

Title: Jesus Calls Sinners

Text: Luke 5:27-32

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Proverbs 2:21 tells us that God's word is what the Lord uses to make us into the upright ones of integrity who inherit God's promises. And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you today, and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 5. We're going to be looking at verses 27-32 this morning of Luke 5. And as you're turning there, I want to remind you that our author, first century doctor named Luke, is giving us here in this Gospel an orderly account of Jesus Christ's life.

In other words, Luke is taking the events of Jesus' life, and he is putting them in a specific order, not necessarily chronologically always like John or Matthew does, but always thematically. In other words, Luke takes certain eyewitness accounts from Jesus' life, and he stacks them together in a roughly chronological fashion, in order to communicate to us one single grand overarching truth. And the first truth that Luke has systematically been teaching us in this Gospel is that Jesus is the Messiah. He's the divinely promised saving sovereign of all.

This was explicitly presented in chapters 1-3, whereas we saw Gabriel, Zechariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, the angels, the Jewish records of the genealogy, and finally God himself, all testify that Jesus is God the Son, the chosen one, the spirit, anointed Messiah, and King. Well Luke builds off of all these testimonies by then showing us in chapters 4 & 5 that Jesus has the authority of the Messiah. He has the authority that matches the claim. He has the divine authority in the spiritual realm as he triumphed over as we saw Satan and his demons. He has divine authority over the physical realm as he delivers people miraculously from leprosy and from paralysis and from all sorts of illnesses. And then finally we've seen that Jesus has divine authority over the moral realm as we saw that climax last week as Jesus turns to a paralytic and he says, *"Man, your sins are forgiven you."* That is the moment, the truth that Luke has been building up to.

As verse 24 of Luke 5 says, all this has happened so *"that you might know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."* Jesus is exactly who he says he is, and he has the authority to back it up. He's the Messiah. And if you will come to him in faith, he can and he will forgive you of all of your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness and set you on a path of total and complete redemption physically, spiritually, mentally. Jesus has the authority. And so, Jesus has the authority to forgive sins but the question that this morning's passage asks is how far though does Jesus' forgiveness go? How far does his forgiveness reach? And the answer that we're going to see this morning is that Jesus' forgiveness reaches to the lowest of the low, to the greatest of sinners. Jesus' forgiveness is so great that it reaches to the most perverted, the most vile, the most hard, and the most hopeless of all humanity. And I know this for three reasons.

First, look at the Bible, second, look around you, and third, look at yourself. Can I say, as I was thinking about it this week, the simple fact that I'm even in church this morning is a miracle of epic proportions. I know my heart. I know my actions. I know my past and too often I know my present. I know that by all rights, as I consider the holiness of God and scripture, that I should be hurled into everlasting judgment where I stand because of the crushing record of shame and guilt and sin that I've committed against my Creator. And then to think that I'm not just among the people of God this morning, but I am one of his children today, viewed as holy and as righteous and as undefiled as God the son himself, to think that I am forgiven, totally absolved of all wrongdoing in the eyes of God.

Brothers and sisters, this is an extraordinary thing. See there's a tragic forgetfulness, and this is what I started to see in their passage this morning. There's a tragic forgetfulness that can overtake us who have been saved for any length of time. A forgetfulness of the fact that we are sinners and nothing, absolutely nothing separates us from the druggie in the ditch or the prostitute in the streets other than the merciful grace and effectual forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus, we would be right there in the ditch and on the streets as well. And if you doubt this, our sinful flesh reminds us of this humbling truth every single day. It reminds us of who we were and who we still would be without the forgiveness of Jesus Christ in our lives, and yet too often we overlook all of that.

We turn to see those who were enslaved in sin in our world, and in our tragic forgetfulness we start to view them, not with eyes of compassion and sympathy. We start to view them with eyes of pride and disgust, and our mission field becomes a battlefield. And our mission becomes our enemies. When we see them in the grocery store along the street at the mall, we often, too often forget the glorious truth that's changed our souls, that Jesus calls sinners. Jesus saves sinners. And Jesus forgives sinners, just like Jesus did with you. This passage is very convicting because it speaks to where we are.

Jesus calls sinners, and that's the lesson, the very simple lesson that's in store for us today from Luke 5:27-32, and we're just going to break this account down into three very basic points. We're going to look at the recipients of Christ's call at the beginning of verse 27. Who does Jesus' call? Then we're going to look at the radicalness of Jesus' call in the end of verse 27 into verse 28. What does he call on those to whom this call is given? What does he call on them to do? And then finally we're going to look at the response to Jesus' call in verses 29-32, the response of those who understand their sinfulness, and the response of those who yet do not. And it's very telling. And so, we have the recipients, the radicalness, and the response to Christ's call.

And so, with that in mind, if you're able, please stand with me out of reverence and readiness to the word of God as I get to read our passage before us today from Luke 5. We're going to be reading from verse 27 on to verse 32. Luke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes these words for us today,

"After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, 'Follow me.' And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and

sinner?' And Jesus answered them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'"

This is the word of God who causes us to rejoice in those who fear him and hope in his word.

Let's pray.

Father, I just, I pray for two things today in light of your word. Remind us of who we are and remind us and show us the glory of your son, Jesus Christ so that the forgiveness that he extends to sinners might be seen sweet in our eyes today. And that he is our Savior, might be deeply treasured and loved. We ask this to be the work that you do in our hearts by your Spirit.

In Jesus Christ's name, amen.

You may be seated.

So, Luke begins to show us how far Christ's saving authority and forgiveness reaches by describing for us at the beginning of verse 27, the recipients of Christ's call. It says at the beginning of verse 27, *"After this he went out,"* that is out of the house that he had been in in Capernaum where he had just healed that paralytic. Jesus *"saw a tax collector there named Levi, sitting at the tax booth."* Now Matthew in his gospel identifies this tax collector as being himself, which is no surprise since having two names back then was quite common. We've already seen how Peter was called Simon. Bartholomew was also called Nathanael in light fashion. Matthew was also called Levi. And so, Jesus goes out of the house after he has just healed this paralytic and declared to him, by the authority of God that your sins are forgiven and rise, take up your bed and walk.

He goes out of the house to walk along the seashore and to teach the crowds from there as Mark 2:13-14, makes clear. And we're told that as Jesus leaves the house and begins to walk along the shore, he sees Matthew sitting at his tax booth. And it makes sense by the way for the tax collector, for a tax collector to be there, Capernaum was a vibrant fishing village in northeast Israel with a major trade route that ran through it. And so, it was natural that Rome would want to set up a customs booth with tax collectors there to make a profit off of that. But what is unnatural though is for Jesus, a Jewish rabbi and faithful adherent to the law, as we've seen, to single out and show focused attention and interest to a tax collector.

See, to truly grasp the significance of this moment, we need to remember what tax collectors were like back then. We talked about this a little bit back in chapter 3, but tax collectors like Matthew were viewed as criminals of the worst kind, having an earned reputation of being characteristically dishonest. If you remember, back in chapter 3:12-13, *"some tax collectors came up to John the Baptist and they asked him what should be the evidence of our repentance. And John the Baptist replies to them, just collect what you're supposed to collect and nothing more."* So that was what they were known for, being characteristically dishonest. And on top of that, the money that tax collectors were gathering was going to support not the

Jewish state of Israel, but rather their unwanted pagan occupier, the Roman Empire. And so, a tax collector was someone who abused his own people, extorting money from them in order to then turn around and give that money to their Gentile overlords. And so, no one was resented more in that day than tax collectors.

In the public mind tax collectors were grouped with the most vile pagan sinners, imaginable, evildoers, adulterers, prostitutes, et cetera. They were so dishonest, in fact, that tax collectors couldn't even give a testimony in public court, and they were excluded from worship in the synagogue because their lifestyle of perpetual, cruel dishonesty. And then just finally one last picture to kind of fill out this painting for you. Tax collectors would take more money than they were supposed to by stopping people on the street and they would tax people for their letters, for their produce, and even their journey to take groceries back home saying that was an import and export tax. And then to make matters worse, if you couldn't pay the tax that these collectors were demanding from you, you could always loan it from the collector itself, but with a 50% interest. And then if you couldn't pay off the taxes that you were owed, why then he would send his thugs to beat you up.

So that's a tax collector. This is Matthew. He's basically a government approved organized crime boss, a traitor above all traitors. I wonder how many times he said, you disappoint me, Tony, right? No one was resented more than these guys. And that is why it is so shocking in verse 27 to read that as soon as Jesus walks out of that house there in Capernaum from healing and forgiving this paralytic man, Jesus, this righteous Messiah, this one who has just been shown to possess absolute divine authority and holiness walks right over to *"a tax collector named Levi who is sitting in a tax booth."* And in fact, it actually says that Jesus, he says he saw him, that word means a settled gaze.

In other words, Jesus came out of that house, he noticed Matthew and he just kind of starts watching him. I wonder what Matthew was thinking in that moment. I'm sure the day started off for Matthew, pretty normal. Here's a huge crowd gathered outside of house. Well, this is great. This is a financial opportunity, a lot of people to tax, right? But Matthew got more than he expected that day as he heard from, I believe, outside that house the very teaching of Jesus. The Gospels make it clear that this tax booth was rather close in location. From the pure lips of Jesus, Matthew hears from within the house about the riches I believe of God's righteousness, the moral poverty of man's sin, he hears Jesus here preach the same message that he preached there in Capernaum. He magnifies the glorious freedom that's found in him, the damning slavery that's exposed and experienced by those who are still captive in sin.

Jesus hears, Matthew hears Jesus expound on the moral clarity that God's spirit and God's word brings and the blindness that sin always produces. And perhaps as he's sitting outside that house looking for a way to tax people, he is cut to the heart. With a sudden realization that though he thought himself rich, he's actually poor. Though he thought himself free, he's actually a slave. Though he thought himself clever, he's actually blind. Perhaps the Holy Spirit began convicting Matthew at that time of his sin, of his judgment of God's offer of forgiveness.

If there was any doubt in Matthew's mind about whether Jesus' offer of forgiveness was legitimate, suddenly he hears Jesus' voice rise up from within the house saying, but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, rise, take up your bed and go home and out comes leaping out of that house, a paralyzed man he had just seen taken up to the roof. I believe Matthew heard the message that day that the year of the Lord's favor had come, and that Jesus can forgive sins. But I can't help but wonder still if Matthew realizes this and his spirit's still in turmoil, as many peoples are as they hear the gospel. As he considers all the people that he's swindled, all the lies that he's told, all the treachery he's performed, all the cruelty that he's committed, as he considers the sinner that he is. I can't help but think that Matthew sits there in despair thinking, there's nothing better than my tax booth. This is all I'll have.

Yes, the man inside the house can forgive sins. He can do extraordinary things, but is there hope for me? Can Jesus' forgiveness reach even to me? And in that moment, Jesus comes out of that house, and he looks straight at Matthew with a settled gaze. I don't know, but I've been under the gaze of my parents sometimes and I can barely handle it. Can you imagine being under the settled gaze of Christ himself? Imagine the shame that must have been his. As he suffered beneath the piercing gaze of Christ, Jesus knew. He knew it all. And he still does, by the way. All things are naked and exposed before the eyes of him to whom you must give an account.

If there be any doubt in your mind this morning, whether you be a sinner in the eyes of the holy God, I just want you to consider not as a faint taste of it, if you're having a hard time understanding the shame that will come when you stand before God someday, I want you to consider every action that you've ever done, every thought that you've ever had, every word that you've ever spoken being played up here in front of all of you this morning for everybody else in this congregation to see. If an event like that happened, I guarantee you every single one of you would probably jump out of your seats and run out of this and never want to look at another person in this congregation ever again.

That's just a small taste of what it will be like to be before the God of the universe. There is no one here today that will be accepted before God in heaven on the basis of your own works. We are all sinners by nature and by choice. By all rights, Christ should pass us by. But we see here with Matthew that he doesn't. In his divine authority and love, he stops, and he makes the divine appointment with a sinner. These are the recipients of Christ's call. Sinners, Christ calls sinners. He doesn't call you to get your life straightened out first. He just wants you to acknowledge your life is broken and that you need him, and he calls on you. Well, we'll get to that next.

At the end of verse 27, in the verse 28, here's the radicalness of Christ's call. Jesus says as he comes up to Matthew, he said to him, *"Follow me."* I have to imagine; you have to imagine the shock that must have been there for those crowds in that moment. I mean, of all people, Jesus asked a tax collector to be his disciple. I mean, come on, Jesus isn't there someone more qualified? And the answer is, I want you to see this morning, absolutely no. In fact, Matthew in this moment was more qualified to follow Jesus than many of the people in that house because the only people who ever follow Jesus are those who know that they're sinners and are in need of a Savior.

As Isaiah 66:2 teaches, *"this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and who trembles at my word."* Why follow a Savior that you don't even need? And that's exactly why so many people I believe today don't bother with coming to Jesus and following him in faith. It's because they haven't been shown their need for him today. They've been told by culture and often by many Christians, you're fine just the way you are. Nothing could be further than the truth.

If you stay just the way you are, you are headed to eternal condemnation. A change has to take place. You must be born again. You have to show people their sinfulness before they'll ever care about a Savior. And oh, I want you to see the gracious calling of Christ for Jesus goes right up to this tax collector, the vilest of sinners in the eyes of most in that culture today and he says to him, you, I want you, follow me. In other words, Jesus takes that brand new life, that total forgiveness, that unmerited grace that he's been proclaiming he goes up to Matthew and he says, here, take it, you follow me. Verse 28 tells us this, *"And leaving everything, he rose and followed him."* So just like that, Matthew rose, he left everything, and he followed Jesus.

You say, how in the world could he make such a radical decision right on the spot? And the answer is, because by God's grace, he understood the radical reward that was before him in Jesus, total forgiveness of his sins and eternal life before God. Matthew had found, as Jesus will describe later in this Gospel, a pearl of great price and he does not care what it costs him to obtain it. John Bunyan reflected on this great spiritual reality at the beginning of his pilgrim's progress when he writes after pilgrim was shown at last by evangelists the way that he would be relieved of his burden and finally escape the city of destruction. John Bunyan writes, I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his home when his wife and children perceiving it began to cry after him to return. But the man put his fingers in his ears and ran on crying, life, life, eternal life. And so, he looked not behind him but fled towards the middle of the plane. That's Matthew here spiritually.

As a sinful man, he runs after him who alone has the power to forgive his sins, leaving everything he's ever known behind because he knows that obtaining Jesus is worth the loss of all things. And this is exactly what the other disciples, by the way, in the Gospel of Luke are going to do repeatedly. If you remember back in Luke 5:11, we've already seen it. Jesus had been teaching from the boat and when they had come ashore, Jesus calls his disciples through Peter to follow him, and Luke tells us that they left everything. They left their boats, and they followed him.

This is a common theme that is seen throughout the Gospels. In Mark 10:28, in Matthew 19:27, Peter says twice to Jesus, *"See, we have left everything and followed you."* Later on, in Luke 14:26, Jesus will say, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate,"* that is in comparison to their love for me, *"does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."* And again, a few chapters after that in Luke 18, we're going to meet a fine young man, very upstanding moral individual, a wealthy young leader of the synagogue who's going to come up to Jesus and ask him, *"what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* And you know what Jesus says, sell everything you have and follow me, leave everything behind.

Whenever Jesus calls his disciples, he calls on them to leave absolutely everything and follow him. This means at the very least that when someone truly trusts in Jesus Christ for their salvation, they are acknowledging at that moment that nothing is more important to them than who Jesus is, what he has done, and obeying whatever he says. And you who have received the Lord Jesus Christ in that way, so walk in him. This is going to be the message of the Gospel of Luke. The refrain of those who follow Jesus is repeated over and over again. They left everything and followed him.

This is Jesus' radical call to every soul. And I want you to know, this is Jesus' radical call to you today. Flee from your sin. Flee from your self-righteousness. Flee from your selfish ambitions and pride. Flee from your plans for the future and the life that you wish you had. Drop it all. Run to Jesus and find mercy and forgiveness and new life in him. Follow him as your Savior and Lord. We need to remember this, that Jesus doesn't say, add me to your old life. Jesus says, abandon your old life and take whatever new life I decide to give you. Follow me, Matthew did that. He really truly did, by the way, leave everything to follow Jesus. You're a tax collector and you give up your position. You turn your back on the Roman Empire, there's no coming back. And so, Matthew really did leave everything that day to follow Jesus.

But I also want to give a full point, that Matthew found everything that day as well. As Jesus will teach us later in Luke 9:24, *"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* Matthew in that moment found the saving promises of Christ were true. He found forgiveness as a sinner. He found salvation. He found that the power of sin and greed and selfishness over him had been broken. He found eternal life. He found abundant life freely given to him. He found everything as he found Jesus that day. As the songwriters have put it, you can have all this world, just give me Jesus. I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today. This is the heart of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

As Peter, or as Paul mentions in Philippians 3:8, *"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."* Yes, Jesus is going to ask you to do some radical things in life, but it will be worth it all to walk with Jesus on this path of life is a grand adventure greater than any that you could plan for yourself. It is a radical call, but you obtain a radical reward, eternal forgiveness and new life in him. And that's what Matthew found. Jesus has authority to forgive sins. Jesus has authority to forgive me. And when you trust in Jesus' saving promise, when you know that all of your sins are gone without a trace and that you as a sinner now stand pure and accepted in the sight of God, man, nothing can keep you silent, and we'll see that in verses 29-32. This is the response to Christ's call, the response to Christ's call.

Look at verse 29 it says, *"And Levi made him a great feast in his house."* See, Matthew honored Jesus. He threw Jesus, not just a feast, it tells him that Matthew threw Jesus a great feast. He had no regrets at all. He wanted to celebrate. And notice though, Matthew didn't keep that celebration of forgiveness to himself. It wasn't like, hey, Jesus, how about you and me get together in a holy huddle in my house and just celebrate together for what you've done for me? He brings everyone he's known along with him. He had to tell all of his friends, it says at the end of verse 29, *"and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them."* See, Matthew was gripped by this realization that if Jesus can forgive the likes of me, then he can forgive anyone. And so, he invites all of his friends, reflecting the spirit of

Psalms 40:10, which states, *"I have not hidden your righteousness within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your loving kindness and your truth from the great congregation."* Matthew is amazed at what Jesus had done for him. And so, he invites all of his friends, saying, you've got to meet this man who has forgiven me of everything I've ever done. This man is worth giving up everything for. Why goodness sakes it's worth even putting up this relationship on the line to tell you about Jesus. So, Jesus and his disciples come to Matthew's house that day, and they enjoy a huge feast with a large company of the most reviled sinners in that culture that day.

Now I want you to imagine that if this happened today, what would people think? Man, what would happen on Christian Twitter? It'd blow up. We don't even have to guess what would happen because we see the example and the answer from the Pharisees in the very next verse. Verse 30, *"And the Pharisees and their scribes grumble at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?'"* Notice how they've just separated themselves from that entire group of people, which is by the way what Pharisees means, it means separated ones. They literally thought, we're the righteous ones, everybody else are sinners.

And I love this, by the way, they don't go up to Jesus and ask that question because I think they're a little bit too intimidated by their last run in, right, when they did that in the house. So instead, they go after Jesus' disciples. Why are you all eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners, the lawless, godless, hopeless ones? We're appalled. Why do you do this? And what they didn't realize is that even though they were accusing Jesus' disciples of displeasing God, they were in fact the ones that were displeasing him. Micah 6:8 says, *"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"* Their merciless, unloving, uncaring, proud stance towards others was an indication that they themselves were not in a position of having pleased God.

In fact, that's what Jesus tells them directly in Matthew's record of this account, when Jesus says in Matthew 9:13, *"Go home and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'"* Jesus had come to show mercy to sinners but not to the self-righteous ones. And he was showing them that those who offer no mercy to others will receive no mercy themselves. The fact that these Pharisees cared more about their outward appearance of separation than the eternal souls of sinners around them showed that they were truly lost. So, this is where we need to back up and say, okay, can this attitude exist in modern-day Christianity today? Yeah. You bet.

You know, right before I started college, I had just studied the life of Christ in the Gospels. And the thing that I was convicted by was how Jesus was a friend for sinners. It was the lesson I needed to learn. And so, I took it on as a personal challenge to myself that I wanted to be in the same places where I believed Jesus would be. And because of that, I heard similar concerns often like those that the Pharisees raised here. For example, I used to have a lunch after class with a fellow classmate that was a homosexual and some of his friends. Those at the table knew that we talk about God, the Bible, truth, sin, and Jesus. But several Christians who weren't at that table came up to me throughout the year and saying, hey, do you know who these people are? This doesn't look good.

Another time I was paired up with three interesting fellows for Science Lab. They did drugs. They had prostitutes over on the weekends, and they got drunk every evening. They were crude, immoral, obscene, and absolutely miserable. The chance came for me from the first semester into the second to switch groups. Everyone in the class thought I would take it, including those three guys, but I didn't. And it's because I had started to know those guys and they had started to get to know me and they had begun asking me about what I believed as a Christian, what the Bible teaches. A Christian classmate came up to me and rather than being excited for the opportunity of evangelism I had with them, they said, okay, I get why they're all in this group together, but why are you here? You don't belong here.

And then one final example, I'm sorry, I know I'm breaking the cardinal rule of preaching where you never give illustrations about yourself, but I've only lived one life. It's mine and so here you go. And so, this is what you get. But one day shortly after my wife and I got married, I had just finished an exhausting day at concreting and I and the crew were told to drive over to a restaurant to get paid for the day and to have an early dinner. Well, I walk in and it's not a restaurant at all, it's a bar. All the guys sit down, all order beers, and I'm more than a little uncomfortable. And as I'm trying to decide what to do, one of the guys I worked with turns around, slaps the empty stool next to him and says, Rev, that's what they would call me, Rev, I've been meaning to ask you, what made you want to study to be a pastor? Can you tell, can I tell you, I sat down at that bar right next to him, ordered a coke, and I gave him the gospel. I was so thrilled about that opportunity that I shared it excitedly with an older Christian that next Sunday only to have them frown at me and say, you know, you probably shouldn't have done that. It didn't look very good.

Listen, that's an excuse that we often tell ourselves, isn't it, when it comes to sharing the gospel with others? That's an excuse that I've sadly told myself many times. Sometimes we're across from someone in the grocery store, next to us in the gym, across the counter from us, and we think, you know, I could talk to this person, I could keep the conversation going, I could get to know them as a person, but maybe it wouldn't look good. No, this doesn't look good. This just doesn't look good.

Brothers and sisters, we need to remember who we are. We're sinners. Sinners, the greatest of sinners who have received the greatest of forgiveness. And if our definition of holiness means that we can't be seen reaching out to and sitting down with someone who needs Jesus, then something about our definition of holiness is terribly off because it doesn't look like the holiness of Christ anymore. The fact that we're forgiven isn't supposed to be a barrier to evangelism. It's actually supposed to be the motivation that drives us to get to introduce others to Jesus. We are to be in the world while not being of it. And so, yes, it is possible for us to have this same attitude as Pharisees have had, that these Pharisees had.

In fact, in our pride and self-righteousness, it is probably often the attitude we most default towards. We can forget that we are sinners, and we care more about their appearances than the eternal souls of others. We can look on others with prideful disgust in our culture today rather than to consider who will reach them in humble mercy. We can act more like Pharisees than like Jesus. And Jesus had some choice words for that type of attitude as he jumps to the defense of his disciples in verses 31-32 by saying this, *"Jesus answered them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'"*

Now let's be clear what Jesus is saying here. He's not saying that there were some people there that needed his forgiveness and other people there that didn't need his forgiveness. No, everybody clearly there needed his forgiveness. Everyone there was a sinner just as it is today. In Romans 3:10, Paul quoted in the Old Testament says, "*for there is none righteous, no, not one.*" And so, when Jesus says I've come for the sinners, not for the righteous, it's not because there were some there that were genuinely righteous and did not need Christ. No, all of them needed a repent. And all of them needed his forgiveness. It's just that some people there didn't think they did. And that's why Jesus was there. He was there to call sinners to repentance.

And in fact, he does it to all people here. He's calling the people that he ate with to repentance. And then he goes out and he talks to these self-righteous Pharisees and he's calling them to repent as well. He does it during the feast and he does it with these Pharisees. He meets with them, he talks with them, he cares for them, and he calls on them to repent. You know, our culture loves to talk about Jesus being a friend of sinners and getting us. But what is often implied is that because Jesus drew near to sinners, he therefore approved of their sinfulness. And that is not at all true. Yes, Jesus loved sinners with a merciful love. And so, he eats with them, and he drinks with them, and he talks with them, but he also calls on them to repent of their sins. And that's why Jesus met with those who were truly lost. There was no other reason why Jesus did any of those things except that he intended to call the lost to repentance for their salvation. And there is no reason ultimately why any of you do any of those things as well, except with the intention to call them to repentance and faith as well. This can be a danger.

I had a friend who once made it a habit of going to a bar with his coworkers after work every day. However, rather than directing the conversation towards the gospel and the things of God, he would just engage in the same activities they did, talk with them about art or politics, etc., and that was it. Can I tell you the end result is that my friend ended up acting more like his coworkers than they ended up acting like him. See, it's not enough simply to be with those who haven't trusted in Jesus. If you're to be like Christ, then you have to be like Christ. And you have to seek to call them to repentance that they might be saved. If you love them enough, you don't just share a coffee with them. You share with them the gospel. Otherwise, what in the world are you doing with that relationship? Jesus never came to sinners and said, you know what you're really okay. Now, he came up to sinners with an infectious holy and loving life, and he says, you know what repent, believe, and follow me. Jesus calls sinners, and he calls them to repentance. And that's why Jesus came to this earth? That's why you and I are still in it. This is the response to Christ's call. Jesus lovingly called us in our sin to forgiveness, and we are to lovingly call others in their sin to forgiveness as well.

Jesus, this morning, can forgive you of every sin. The sins you remember and the sins you do not. His sacrifice is sufficient for them all. This morning, you can be free indeed. What are you going to do with that message, Grace Chapel? God has providentially kept you on earth to this day, and he has put you in the positions that you are in, and he has given you the relationships that you have so that you might be like Christ to them. There are so many times when I get done with a sermon, and someone says, oh pastor, that was, that was all right. But what they'll say is, boy, I sure wish so-and-so was here that today. Man, why do you think you heard it? It's so that you passed it on to them. If God wanted me to be engaged in

all your relationships, he would have created three hundreds of Pastor Zachs. He didn't. He created one, and he created you. So that you would talk to your friends about Jesus, that you would talk about Jesus to your family members and your neighbors. That's your mission. It's to get to know them, to love them, to sit down with them, to talk to them, to not judge them, and to give them the gospel, to call on them to repent, to say, let's follow Jesus together. Jesus' mission is to be the same as ours, and Matthew got it right off the bat. To be converted is to have a commission. We need to avoid forming a holy huddle. We need to look immersed upon those around us, and we need to become a friend for sinners, because they are in need of a physician, in need of a Savior, and you know one. His name is Jesus.

So, I want you to consider this to be your homework this week, because this is your mission as a Christian period. I want you to think about one person you know, one person that you know that does not yet know the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. They might be someone that you get along really well with, or they might be someone who is very difficult for you to even have a conversation with. I want you to Grace Chapel, if we all did this, I want you to purposely seek out to do one activity with them this week. Go out for coffee, go on a hike, invite them over to your house for a meal, show a settled interest in them, so that God might use you to call them to repentance, just as he used someone in your life to call you, because Jesus in mercy came to sinners, Jesus in mercy came to you. Jesus in mercy calls sinners, Jesus in mercy called you, and how can we do any less than to carry on that work, for Jesus calls sinners and Jesus is calling you. Hallelujah, praise the Lord. What a privilege.

This is the word of God from Luke 5:27-32, which I consider a great privilege to have been able to share with you today, which I now commit to your further study and your faithful obedience this week, until Jesus our Savior returns. To that end, as the men come forward for communion this morning, let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you so much for Jesus. I thank you, Father, that he is the Savior for sinners, and that the reason why we have joy and hope, and purpose today is because of him. Father, I thank you that you have saved us from eternity in hell. That you have saved us and drawn us to yourself where we can enjoy your glory for all of eternity. I thank you for the joy of knowing that our sins are forgiven through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And Father, let us throw a great feast for what you've done for us. May we live a life of joy, a living sacrifice for you, and invite everyone we know into the celebration because Jesus is worth it all. Father, make us bold for the gospel in our day. Make us more like Jesus, truly holy and truly loving. Father, I thank you that you have equipped us for this mission. You have given us the truth, you have poured your love into us by the Holy Spirit that's been given, and you have given us all these relationships that we get to be missionaries into, that we get to proclaim the gospel to. Help us to be faithful in doing that this week. And Father, we just thank you for calling us. Use us, Father, as you seek to call others to yourself.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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