASB} Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

"Then it happened" means that as a _____ of Matthew following Jesus. Luke makes it clear that the house was Matthew's.

Not only did he walk away from everything, he spent lavishly to _____ his former associates to the Lord.

The Pharisees were scandalized by Jesus' _____ once again. Luke 5:30 says, "The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples." But they didn't talk to Jesus directly...

Scrupulous Jews believed that in order to keep themselves on the right track, they had to _____ sinners.

Sinners came in two basic flavors. The first, were the deplorables, including _____ (Matthew 9:10; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31&32). The second, were the common Jews, the **עַם הָאָרֶץ** (äm hä äř-ěts). “The people of the land.” They didn’t have the time or _____ to live like the Pharisees.

The religious elites, instead of _____ either category, looked on them with disgust or at least disdain. Jesus demonstrated their attitude in Luke 18:11. Matthew 9:36, “Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.”

Just the thought of _____, especially at a meal, with a tax collector and sinners of both varieties was horrifying.

How is Christianity today any different than that?

MATTHEW 9:12&13 ~ ¹²NASB But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

In the aphorism, Jesus completely _____ with the Pharisees that the people at the party were sinners.

Yet, He and they, arrived at completely different conclusions.

Scrupulous Jews (and many Christians) worry about contaminating themselves, which is a _____ - _____ approach.

It leads to prideful self-righteousness that ends with hypocrisy.

Jesus had a completely different plan. He was saying that, God, all along, wanted His people to be a _____ in a dark world. The sinful need help, not judgment.

To prove His point, Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6.

We must love God enough to say, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8). Then we must love _____ enough, that we minister Grace, rather than condemnation.

Micah 6:8, John 3:10

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

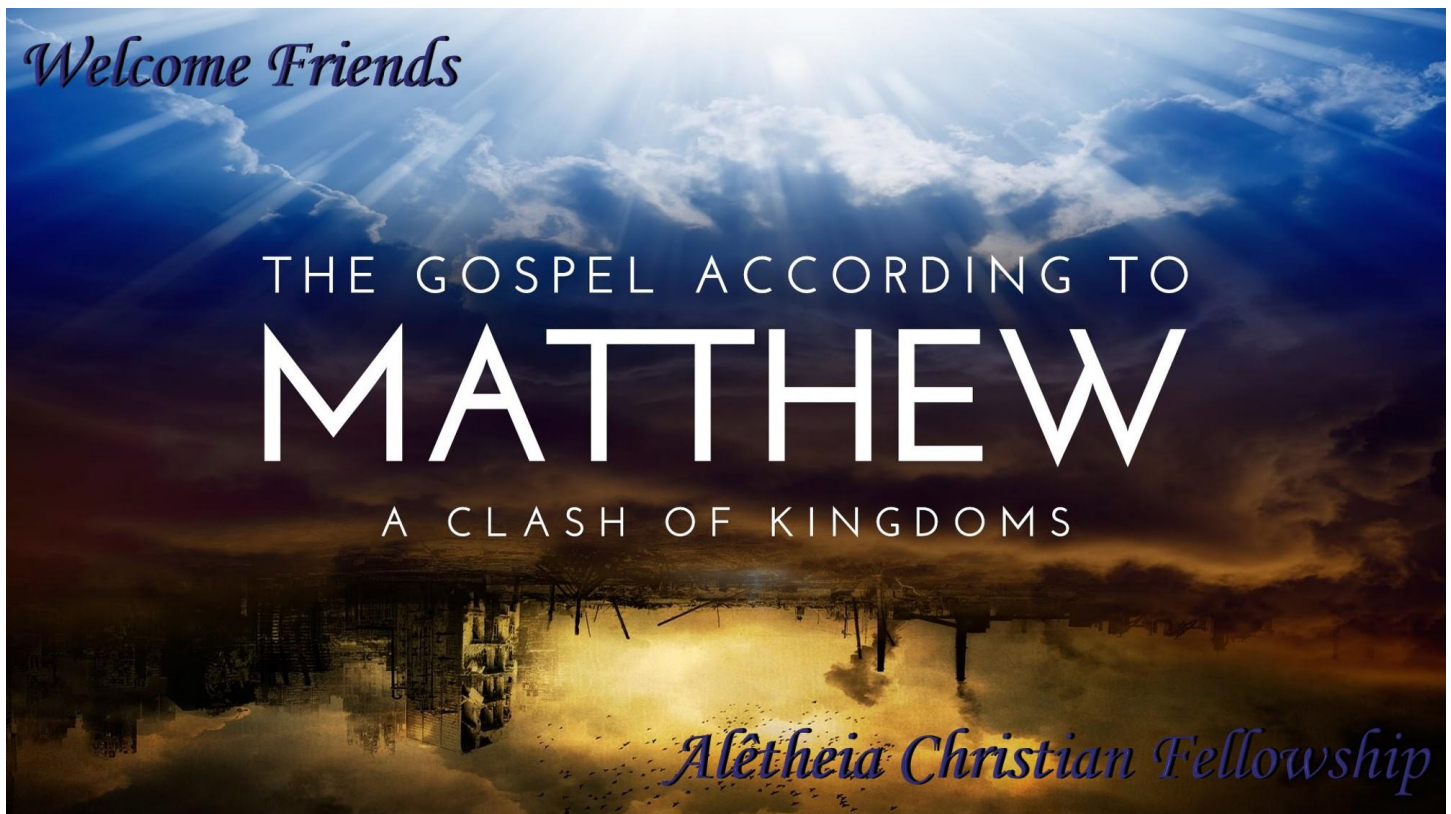
Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 9b ~ 040719



Virginia Mitchell Passed From this earth Thursday night. Pray for Her husband Lonnie, her boys, Travis and Troy, and their families.



Last week we concluded three supernatural events that demonstrated Christ's mastery over Satan's power and authority.

Jesus can immediately undo supernatural disaster. He can expel a legion of demons. And He can forgive human sinfulness on earth as God can in Heaven.

The final episode ended with two different reactions to Jesus. Nothing more was said of the Scribes, who were scandalized by Jesus, but we'll find them again, even more firmly opposed to Him.

For the rest? Well, they glorified God for the miraculous healing, but so much more for the forgiveness that was granted to a man, while he was still living.

I said that the last verse was pregnant with meaning that the people at that moment didn't fully get. For now, I'll leave it at that, but remember what was said in verse 8, when we get to "Binding and Loosing," to "Keys of the Kingdom," and to the role of the church.



Matthew 9:9 ~ ^{9NASB} As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

Again, Matthew's point in sharing these events, is to elicit a proper response to Jesus, and so he gives us such a response. His own response.

Matthew was known as Levi before he became an Apostle. He was the son of Alphaeus. At the time, in any given region, parents had a very small pool of acceptable names to choose from and so there were a lot of duplicates. Among the Twelve Apostles, there were two guys named Simon, two named James, two named Judas. Sometimes they were given nicknames, sometimes added descriptors like Iscariot or son of Zebedee or the tax collector. Sometimes Jesus renamed them like Simon to Peter, or Saul to Paul or perhaps like Levi to Matthew.

One of the Apostle's named James was also a son of Alphaeus. He may have been Matthew's brother, or it could have been a different Alphaeus.

What we know was that Matthew collected taxes. We can make an educated guess that he worked for Herod Antipas, rather than Rome. The local Centurion would have made one or two of his troops available to protect Matthew and the revenue.

We surmise that Matthew was either the head tax collector in the area, or at least a very prominent one.

I sincerely doubt that this was the first time that Jesus and spoken to Matthew. It was a tiny village - Matthew was a very public figure with his job and readily noticed as a rich man living in a poor town. The proverbial big fish in a little pond. Jesus was obviously the biggest celebrity in the area. They were certainly aware of each other and I would guess that they had not only met, but had interacted before.

It's not hard to imagine that Matthew was well aware of Jesus, His activity and His teaching.

Based only on my own experience, I imagine that Matthew was already considering becoming a full-fledged disciple. I can imagine that he wanted to follow Jesus, but I also imagine that he was torn.

On the one hand, wholehearted devotion to Jesus seemed like the right thing, but on the other hand there was the logical, rational, sensible way to look at it - Matthew could have easily reasoned that I must be responsible and take care of my family. He might have

thought, I'll follow Jesus after I get a big enough bankroll, or pay off my house or retire from collecting taxes.

How much more could I do for Jesus' ministry if I'm still in my position of influence. How much better could I serve if I don't have to worry about financial obligations? How much better off would Jesus' ministry be if I remained wealthy and gave generously?

At least for me there was a war raging between the thing I knew in my spirit and the thing I knew in my head.

Whatever Matthew's case, Jesus' call at that particular moment was the tipping point. It was the decisive moment for Matthew. I think Jesus was basically saying, "Are you coming or not?"

"Yes, Lord, I am, right away." Luke tells us that Matthew at that instant walked away from everything - he left his old life, his old position, his old income, his old security, his old everything. It's vivid. It's Matthew left everything and never looked back (Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27&28).

I find it interesting that Matthew calls himself Matthew, in this place. Both Mark and Luke in telling this story present him as Levi and then change his name to Matthew later, when he's listed as an Apostle. Matthew, himself, is uninterested in remembering his old name. He's moved on and he has no intention of going backwards.



Matthew 9:10&11 ~ ¹⁰NASB Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

“Then it happened” means that as a direct result of Matthew following Jesus. Because Matthew accepted Jesus’ call, then this happened. It doesn’t necessarily mean that it happened immediately in time, just that the two things are related in sequence.

Luke makes it clear that the house was Matthew’s. Of course, “Reclining at the table” means eating dinner, but the word’s chosen intimates that it was a celebratory party. Luke 5:29 says, “Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house.” The ESV has, “Levi made him a great feast in his house” The NET hits it better with, “Levi gave a great banquet in his house for Jesus.”

Matthew was far more educated, far more influential, and far more affluent, than we usually imagine.

He had many powerful friends who were doing well under the Hellenistic system of the Roman Provinces.

Not only did he walk away from all that, instead of being frugal with what he had in reserve, he freely and lavishly spent his money to throw a big party in order to introduce his former associates to the Lord.

Matthew was all in. Everyone who was anyone, in a secular sense, was there.

Some people wonder how the Pharisees knew about the party. They imagine that there was a spy or that someone tipped them off. Such thinking reveals a modern western bias. This is a big shindig in a small village. Everyone knew what was going on at Matthew's house whether they went to the party, or not.

The feast was more like what we would think of as a big outdoor BBQ. The cooking for all the people was done outside in a courtyard within the home complex. The eating probably took place outside as well, where anyone in the area could hear and smell what was going on. They might have eaten on the roof of the house, where anyone outside the family walls could see everything as well.

It was no mystery to anyone nearby what was going on.

The Pharisees were scandalized by Jesus' behavior once again. Luke 5:30 says, "The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples." They don't

talk to Jesus directly, perhaps because He was surrounded by the other guests wanting a piece of Him. Perhaps because, by now, they were a little afraid of Him.

Anyway, they couldn't believe that Jesus, this supposed Rabbi, would taint Himself, by fellowshipping with unsavory people.

Scrupulous Jews, whether in leadership positions, or not, believed that in order to keep themselves on the right track, in order to avoid sin, and to be as Godly as possible, they had to shun sinners. Sinners came in two basic flavors.

The first were the deplorables. In this Gospel alone, tax collectors are associated with "Drunkards," "Gluttons," "Prostitutes," "Gentiles," and in general, with "Sinners" (Matthew 9:10; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31&32).

The second kind of sinners were the common Jews, the people eking out a living as best they could. The folks primarily living in the small villages throughout the countryside who were too poor to worry about being scrupulous. They had to work too hard to put food on

the table to be overly concerned about all the ritual purity demanded by the Pharisees.

In Hebrew, they were called the עַם הָאָרֶץ (äm hä äř-ěts). “The people of the land.” They simply did not have the time or the resources to live like the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes.

Those religious elites looked down on their poorer brethren and instead of doing anything to help them, they shunned them with an air of superiority and disdain.

Jesus demonstrated the attitude in Luke 18:11b, 11bNLT The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector!’

Later, in this same chapter, we will see Jesus’ reaction. “Going through all the cities and villages” in the region, verse 36 says, “Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:35&36).

The goody-two-shoes religious people had the theory that you shouldn't get too close to people who were not as religiously serious as you. Certainly, you would never associate with commoners - the people of the land - who, best case scenario, due to their country lifestyle, were probably ceremonially unclean at any given moment.

Then, just the thought of fellowshiping, especially at a meal in the house of a tax collector and in the company of other sinners of both varieties was horrifying.

Someone at the party might be an adulterer, or living with his girlfriend, or a beer drinker, a smoker, what if there was a person there who didn't believe in God - worse yet, what if there was a Democrat!

I hope you get my point. How is Christianity today any different than that?

How many Christians today would think less of you if you were discovered to be the guest of honor at a banquet full of sinners? Drunks, drug addicts, sex offenders, homosexuals, smokers, porn kings, users of profane and vulgar language. We cannot countenance

such people, nor the supposed Christians who would mix with them.

We must not allow them anywhere near us, or their ungodliness will rub off on us. They have a highly contagious plague and we don't want to catch it. With that attitude we are exactly like the Pharisees before us.

It is confirmed by our feeling of superiority over less Godly people than ourselves, no matter how well we hide the attitude.

In the early 70's we had a pastor, who, a few years earlier, had pastored a dignified church. He began reaching out to the hippies, homeless and down and outers. His dignified church threw him and his friends out.

How well would you handle it if some unsavory sinners came to church to hear God's Word? What if they sat right next to you and your kids?



Matthew 9:12&13 ~ ¹²NASB But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Everything you need to know about Godly people interacting with ungodly people is found in verse 12.

The first thing I want you to see in Jesus’ aphorism is that He completely agreed with the Pharisees that the people at the party were sinners. Jesus not only didn’t

deny that fact, He didn't even try to minimize, or rationalize it.

“You’re right,” Jesus basically said, “They are sick - they are sinners.” On that, both Jesus and the Pharisees agreed, but when it came to the ramifications, or implications, drawn from that reality, they came to polar opposite conclusions, and so polar opposite actions.

They arrived at completely different ideas about dealing with the fundamental problem of Godly people and their association with people less Godly.



As we saw, the scrupulous Jews and too many Christians worry about contaminating themselves among less holy people.

It is a completely self-centered, self-focused approach and since that is true, it should come as no surprise that such people are also always aloof - seeing themselves as better.

It leads to pride, self-righteousness and inevitably to that holier-than-thou attitude that drives less Godly people crazy. Why, because they easily see human flaws in the super-religious and that means hypocrisy.

What was the number one charge Jesus made against the religious elite of His day? “You hypocrites!” What is the number one complaint non-Christian’s level at Christians today? “You hypocrites!”

Here’s further irony. Such religious folks don’t care that the less religious persecute them because they chalk it up to suffering for being God’s friends. No, it’s not that, it’s that religious people make themselves insufferable.

There’s still plenty of Christian persecution to go around without being the cause of it.

You might think, I am not that way at all, because I know that without Jesus, I’m no better than anyone else. Yeah, well, keep telling yourself that. When you do, you’re refusing to examine yourself. Instead of assuming you’re humble, go ahead and look closely. Then tell Jesus that you don’t feel one bit superior to the guy, who already this morning, is getting drunk down at one of our hundreds of casinos, blowing his family’s grocery money.

The point. When God-honoring people face the reality of others not so inclined, we have to make a decision.

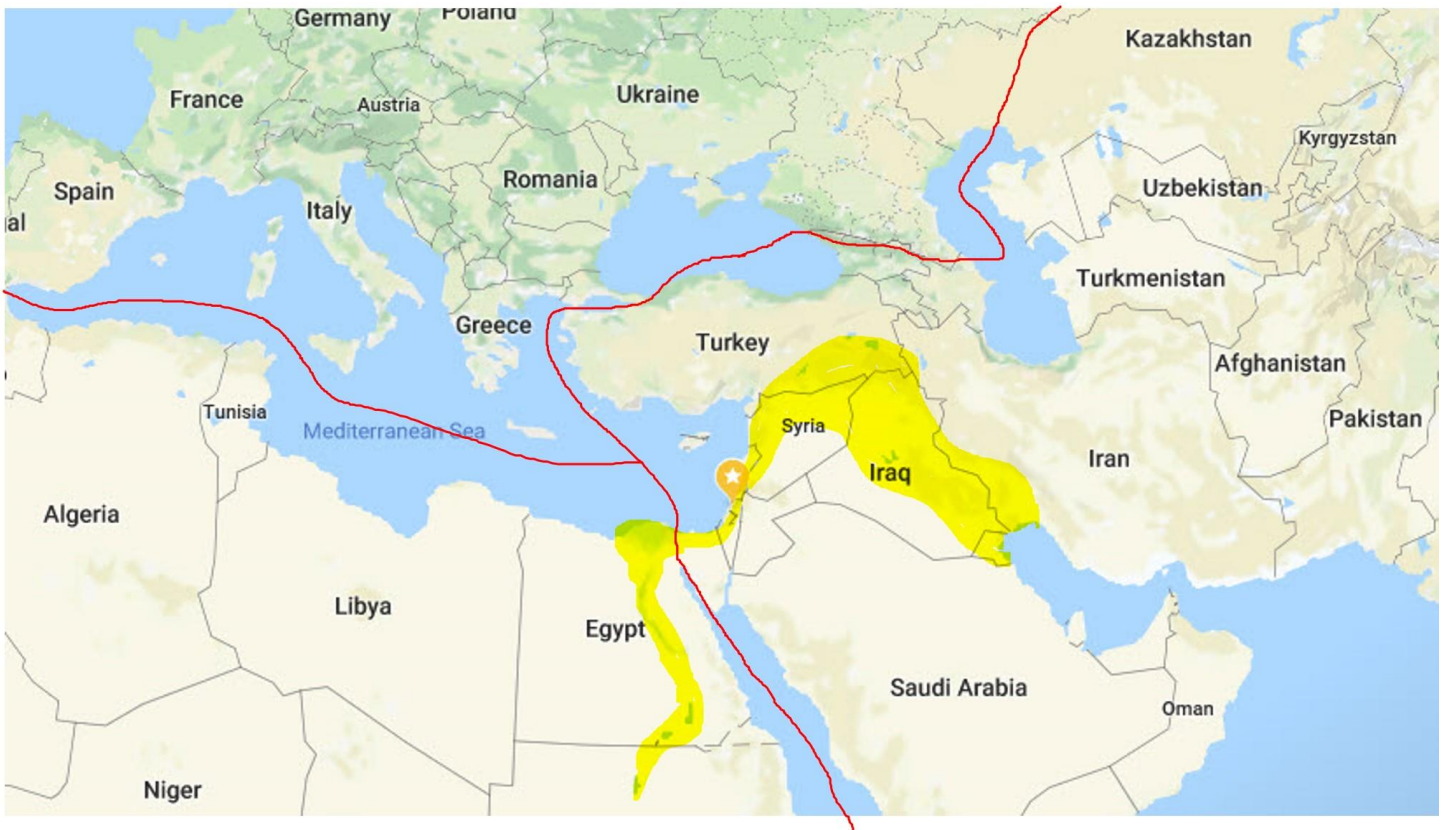
The easiest and most time-honored decision is to keep our distance.

Jesus had a completely different plan. He was saying that, God, all along, from the very beginning of things, wanted His people to be a light in a dark world.

He wanted His people to minister to the ungodly and help them meet the Source of that light. To give them hope, not to shun them as though they had some kind of infectious, communicable form of spiritual leprosy.

They need help, not judgment. Who is the Great High Physician? We think in terms of physical healing, but physical healing is nothing compared to spiritual healing.

When Jesus walked the earth in a flesh-suit, He acted as a doctor to the ill. Now that we are His hands and feet on earth, should we behave like the Pharisees or like Him?



To prove His point to the Pharisees from the Scriptures Jesus quoted Hosea. What He was doing was new, but it wasn't supposed to be new, it was precisely what God had always wanted the Jews to do.

It is why God planted them where He did. At the very crossroads of the ancient world. In the center of the Fertile Crescent.

At the intersection of Asia, Africa and Europe. A land bridge between the various world superpowers of long ago. The Egyptians to the south. The Sumerians, Babylonians, Persians, Parthians to the east. The Hittites, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans to the north.

God's children were not put there to isolate themselves, to create a cloistered society of supremely religious hermits. God wanted them interacting in the Fallen world among the sinful people.



All are welcome no matter what their sin. That's the key distinction few seem to make. We either want to say, you're a sinner and sinners are not welcome, or we want to say, we're all sinners, so everyone is welcome. The unspoken implication is that we won't deal with the sin issue, just the hope issue.

Sin is so much worse than any of us imagine. It is intolerable in any of its varied forms. All of us sin and all who sin are welcome, but not to condone or even minimize sin... We're here call it what it is, to expose when necessary and eradicate it where possible.

Sin cost Jesus His life - without that it would cost you your eternity. We can't ignore sin. We must rail against it - not make peace with it.

But to wage an effective war against it we must fight it in ourselves and help others to fight it within themselves. So, we must involve ourselves in the lives of sinners, not to become like them, but to influence them to be like Him.

So, it was never to condone their lifestyle, never to intermix by adopting their ways, never to allow their illness to make us sick - it was always to be physicians, doctoring them, in order that they might be healed.

That requires vastly more from us than simply keeping the world at arm's length. We must be careful to influence them, rather than be influenced by them. No easy task. Perhaps that's why we were given the Holy Spirit.

It gets messy. Hard and fast rules rarely apply. It requires us to get beyond our own selfish, self-focus and realize that God planted us where He did for a reason. We work for Him, by working with sinners, for their good, not for our own good.

We must love God enough to say, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8). Then we must love others enough that we minister hope, rather than judgment. Grace, rather than condemnation.

This is what God has always desired from His people. Since Jesus already quoted Hosea, let me quote another Old Testament prophet. Micah 6:8, 8NASB He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

It was always there. Israel had its marching orders. Be a light to the world without letting the world dim that light. It's still the same.



To graphically show that very thing to the Pharisees, Jesus quoted Hosea as I said. What's more interesting to me than the wonderful quote itself, is the way Jesus quoted it. In verse 13, Jesus tells them, "But go and learn what this means."

It was a common phrase that the Rabbi would use on His students when they were being particularly dull, lazy and slow-witted.

Generally, the teacher would teach and get a blank stare from the pupil. So, the teacher would say, "Go and learn what this means." In other words, go read

and study, pray and think, do your homework and then come back and we'll resume the lesson.

To say that to the Pharisees who prided themselves on being the educated expert teachers who looked down on everyone else in disdain, it was a slap in the face.

It's like Jesus said to the Pharisee Nicodemus in John 3:10, 10NLT "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? Nicodemus and his friends needed a paradigm shift.

Again, people are always telling me how sweet, irenic, peaceable, gentle and pacifistic Jesus was... and I'm like, "Do you ever read the Bible?"