

Luke's Gospel: Son of Man, Seeker of Men.

Part 12: A Party with a Purpose—Matthew's Story

Today's Big Question: How does God want me to respond to those broken people who are on the "outside"?

Luke 5:27-32 (NKJV): Matthew the Tax Collector

²⁷ After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." ²⁸ So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

²⁹ Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. ³⁰ And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

³¹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Let's jump into the message:

A Party with a Purpose: How Jesus Transforms Sinners into Saints!

1. I am willing to leave everything _____ when Jesus calls out my _____ (v. 27-28).

- What was Levi's (Matthew's) occupation? He was a tax collector! Tax collectors were considered the "scum" of Jewish society.

Culture Insight: **2:14** *tax collector's booth.* Most people in the Roman Empire did not like tax collectors; Jewish people viewed them as traitors. For assessment purposes, tax collectors were allowed to search anything except the person of a Roman lady; any property not properly declared was subject to seizure. In Egypt, tax collectors were sometimes so brutal that they were known to beat up aged women in an attempt to learn where their tax-owing relatives were hiding. Ancient documents reveal that when harvests were bad, on occasion an entire village, hearing that a tax collector was coming, would leave town and start a village somewhere else. People sometimes paid tax collectors bribes to prevent even higher fees being extorted. Some scholars consider Levi a customs officer who would charge tariffs on goods passing through Capernaum. Such tariffs were small by themselves (often less than 3 percent) but drove up the cost of goods because they were multiplied by all the borders they passed through. Customs officers could search possessions; customs income normally went to local governments run by elites who were cooperative with Rome.

Others regard Levi as collecting taxes from local residents, likely working especially for agents of Galilee's ruler, Herod Antipas.¹

- Notice the activity of Jesus in Levi's life:
- Notice Matthew's response to Jesus' call:

Philippians 3:7-8; ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Matthew 13:45-46; ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

2. I now want all my _____ friends to also meet and follow _____ (v. 29).

- Notice what Matthew did next: He threw a party for all his lost friends!

Application: The best way to reach lost people is to reach *one* lost person and to start ministering to all his/her friends. Lost people typically know more lost people than you do!

- What kind of party did Matthew throw? Matthew threw Jesus a house party! Notice the 3 P's of Matthew's Party:
 - It was a p_____ party—it was in his own house.
 - It was a p_____ party—he invited a large number of people.
 - It was a p_____ party—most of his guests were lost people that he wanted to introduce to Jesus!

Scripture Insight: 5:29 This verse describes the first of several feasts or meals in the Book of Luke (7:36-50; 9:10-17; 10:38-42; 11:37-54; 14:1-24; 22:14-38; 24:28-32, 41-43). In ancient Israel the table was a place where spiritual points were taught and where fellowship occurred.²

- Jesus surprised the religious leaders:

¹ Quote from NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible.

² Quote from NKJV Study Bible.

Challenge: Throw a Matthew Party this Spring!

- At your house
- Invite your lost friends
- Let us come and join you to help you connect your friends to Jesus!

3. I will not let the _____ deter me from my _____ (v. 30).

- Here's the secret we can learn from Matthew: Anytime you attempt to do something great FOR Jesus, you are bound to attract criticism FROM those on the sideline.

Scripture Insight: "In contrast to the two commands of Christ, the Pharisees had developed a system of 613 laws, 365 negative commands and 248 positive laws...By the time Christ came it had produced a heartless, cold, and arrogant brand of righteousness. As such, it contained at least ten tragic flaws. (1) New laws continually need to be invented for new situations. (2) Accountability to God is replaced by accountability to men. (3) It reduces a person's ability to personally discern. (4) It creates a judgmental spirit. (5) The Pharisees confused personal preferences with divine law. (6) It produces inconsistencies. (7) It created a false standard of righteousness. (8) It became a burden to the Jews. (9) It was strictly external. (10) It was rejected by Christ."³

- Only those who have encountered grace can truly understand grace!

6 Things about Grace that you may not understand:

- 1) Grace is not earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- 2) Grace is a gift that must be received (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- 3) Grace makes us right with God through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:20-24).
- 4) Grace is God's love in action (John 1:14, John 3:16).
- 5) Grace is a gift that we are to use to build others up (I Peter 4:10).
- 6) Grace is often given to us when we are at our weakest (2 Cor. 12:8-9).

³ Outlined from Fan The Flame, J. Stowell, Moody, 1986, p. 52.

4. I was changed by this truth: Only those who realize that they are _____ can get _____ again (v. 31-32).

- You have a terminal sickness and you may not be aware of it—this sickness is call sin.
- Jesus came to save the lost...and you can't get saved until you first realize that you are lost and in need of a Savior.

Scripture Insight: [5:32](#) Jesus' mission was to call sinners to **repentance**. Upon His ascension, Jesus commissioned His disciples to the same task ([24:47](#); see also [3:3](#), [8](#); [13:1-5](#); [15:7-10](#); [16:30](#); [17:3, 4](#); [Acts 26:20](#)). In this passage, repentance is pictured as a patient who recognizes that illness is present and that only Jesus, the Great Physician, can treat it. A humble approach to God for spiritual healing is the essence of repentance.⁴

Take Home Truth: You can't become healed and whole again until you first realize that you are lost, broken, and in need of a Savior!

Action Steps:

- Acknowledge that I am a sinner and in need of a Savior.
- Throw a party for all my friends who don't know Jesus!

How? Let us know if you would like to host a community "party" that is geared towards reaching those who are in need of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

→Sign up on your Connection Card.

Go Deeper this week:

- **Watch**—Check out RightNowMedia--
 - The Grave Robber by Mark Batterson.

Preview for next Sunday: "Out with the OLD, in the NEW!" from Luke 5:33-39.



⁴ Quote from NKJV Study Bible.