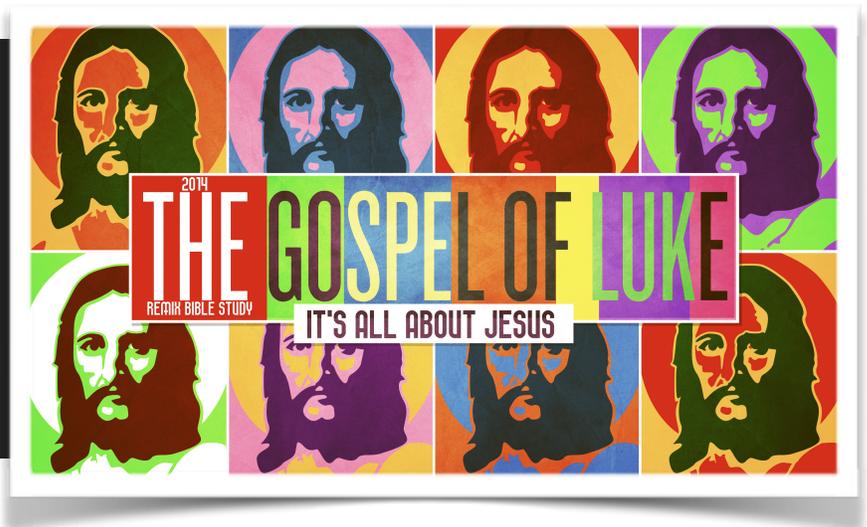


Luke 5: 27-31



“Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them... 31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (v. 29-31)

What’s the best party you’ve been to? What made it awesome?

Alternate Question: Have you ever been to a party where you immediately felt you didn’t “fit in”?

Does it strike you as odd that Jesus frequents parties? Is this justification for you (as a Christian) to party it up? Why? Why not?

How do you think the disciples reacted when Jesus added Levi/Matthew to the team?

What do we know about tax collectors in Jesus’ day? What’s the general attitude towards tax collectors? [Check Resource]

Why do you think Jesus chose Levi/Matthew?

Why did Levi/Matthew so easily and willingly “leave everything” to follow Jesus?

What was he giving up? What do you think it cost him to forsake his old lifestyle?

What’s the most difficult thing you’ve personally had to “give up” in order to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Who were the guests at Matthew’s party? (Mark 2:13-17, Matthew 9:9-12). Who would those guests be today?

Why did the Pharisees have a problem with Jesus’ hanging out with this new entourage? What’s the real issue here?

What did Jesus mean in verse 31 when He said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.” Does this imply that Jesus doesn’t care about believers? Explain.

Who are the, “tax collectors” in your life, and how might you “party” with them in a manner that exemplifies the love of Jesus Christ?

RESOURCE:

WHO'S YOUR TAX GUY?

Adapted from John MacArthur's "12 Ordinary Men"

- In all likelihood, none of the 12 disciples was more notorious as a sinner than Matthew
- Tax collectors were the most despised people in Israel, (more hated than the occupying enemy force – Romans).
- Matthew was Jewish (which means he worked for the enemy). His occupation made him a traitor to his nation, a social pariah, the rankest of the rank. He would have been a religious outcast, forbidden to ever enter any synagogue.
- Tax collectors extorted money from the people of Israel to feed their Roman coffers and to pad their own pockets. They often strong-armed money out of people with the use of thugs.
- The Jewish Talmud taught that it was righteous to lie and deceive a tax collector, because that was what a professional extortioner deserved.
- Two kinds of tax collectors, *Gabbai* and the *Mokhes*. *Gabbai* were general tax collectors, (property tax, income tax, and poll tax set by official assessments). The *Mokhes* collected duty on imports, exports, goods for domestic trade, and virtually anything moved by road. They set tolls on roads, bridges, taxed beasts of burdens, axles on transport wagons, and charged a tariff on parcels or whatever they could come up with to tax.
- There were two kinds of *Mokhes*. The *Great Mokhes* and the *Little Mokhes*. The *Great Mokhes* stayed behind the scenes and hired

others to collect taxes for him, (Zaccheus). Mathew was evidently a Little Mohkes because he manned a tax booth where he dealt with people face to face.

- Hence, Matthew is the one people saw and had to deal with on a daily basis. He was the one people saw and they resented him deeply for it, (one of their own betraying them). He was the worst of the worst. No self respecting Jew would ever choose to be a tax collector. He had effectively cut himself off not only from his own people, but also from God.
- Matthew invited other tax collectors and sinners to his party because they were the only kind of people he knew and hung out with.
- The “others”/“sinners” who are grouped with the tax collectors were not ordinary sinners. The Pharisees along with others could readily admit that everyone is, after all, a sinner and in need of God's mercy and forgiveness. But the sinners associated with tax collectors were in a special class. These were people who deliberately and persistently transgressed the requirements of the law. Included in this group would be money-lenders who charged interest on loans advanced to fellow Jews. This was a clear violation of the law of God stated in Leviticus 25:36-38.
- Also in this group of sinners might be prostitutes who made their living by their ill-gotten gains. These were individuals who sold themselves to a life of sin in deliberate disregard of the law of God.

