

Seeing Jesus: Partying with “Bad” People
Luke 5:27-6:11
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Jesus shows us a surprising God

I) God calls ‘bad people’ as colleagues

v.27: Jesus said to [Levi the tax collector], “Follow me.”

A) Evidence

- Meaning of “follow me.”
- Tax collectors
- Aggressive recruiting

B) Meaning

- The extortionist is all of us
- “Straight blows with crooked sticks”

II) God accepts invitations to parties with ‘bad people’

v. 29: And Levi made him a great feast in his house

A) Evidence

- Jesus comes and eats

B) Why?

- Not because Jesus likes ‘bad’
- But because Jesus like ‘people’
- Jesus’ m.o.: inside out

C) Meaning

- God has always been showing up
- The incarnation
- How long has God been with you?

III) God does not require us to be sad and serious all the time

v.34: Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

A) Evidence

- Why fast?
- Why no fasting with Jesus?

B) Meaning

- Something greater than being good and doing justice is here
- What God wants the most
- Do we want this?

Take Away/Conclusion: What do we do if we don’t want this God? Take hope from the story of Levi.

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) If you were God, what sort of relationship would you like to have with people? Why?
- 2) Tax collectors were Jews who used the threat of Roman reprisal to extort tax revenue from their own people. They became rich by collecting more than Rome assessed and pocketing the balance. Imagine how their fellow Jews felt towards them? Can you think of a parallel occupation from our time?
- 3) An extortionist uses power to get what he wants rather than to serve. Think of the power that you have. How do you abuse it?
- 4) Levi is Matthew—the disciple who wrote the Gospel that bears his name—one of the books in the runaway best seller of all time. Imagine how Matthew must have felt later in life when he recalled what he once did. Why does the Lord choose to operate this way—that is, to heal people through people who themselves are still sick?
- 5) Recall a time when the Lord used you for some good end, despite yourself. Spend some time thanking God for that.
- 6) Have you ever been surprised by Jesus “showing up” in a strange and unexpected place—perhaps in a conversation with someone in a totally non-religious setting—or in a conversation you had with a totally unlikely person. Why did it surprise you? What does your surprise tell you about Jesus? About yourself?
- 7) Reflect on the following words from a 19th century anonymous hymn:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me.
It was not I that found, O Savior true;
No, I was found by thee.

I find, I walk, I love, but O
The whole of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee.
For thou wert long beforehand with my soul.
Always thou lovedst me.

- 8) Reflect upon and discuss the following: “Religious conservatives say, ‘The most important thing is to be a better person.’ Religious liberals say, ‘The most important thing is to fix what’s wrong with the world.’ Jesus says, ‘These things are important, but what matters the most is to be ‘married’ to God—to now that he loves you and is with you because of me—that he loves you more deeply, more faithfully, and more intimately than the best husband on earth has ever loved his wife.’”
- 9) Do you find that you want to want the God who loves you in the way described above, but that you nevertheless keep pushing him away? If so take hope from the story of Levi, whose heart Jesus changed dramatically. Ask Jesus to do the same for you.

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