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JESUS' MESSAGE OF MERCY

In Matthew 9:10-13, we see the stated purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth. The rigidly religious Pharisees questioned Jesus as to why he was violating their religious protocol by eating with and associating with sinners who did not live by their strict standards. He said in vs. 13b, ***"...I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."***

These Pharisees were righteous in their own eyes, so they felt no need for repentance. They believed their religiosity alone would get them to heaven. They rejected Jesus' message of repentance the same as they had rejected it from John the Baptist.

Jesus had no need for the Mosaic sacrificial system upon which they relied, as He, Himself, was to be the sacrifice. He said, ***"I will have mercy (upon sinners), and not sacrifice."***

I once had a friend who was a retired minister very high up in the administration of one of the oldest mainline denominations. One day after we had a tennis match, I asked him about salvation and the born-again experience. He did not believe one needed to be born again or repent unto salvation. He believed that if you just believed in God and lived a good life on earth that you would go to heaven. Today there are millions of religious people who believe that same way. They are blind to the gospel message. Often, they have been led wrong by ministries like my friend.

Jesus' message was not received by ministers like my friend. He came to the unrighteous who hungered for His message. In their hunger, they were filled with the righteousness of Christ by their repentance and faith on Him. It was just as Jesus had said in Matthew 5:6, ***"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."***

Folks, we can never be religious enough or clean living enough to obtain God's mercy of salvation. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us (put upon us) by our steadfast faith on Jesus' love, mercy, and redemption. We can never be good enough on our own!

Jesus said in Matthew 10:13, ***"I will have mercy..."*** and Psalm 100:5 that says, ***"His mercy is everlasting."*** Our trust (faith) is in Him.