**Jesus calls Levi**

Luke 5:27-32

Key Verse 32

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

**Introduction**

In this passage Jesus called Levi. People treated him as a hopeless sinner who deserved to be judged. But Jesus called him to become his disciple. Jesus proclaimed that he came to call sinners to repentance. This passage leads us to know God’s deep compassion and amazing grace for sinners.

**1.Read verse 27. Who does Jesus see? (27a) What is his profession? What does this generally mean about such a person in his society? How does this stereotype contrast with the origin of his name? (Number 18:14) What does Jesus say to him? (27b) Why do you think Jesus tells him to follow him?**

**1-1 Read verse 27**.

***27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him,***

**1-2 Who does Jesus see? (27a)**

* A tax collector named Levi
* Jesus pays close attention to a man whom people ignore.
* Jesus sees God’s image in Levi, something that others can not see.
* Jesus is the good shepherd who knows who we are as well as what we need.

**1-3 What is his profession?**

* Tax collector
* Tax collectors hired by Roman government collected Tax from their own people.
* In fact they collected tax more than they were required and kept the extra money for themselves.
* Capernaum is known for the place where main tax office is located.
* Levi’s tax booth was located in Capernaum. (Mark 2:1, 13)

**1-4 What does this generally mean about such a person in his society?**

* They were recognized as public sinners. (30b)
* People called them “Dogs of Romans, Betrayers” – They were rejected and isolated from society.

**1-5 How does this stereotype contrast with the origin of his name? (Number 18:2-6)**

* *Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the tent of the covenant law. 3* ***They are to be responsible to you and are to perform all the duties of the tent****, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar. Otherwise both they and you will die. 4* ***They are to join you and be responsible for the care of the tent of meeting—all the work at the tent****—and no one else may come near where you are.5 “You are to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the altar, so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelites again.* ***6 I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the tent of meeting. -* Number 18:2-6**

* Levites are in charge of all the duties at the tent of meeting and the temple, assisting priests.
* These were honorable duties before God.
* Levi should have been fulfilling these noble duties, but instead he was doing something that made him a public sinner..
* He chose to live for money rather than live for the duty given to him by God.
* His life had nothing to do with his name, Levi.

**1-6 What does Jesus say to him? (27b)**

* “Follow me,” Jesus said to him
* Jesus called Levi to become his disciple(=learner) and follower
* Jesus didn’t say any other words. Neither did he mention his past life.

**1-7 Why do you think Jesus tells him to follow him?**

* Jesus called him in order to save him from his sinful and meaningless life, leading him to live as one of his disciples.
* Jesus had mercy on Levi and called him to live a truly blessed life.
* Jesus wanted to use him preciously for his eternal kingdom purpose.
* According to Jesus’ desire, Levi became one of Jesus’ twelve disciples.
* Levi later wrote the book of Matthew.
* Thanks to Jesus, he was enabled to live a life consistent with his name Levi.
* Jesus is still calling people to follow him in the same way.
* Praise the name of Jesus!

**2. Read verses 28-29. How does Levi respond? (28) What do you think are some things that may have to be overcome in order for him to follow Jesus? What does he do for Jesus? (29a) Who are eating with Jesus, and what do you think of this? (29b)**

**2-1 Read verses 28-29.**

***28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him 29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.***

**2-2 How does Levi respond? (28)**

* “Levi got up, left everything and followed him”
* Without hesitation, Levi followed Jesus immediately.
* He left his old values behind..
* There is a complete separation from his past life and a full commitment to Jesus.
* Jesus wants us to make this kind of commitment.
* Many believers don’t commit themselves like Levi.
* Jesus’ calling was too powerful and convincing to be resisted by Levi.
* It seemed that Levi was the least and last person who could follow Jesus and become his disciple. But when Jesus called him, Levi followed immediately.
* So anyone can become a disciple of Jesus if Jesus calls him through the work of the Holy Spirit.
* We can have hope for anyone if we believe in the power of Jesus’ calling.

**2-3 What do you think are some things that may have to be overcome in order for him to follow Jesus?**

* He needed to give up the things that he had followed or pursued such as money and worldly desire. He also needed to change his old life style.
* There is some cost that we need to pay to follow Jesus. Only those who pay the cost willingly can follow Jesus.
* But the things that we would receive from Jesus for following him cannot be compared to the things that we leave behind.

**2-4 What does he do for Jesus? (29a)**

* “Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.”
* It was his great expression of joy and thanks to Jesus.
* He wanted to share his joy with others and invite them to Jesus.
* Levi had great joy that he had never had before. Despite having a lot of money, he did not have such joy.

**2-5) Who are eating with Jesus, and what do you think of this? (29b)**

* “A large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.”
* Jesus was eating with them. -Sharing a meal with someone is a great way to make friends and have fellowship with each other.
* Jesus accepted the sinners and became their friend.
* People felt uncomfortable eating with sinners at that time. But Jesus joyfully ate with them.

**3. Read verse 30. What do the Pharisees and the teachers of the law say to Jesus’ disciples? (30). What do you think their complaint shows about them?**

**3-1 Read verse 30**.

**30 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”**

**3-2 What do the Pharisees and the teachers of the law say to Jesus’ disciples? (30)**

* “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” -They were angry at Jesus who accepted the sinners. It was an unacceptable thing to them.

**3-3 What do you think their complaint shows about them?**

* They didn’t understand Jesus’ heart.
* To them the sinners were the people who didn’t deserve to receive God’s favor.
* They were judgmental.
* They thought that they were righteous and better than the sinners.
* They thought that only they deserved to receive God’s grace.
* They didn’t understand God’s mercy at all.

**4. Read verses 31-32. What does Jesus say to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law? How do you think this analogy fits the situation? (31) Whom does Jesus call and for what purpose does he call them? What does this show of God’s grace? (32)**

**4-1 Read verses 31-32.**

***31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance***

**4-2 What does Jesus say to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law?**

* “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”
* “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
* Jesus told them the purpose of his association with the tax collectors and other sinners.
* Jesus was with them to help them to live different lives.
* To the Pharisees and the teachers of the law sinners were objects of judgment. But to Jesus they were objects of help. God sent Jesus not to judge people but to save them.
* Jesus noticed the religious leader’s judgmental spirit and wanted to correct them so that they may know God’s heart toward sinners.

**4-3 How do you think this analogy fits the situation? (31)**

* Jesus saw the sinners as sick patients who needed doctor.
* Sinners are sick people who are suffering from various kinds of sin sickness.
* Because of their sin sickness they have a lot of pain and cannot function properly.
* So they ended up living a life that they don’t really want to live.
* Patients cannot heal themselves. Patient needs a doctor who can heal them.
* Like a doctor Jesus shows his compassionate heart toward sinners.
* ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor’
* The healthy refers to the righteous who don’t need help.
* Those who think they are healthy don’t need doctor.
* The Pharisees and the teachers of the law considered themselves righteous ones who didnt need any help.
* “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10)
* All people need a doctor because all people are sinners.

**4-4 Whom does Jesus call and for what purpose does he call them?**

* **“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**
* Jesus came to call sinners to repentance.
* He is looking for sinners and waiting for them. He welcomes sinners just as doctors welcome patients.
* Jesus heals and saves people by helping them to repent.
* Without repentance, we cannot be healed or saved. Repentance can be compared to spiritual surgery that brings us healing.
* Whenever we commit sin, all we have to do is to come to Jesus just as we are, repenting of our sins.
* Satan condemns and discourages us to keep us from coming to Jesus. But Jesus still calls us even when we are the worst sinners.
* ‘I have not come to call the righteous’- Jesus didn’t come to look for righteous people, for no one is righteous in God’s sight. (Romans 3:20)
* Jesus wanted to challenge the religious leaders who thought that they were righteous.

**4-5 What does this show of God’s grace? (32)**

* **“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**
* What a wonderful grace it is!
* Sinners deserve to be judged. But Jesus came to save them.
* This is God’s heart toward sinners. This is God’s amazing grace.
* All sinners can have hope because of Jesus’ word.
* If anyone comes to Jesus and accepts his calling, Jesus forgives all his/her sins and leads him/her to live a new life as his disciple.

**Conclusion**

Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. He has great compassion for sinners like a doctor. Today he is faithfully calling sinners to save them. May God help us to hear his calling, come to him, repent of our sins, and live a new life. Also may God use us preciously to call many wandering sinners who are suffering from their sins like Levi. Amen.

**One word: Sinners to repentance**