

Maranatha Fellowship CRC
Farmington, NM 87401

Sunday, June 30, 2024, 10:00 AM

Message – The Wonders of God's Grace in Christ: Jesus Calls the Levi and Eats with the Sinners

Scriptures: Luke 5: 27-32

Brief Preview:

Luke, a gentile physician, builds his gospel narrative around a historical, chronological presentation of Jesus' life. Luke writes the longest and most comprehensive of the four Gospels, presenting Jesus Christ as the Perfect Man who came to seek and save sinful men. Growing belief and growing opposition develop side by side. Those who believe His claims are challenged to count the cost of discipleship; those who oppose Him will not be satisfied until the Son of Man hangs lifeless on a cross. But the resurrection ensures that His ministry of seeking and saving the lost will continue in the person of His disciples once they have been equipped with His power.

Jesus defends his right and clarifies why he wants to associate with sinners for the sake of the Gospel. He came to seek and save what is lost (Luke 19:10). According to Jesus, the Gospel is for sinners, and Jesus' mission fits his message (Matthew 9:11-13). When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" "On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Truly, Jesus has come to seek and save what is lost. We must listen and love: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. We need to caring people, full of empathy and encouragement, leading people to repentance.

Outline:

- I. Introduction – the Wonders of God's Grace in Christ
 - A. **Illus:** 'Miracle in the Storm' Story Shared with the Laotian People
 - B. What's the story today? Have you grasped it?

- II. Jesus Calls a Levi, A Despised Tax Collector (v. 27)
 - A. Jesus Calls Levi from the tax booth, to be his disciple and follower
 - i. How tax collectors were viewed in Jewish culture
 - ii. Pharisees practiced separatism
 - B. The call of Levi was made effective (v. 28)
 - i. Jesus initiates the entire encounter: He goes out and stops the tax collector, Levi at his toll booth.
 - ii. The Levi responded to Jesus' invitation.
(This tax collector had little inclination toward religion, he got up and left everything and followed Christ)
 - iii. Levi throws "a great banquet" and invites his notorious friends.

- III. Jesus patiently bears the opposition of sinners (Heb. 12:3) against himself and his disciples, v. 30
 - A. The associations Jesus makes with Levi cause other religious figures to raise questions
 - i. They took their complaints to the disciples
 - ii. The Greek term for "complained," *egongyzon*
 - iii. The complaint: "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"
 - B. The Pharisees avoided sinners to avoid the suggestion that they endorsed the sinners.
 - i. They preferred a level of quarantine from sinners
 - ii. But Jesus preferred to aim for the recovery of the sinner
 - iii. Jesus's action suggested that the "separationism" the Pharisees advocate doesn't honor God

- C. Jesus uses the most important image to point out the issues
 - i. He notes a healthy person does not seek a physician, the sick do. The picture of a doctor is a well-known ancient metaphor (2 Chron. 16:12, Isaiah 3:7, Jer. 8:22)
 - ii. The image that Jesus uses is strong and reasons
 - iii. Jesus calls on those who are not well to get better by coming into the grace God offers them.

IV. What are the practical implications for us?

- A. The call of Levin in 5:27-32 points us to the message of the Lord
 - i. What's the message? We must understand the importance of reaching out to others and initiate contact
 - ii. We need to look at how Jesus handled sinners, how Jewish leadership reacted to Jesus
 - iii. According to Ephesians 5:7-14, we must separate ourselves from the “deeds of darkness,” from the acts of sin, but we must not isolate ourselves from sinners
- B. What's the lesson for us?
 - i. Don't be uncaring and insensitive: avoid the attitude of Pharisees
 - ii. Don't ignore the needs of people; call the sinners to repent
 - iii. We must understand whomever we seek to reach, we must offer them the hope of the call of the gospel, manifest humility, and show concern for loving them and others

V. Conclusion

- A. Jesus reaches out to sinners.
 - i. It's because he sees the potential for their being renewed through God's grace.
 - ii. Jesus knows such change doesn't happen when those who seek sinners isolate themselves from sinners.
- B. Jesus' mission is to regain the lost by going to them
 - i. Jesus went after Levi and called him
 - ii. The banquet Levi gives to Jesus is not just the expression of thanks, but a recognition that since God gives graciously, so should he
 - iii. God gave graciously to us, so should we

Questions and Answers (Refer to Luke 5:27-32, NIV for answers)

1. After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. Then, what did he say to him and what did Levi do? A. 'Follow me' B. Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. C. Both A and B. D. None
2. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples (Luke 5:29-30). What was the complaint? It was: “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” A. True B. False
3. Jesus answered them (Luke 5:31-32) A. “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick B. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” B. Both A and B are correct C. None
4. What's the take-home lesson for us today? A. We must understand that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). B. The older son represents the attitude of Pharisees, who do not want sinners to turn to God. C. Jesus said, “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees,” (Matt. 16:6). D. Jesus came to seek and save what is lost (Luke 19:6). E. Jesus has not come to call the righteous but sinners (Matthew 9:11-13). F. Jesus reaches out to sinners because he sees the potential in them for their being renewed by God's grace. G. Jesus mission is to regain the lost by going to them, as he did here with Levi (Luke 5:27-29) H. Control should no longer be our concern but loving others I. The banquet Levi gives is not just an expression of thanks but a recognition that since God gives graciously, so should he J. Our response should be the same; God gave graciously to us, so should we. K. We need to be careful not just to reach out to the attractive (to those who seem to do well), but also to the ostracized, marginalized, and rejected, just as Jesus did to Levi. L. Ephesians 5:7-14; We must separate ourselves from the ‘deeds of darkness,’ from acts of sin, but we must not isolate ourselves from sinners M. Be caring empathetic, encouraging to the sinners, and lead them in humility to repentance. M. Apply All.