

Levi's Response | Luke 5

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[0 : 0 0] Please join me in Luke chapter number 5 as we continue. What a powerful morning in singing the truth of God's Word. What a great truth right there, and that in following Jesus, we will never walk alone.

He called us to follow us. He didn't say, go this way and do this thing. He just says, follow me. So even when you feel alone in following Jesus, you know that He's there with you. Appreciate being reminded of that today, following Jesus.

I'm grateful for the people that we get to follow Him with as we're on this journey together. You know, those of us, only those that would not see themselves in this category would be offended when Jesus is a friend of sinners.

But every one of us in here that knows that Jesus is a friend of sinners ought to say amen. Because that is the category that He found us in. If it wasn't for His grace, it's the one that we would still be in today.

Some of my friends that are here today following Jesus, I have David here and Jason Holt. If I don't say your name, it doesn't mean you're not my friend, all right? And the Millers and some other missionaries we don't often get to see on Sunday mornings.

[0 : 5 9] But I know it's harder for Jason to sit through church than it would be for him to preach today because of the way he is built. But one of the things, I'm on my third week if you're visiting here. This is my third sermon to ever preach, okay?

Hope it goes well. Now, this is my third Sunday as the pastor of the church. And something that I'm really wrestling with that I do not want to come to the Word and not be changed. More than anything, more than ever, because we're in a part of Luke that isn't hard to understand.

The story is quite simple to understand, but it has such ramifications on our lives. And I can never stand here and ask you to wrestle with the truth of these words if I don't wrestle with them.

And so the understanding of the pastor today is very simple. But what I'm going to challenge you to wrestle with is something I would never ask you to wrestle with if I wasn't wrestling with it myself. Like so many stories in the Bible, it centers around a table.

Stephanie didn't want me to bring my one from the house. We kind of used it there. So I brought this table here today that represent the one that Levi would sit down with, with his friends, those tax collectors, and they would get to meet Jesus.

[2 : 0 1] And that was Levi's response to hearing, follow me. As we end the day, I want you to think about what is your response to follow me? Don't worry, this is not the story of Jesus turning over the table.

You're safe in the front row, okay? This is a Levi inviting people to a feast. And that was his response to being told to follow me. So the first thing I want to look at that I just absolutely love is that Jesus loves all the little tax collectors of the world.

All right? And he does. Jesus loves all the tax collectors of the world. This is how it talks about publicans in the Bible. In Matthew 21, 32, it says, And they believed not, but the publicans and the harlots believed him.

And when you had seen it, repent and not afterwards that you might believe him. So publicans were put in the same categories as harlots. That seems a little bit extreme, doesn't it? But they had a role that they would play between the government and the Jewish society.

They were seen as traitors. They would collect the money. They were left in charge of collecting money for an area. But they wouldn't just collect for the Roman government. But they would take extra. And so they would live in prosperity in a time when other people wouldn't.

[3 : 07] Just everything about them was something you just wouldn't like. Right? They didn't seem faithful to their Judaism. They didn't seem faithful to their people. They were living these amazing lives of being wealthy and all that.

And so they weren't appreciated. So they were in a category of publicans and harlots. And so why call a tax collector? That had to be the question that the disciples were asking.

You know, the other ones like, we like fishermen. We're pretty comfortable with other fishermen. Jesus, why don't you keep calling fishermen? But when he looked at Levi, a publican, a tax collector, and saw, said, follow me.

They all had to be wondering, why do we need this guy with us? Right? This is not making the party better to invite Levi. It's said like this in the book of Matthew in a parallel passage, Matthew 9, 11 through 13.

And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto the disciples, Why eateth your master of publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that behold need not a physician, but they that are sick. Then Jesus said this, But go ye and learn what that meaneth.

[4 : 08] I will have mercy and not sacrifice. But go and learn what I mean by calling Levi. Go and learn what I mean by saying that I've come to save sinners. That I've come to bring healing to that was sick.

And I pray that you have in here. If you don't know that Jesus loves the children of the world, red, yellow, black, and white, Then you don't know the gospel. If you don't know that Jesus loves all people and that he died for all people, Then you need to go learn what that means.

Hopefully in your maturity and knowing the gospel, You have no problem saying Jesus loves all the children of the world, red, yellow, black, and white. But what if I was to change those out with some other titles and some other names?

And so a tax collector or whatever it is in your life. Somebody that has issues of sexuality or somebody that deals with a sin that you find to be so easy. Somebody's a drunkard and you've dealt with this.

Or somebody is violent or whatever it is. What words would I need to replace red, yellow, black, and white before you would say, Why in the world would you call a tax collector? Why in the world would you go and share the gospel with somebody like that?

[5 : 09] Our missionaries face this sometimes. People will visit their mission field. And I've heard David tell it many times. They'll say, Why would anybody want to live here? This is just such a pagan place. And he would say, Because they need Jesus, right?

Jesus died for all the people of the world. And so let's not buy in the three common lies that happen. The first one is that God only saves the good. That's the first lie that we often hear.

Why would he call a tax collector? Well, we can't call a tax collector because God only saves the good. The second Vatican council said, The gospel teaches that those who live in accordance with beatitudes and who bear lovingly, the sufferers of life will enter God's kingdom.

Another way they said, It was the heathen are saved if they live good lives and are sincere. Raymond Pettiker wrote a book called The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, said the good and bona fide Hindu is saved by Christ and not by Hinduism, but it is through the sacrament of Hinduism, through the message of morality and a good life that Christ saves the Hindu.

So it's not just people that write books about Catholicism and Hindu, but it's the good old boys. It's the people I grew up with as well that said that the good get good and the bad get bad. It's what we love.

[6 : 16] Disney knows they love it. Cinderella, right? She was a good girl. She's crying. That's on the grave of her mother and now her evil stepsisters. At the end of that, birds pluck the eyes out of their evil stepsisters, all right?

I don't know if that's in the Disney version, all right? But it's in the original. You know, we want good for good. We want good for good. And then sometimes when there's a fairytale twist and the good doesn't go to the good, but bad goes to the good or bad, or that it really messes with us, right?

Because we want to live in a world where we think good's for good. But then once we realize that, then we're all having a problem because none of you in here are good. None of us deserve the kingdom of God.

None of us deserve God's grace. We love that, but it's not what is happening. And I'm glad that's not the case. I'm glad it's the grace of God. Matthew 23, 13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, but if you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

There's people that tell the lie that only the good go to heaven, and this lie is damning people to hell. John Pearson has this thing that he does when people come to his door and they knock on it and they want to talk to him about heaven.

[7 : 25] He says, are you here for my salvation or are you here for your salvation? Many people going about are teaching people a works-based salvation, and they're doing it because they are victims of a lie that says that God can't save tax collectors because God only saves good people and you need to be a good person.

Another lie is that only some people can respond to God's love. I certainly believe in human depravity. That's the reason that I give suckers out after church like Pastor Gardner did. It reminds me of human depravity of all your kids, right?

They always want more. We know this. We know that man, he doesn't seek God on his own, Romans 3, that man can't fulfill the law demands, Romans 8, that we're all spiritually dead.

As a teenager, I used to tell the story about how if you try to jump across the Grand Canyon and sharing the gospel, and I would say, it doesn't matter if you make it halfway across or if you make it almost to the end, but you're just a few feet short.

If you're evil, Knievel, and you don't make it all the way across the Grand Canyon, then you die. Well, the problem with that analogy and the reason it wasn't included in Scripture being imperfect is that none of us even come close, right?

[8 : 32] None of us get a little bit close to the end or another, that we're all dead in our sins, that we could not do anything, but that does not mean total inability. Just because, as one man, Leighton Flowers, says, just because I don't have the ability to call the president doesn't mean that I don't have the ability to answer the phone if he calls, that the gospel allows me the opportunity to respond to the faith needed, to put my faith and trust in Jesus.

And repentance comes before life. Ezekiel 18, 32, For I have no pleasure in death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye. John 5, 40, And you will not come to me that you might have life.

6, 30, 3, 16, Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. And speaking of the prodigal son, and when he had come to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough to spare and perish with hunger?

Why do we believe that the tax collector can't follow Jesus? Some people believe it because only good people can follow Jesus. Other people believe it because only God will allow a few people to respond to the gospel message.

And that's not the case. God is using us to beseech the world. 2 Corinthians 5, 20, Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

[9 : 53] To ask, to urgently, fervently do something, to employ, to entreat. That's what God is doing in this world. What does that look like? For Levi, it looks like getting out a stationery and sending out an invitation to his friends to a meal.

So we have the lie that only the good can be saved. We have the lie that God only makes salvation available to us like few. And then the last one that is very common today, that could be described as love wins.

A man wrote a book that he said that in the end God wins. Nobody ever goes to hell. We try to erase hell from scripture under the guise of stating a loving God would never send anyone to hell.

A.W. Tozer said this, The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the conscience of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity.

While death draws every day nearer and the command to repent goes unheeded. So when Jesus calls somebody that you don't think that could be saved and you'd say God only saves the good, that's a lie.

[10 : 55] God didn't die for all people, that's a lie. But when you say the death of Jesus on the cross means that we're all now going to heaven, that you don't have to repent of your sins and turn to him, that's also a lie.

He's willing to take you in any direction. Satan will sell a whole list of lies and they all take you away from recognizing the importance of the cross of Jesus. And so love wins here is the last of those lies.

Matthew 25, 46, The Bible is very clear about a place called hell that is where people will go that do not respond to his call to follow him.

And the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. We believe that God can save tax collectors or anyone because the power is not found inside of them of doing good, but the power is in the gospel of Jesus.

For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Which means that anybody that hears the call to follow me, they can respond.

[12 : 00] Romans 10, 9, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ shalt believe thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Tax collectors, fishermen, or whatever, any group of people in this world, they can respond to Jesus' call to follow them.

And when we share the gospel, we're sharing the most powerful message in the world. When we're sharing the gospel, we are beseeching people in Christ's stead to turn. The gospel has the power to make men aware of their spiritual deadness and they can respond to him in faith.

And now the question is, knowing this and believing this, will we follow Jesus? Will we follow him outside of the camp? I'll never forget hearing this passage read from Hebrews chapter number 13 in a message.

Not just fishermen, but those that are despised. Hebrews chapter number 11, verses 11 through 14. For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp.

Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

[13 : 10] For we have no continuing city, for we seek one to come. Outside the camp was a place of shame. The blood sacrifice was offered in the tabernacle, but the sacrifice being made outside of the camp was a place of shame.

It was outside of religion. It was outside of the place that we were supposed to go. And Jesus went to a place of shame. It also says in Hebrews that he went and endured the cross, despising the shame to sit down at the right hand of the throne of God.

That God went outside of the camp to a place of shame and that we were told to join him in that place. When Jesus sat down that day and all of the Pharisees and all those watching him saw Jesus sitting with sinners, Jesus was going outside of the camp.

Jesus was going outside of what people believed was appropriate, what was right. When Jesus died, he died outside the camp for us. He died outside of the city. And he calls us to go outside of the camp and to endure the shame that others, so that other people can hear this message.

In Galatians, this is how the argument goes down. Galatians 6, 12, As many as a desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

[14 : 20] For neither they themselves are circumcised, keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, saving the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

So let me explain that to you here. What was happening is these people said, there's a real shame to believing in the cross completely. There's a real shame to just saying, I was nothing without him.

He did all the entire work. So why don't you also add to this grace a works? And in adding to this works, then we're going to be more socially accepted to the people in the day.

That we're not totally rejecting what they're teaching and accepting something else. We're trying to bring two worlds together. And what we're trying to do is we're trying to soften the shame of the cross. And that's even what it says.

It says, you make a fair show in the flesh that constrain you, only lest you should suffer persecution for the cross. So by mixing a works-based salvation and a cross-based salvation, you're lessening the shame of being people that say, I was hopeless without Jesus.

[15 : 27] And that's what they were calling them to do. And so they insisted that circumcision was necessary. And why? So that they could boast that they converted more people to this worst base, the religion.

By adding works to salvation, they were removing the significance and the shame of the cross. But in Hebrews, it said, let us go forth, therefore, unto him. There's a uniqueness of the gospel.

Salvation is only offered the sinners. It's not withheld from tax collectors, but it's only given to people that see themselves as sinners. Luke 5, 32.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Have you ever seen yourself as lost? Have you ever recognized that you were in need of a savior?

Savior. You'll find more people here in the southeast that have been saved than you'll find people that have been lost. Meaning you'll find more people that professed that they were Christian their entire life, that they never needed that.

[16 : 25] I never had anything that I needed to repent of. I never needed to say that I was sorry. I've never done wrong. That is the common thought of the day, but that is not the grace. If you've never seen yourself as a sinner, then you've never put your faith and trust in him as your savior.

And so what do you think about those that seem unlovable? Isn't that, that isn't the full story. Those that you see that you don't think are lovable, they are far worse than you could ever imagine.

But they are loved by God far more than you would ever want to admit. Romans 5, 6. For when we were yet without strength. That's where you're at when Jesus found you. In due time Christ died from the godly.

For scarcely for a righteous man would one die. Yet per eventual for a good man some would even dare die. But God commendeth his love towards us. In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ went outside the camp for us. Christ came to us even though we were tax collectors. Christ came to us because we had nothing to offer him. And he died in our place.

[17 : 26] And so the question is, Levi, he was outside the camp. And so it was nothing for him to go to people that were outside of the camp. But what about you? Who is supposed to be sitting at your table? This is some of the things that I wrestle with.

Who are some of the people in our lives that are outside the camp? I get emails like this every day. Folks, we have two brothers. IJ age 9, KJ age 11. African Americans that are needing to be moved through no fault of their own.

They're described as good kids, few behaviors. And KJ endures helping his little brother. Likes filling part of his home. He even volunteers to help with chores. IJ has physical incontinence issues and does wear pull-ups.

They're super sweet and need placement quickly. They're Forsyth County children. 13-year-old Caucasian girl who has been in care since February 2020. She's on medication for depression, anxiety, and allergies.

She often appears sad and tends to be isolated in her rooms when feeling depressed or anxious. She has suicidal thoughts and spent from January to this year in May in a treatment facility. She can be verbally defiant, disrespectful to adult caregivers.

[18 : 29] So someone with lots of patience and a thick skin is needed. She wants a family that does things together. Those emails come in and they're not responding because those kids are outside the camp.

And none of us want to go outside the camp for them. There's a third of a billion people that live between New Delhi and Kathmandu, Nepal. And most of them will never hear the gospel of Jesus Christ because those of us that live inside the camp and those of us that have the comforts of this life and those of us that enjoy buildings like the ones we live in, we never want to go outside the camp so they can hear them.

There's a deaf population in our county and somebody goes outside the comforts of themselves and they learn a language and they share the gospel. They will live and they will die outside the camp and they will never know that Jesus Christ died for all the tax collectors of this world.

We must go outside the camp. If Jesus did not go outside the camp, I would not be standing here today because I was not born into a royal team. I was not born into a religious family, but somebody went outside the camp.

Somebody sent a van outside the camp. Somebody shared the gospel with my family. And because somebody went outside the camp, I get to share with you today about Jesus. And I've shared with you seven or eight verses a day and every one of you could have finished them because we know the gospel and we memorize the gospel, but we have kept it for ourselves and we will not go outside the camp.

[19 : 48] And if we will not go outside the camp, then what is it that we're doing? Then why do we get to enjoy all these things if we're not willing to go outside of the camp?

We're so blessed with this comfortable life. Jesus had to shock everybody when he looked and said, hey, Levi, follow me. And all those disciples said, not a tax collector.

Man, wouldn't it be so wonderful if we saw Jesus say, hey, Levi, to some people and we looked around here and people, we saw strange things happen. We saw things that were not common to us here. And so that's Levi's response.

Levi said, I will follow you. Levi follows Jesus. And every one of you in here, I pray that you made the decision today. He died for you. I can say that with full confidence. I know that about you and I know that about him.

Jesus died for you. I also know that if you haven't put your faith and trust in Jesus, you're a sinner that needs to repent of your sins and to follow him. And that's what Levi does.

[20 : 46] He follows Jesus. The invitation is the same to all of us. It is to follow him. Levi quickly counted the cost. And unlike the other one, other disciples, even though they left their nets and they left everything, you don't get to go back and be a part time tax collector.

You don't get to say, hey, guys, I know I was a tax collector, but I've been following Jesus. I need to pick up some hours on the weekend. It isn't working like that. Once he lost that job, it was over. And he counted the cost in a moment.

He ran it and he said, following you will be far better. And he made a decision to leave it all. Following Jesus requires a willingness to burn the map that we've been carrying and say, okay, Jesus, wherever you're going, I am following.

Here are some examples of people. There's a certain ruler, Luke 18, saying, good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? None is good save the one that is God.

Jesus is constantly reminding us that none of us are good. Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, all these things I've kept from my youth up.

[21 : 53] Meaning I've been doing all these things. Jesus, even before I ever met you and was called to follow you, I can do a list. Give me a list of things to do. I am very good at lists. How many of you have a wife that are very good at making lists?

All right. It's a skill set. All right. And so he said, I'm very good at following lists. I make lists here. But Jesus said, following lists and checking off boxes, that's not what it is to have eternal life.

Now, when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, yet lackest thou one thing. Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.

On that day, what did following Jesus look like for that man? It meant being willing to sell everything that he had to follow Jesus. Following Jesus means we change our value system.

Luke 18, 23. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful. Why? Because when he counted the cost like Levi, he wasn't ready to follow Jesus. For he was very rich.

[22 : 49] And when Jesus saw that, he was very sorrowful. He said, how hardly shalt thou have riches enter into the kingdom of God? For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

When you value the things of this world so highly that you would not set them down to follow Jesus, then it's hard or it's impossible for you to follow him.

It really came down to a value system. It didn't matter how much money this man had. He was valuing the things of this earth at a greater value than the things of heaven. And Jesus said, because of that, you can't follow me.

It requires giving your all. The more you value your place and what you have in this world, the less you're willing to give it your all to follow him. We're told in Philippians 3, 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.

Every one of you take everything in here that you find your identity in this world and lay it right here in front of you and say, in comparison to following Jesus, that's nothing. There's nothing that I would say that's off limits to him.

[23 : 55] If you're wanting to know what it is to follow Jesus, if you're going to ask him what is the next step in following Jesus, you say, Jesus, this is all the things I have in this earth. None of them matter to me. You could have them.

Those of you that have kids in here, you know they have certain toys that they'll let other kids play with. You know, they can play with a checkerboard. They can play with this. But there's certain toys, those are off limits. These belong to me. Following Jesus says, there's nothing in my life.

There's no part of my identity. There's nothing about me that's off limits to you, Jesus. You can come in and take whatever you want and rearrange my life. And so why was a table full of tax collectors?

Here's your deep thought for the day. Why was the table full of tax collectors? Because Levi was a tax collector. Very deep, isn't it? I couldn't fill a table with tax collectors or publicans because I'm not a publican.

All right, I'm a Republican or maybe. Okay, I'm not a publican, okay? I'm not a publican. I can't fill my table full of publicans. But what can I fill my table with? The type of people that when I throw out a net that I would find, I can find people like me.

[24 : 57] There's somebody that I can have at that table. You know those emails that I read to you? Those weren't for me. That wasn't for me. Maybe it was for somebody else. But there are people at my table. There's somebody that should be at my table.

That's why I wanted to bring my own kitchen table and dedicate it to the Lord. And I was going to ask all of you, bring your kitchen tables tonight. It's going to be awesome, all right? And to dedicate your kitchen tables to the Lord. And that's where Levi said, I have a kitchen table.

I have a Rolodex of friends. And I have Jesus here. We're about to have some fun. And that's what Levi does in the story. He gave what he had available to him. We have other examples here.

Another example of how people should respond. Another tax collector, a publican named Zacchaeus, met Jesus one day, Luke 19, 5 through 8. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, you're a wee little man.

No, he didn't say that. Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for the day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. And when he saw it, they all murmured, saying that he was gone to guest with a man that is a sinner.

[25 : 59] And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And I have taken anything from any man by false accusation. I restore him fourfold. So that was his response in following Jesus.

And it was complete. It was different than another man's, but it was complete. Every one of us following Jesus, it isn't going to look the same, but who we follow is the same. And what he deserves of us is the same.

It is complete. So Zacchaeus says, I'm now going to do my job as a Christian man would. I'm going to set right what I've done wrong. And from here on out, I'm going to do things in a way that would honor the Jesus Christ that I follow.

And every one of those men had given completely. Maybe your response should look like hospitality to those that you consider outside your camp. Hospitality using your Christian home in a daily way that seeks to make strangers, neighbors, and neighbors family of God.

You could open up your home. Husband and wife in here today, you could grab the other one by the hand during the invitation and say, I know in following Jesus, our home has to be open to other people, the tax collectors, being open to people.

[27 : 05] Every one of you in here have family members and little cousins, nieces and nephews, and the family just doesn't know what to do with them. We live in a time where there's such confusion.

That the openness towards sin that people are embracing and in the same what is wrong, they're saying it so pridefully and they're owning it. And your family doesn't know what to do with it.

So people are just turning their back to them. And they're just saying they're outside the camp. And they're just going to say, we don't know what to do with this person. And when they say that, say, I know exactly what to do with them. Because I'm just like them.

I'm a sinner in need of Jesus. There is nobody in your family that's without the reach of Jesus Christ. And so open up your home. And men, hospitality, that is not a feminine word here. Hospitality, it is a requirement for an elder.

For men, hospitality is not just women's work, but it requires everyone. Man and women. It is a tough thing to do to open up your home. To the maniac of Gadara, what did following Jesus look like?

[28 : 03] It looked like going home. But Jesus sent him away saying, return to that own house and show how great things God had done unto thee. And he went his way and he published it through the host city, what God had done.

Three different responses. Every one of them following the same person of Jesus. And every one of them completely just doing what God would have for them to do. So I'm going to challenge you today to find your next step in following Jesus.

He's not done with you. He's brought you to this point, but he's not done with you. And how do I know? Because there's still people outside the camp. There's still people that haven't heard the gospel. If you can come and report to me that everybody in this world has heard the gospel, then I'll tell you we can take a break.

I used to tell Brother Austin, when we get done reaching the world with the gospel, we're going to go fishing. All right? And we'll find something to do, but we're not there. Which means that he's not done leading you and guiding you.

He wants you to follow him. And in following him, you're going to meet people that could sit at that table with you. He's going to meet people. So find your next step in following Jesus.

[29 : 05] So maybe the day is as literal as sending out a party invitation. As literal as sending out a party invitation. Next week we'll have some postcards, or this week by Thursday there'll be some postcards.

And you can invite them to the Levi's Luau, the party that we're going to have here. And on that Sunday, all that I plan to do with everything that is in me is preach the gospel as clear as I can and as fervently as I can.

So that the people that you brought on today will know who Jesus Christ is and why he's so lovely. Maybe in the year of the day, maybe you need to invite your neighbors over for a meal and let them come sit at the table.

And when you do that, it isn't just enough to bring them to the table. Who else has to come to the table? Jesus, right? Many people can gather a crowd of people, but that isn't the ministry. That's not what we're called to do.

We're told to set out seats and we're told to invite people to it. And once those people are seated at that table, then we are supposed to bring Jesus to the table. And how do we do that today? We open up God's word and we show them the Jesus that loved them and died for them.

[30 : 07] Don't forget to send out the invitations and make your home a place that brings people in. But don't forget to always set a place setting for Jesus to be at that table and to preach the gospel, the truth that Jesus saves sinners.

Maybe it's to go home and share him with your family, the great things that God has done in your life. I can stand up here and I can cry and I can explain how much I love Jesus.

But dads in here, none of that will be near as important as them hearing it from you. It won't mean near as much as it will from you. When you talk about Jesus, there's certain people that listen that will never listen to anybody else.

Levi had a table full of tax collectors. None of us can do that and none of you want to do that, right? Some of you probably sit down with tax collectors around spring of every year, right? But Levi had a network of people that he could get to a table.

Every one of you in here have people that you can get to that table that nobody else can. And it's a privilege and it's a responsibility. Maybe in here today the next step for you is to follow the Lord in baptism.

[31 : 10] And why do I say that? It's because you need to proclaim as clearly as you can that you're following after Jesus. And baptism is the way that God outlines it in the scripture. That after salvation, we all have the same way to let everybody know that we are a believer.

Maybe it's to reach out to a friend this week and spend time in prayer asking for wisdom. And that's what I plan to do. I have a plan meeting tomorrow with a friend and I hope to meet with some other people. Because I don't want to just say these words.

I really want to go outside the camp. I want to know what that looks like for my life and for my family. And to reach people that nobody else is reaching. And to make sure that they know that Jesus Christ.

And I pray that you'll wrestle with it as well. Pray that you'll come to an altar and you'll say, God, I want the answer and if you'll give it to me. There's nothing in my toy box that's off limits to you. There's nothing in my life.

There's no type of person. Red, yellow, black and white, tax collector in his sight. Jesus loves all the children of this world. And whoever it is that you're unwilling to go to today, tell him, I will speak to that person.

[32 : 12] The one who has called you to follow him, he will tell you what steps to take. Listen to him and his word. Did he speak to you today? Do you know what steps you need to take?

Recognize God's love as a piano player comes. Recognize God's love for tax collectors and all those that are despised in our society. Homosexuals are despised in our society, but Jesus Christ died for them.

And how are we going to engage that as a church? We're not going to let go of the fact that that is not what God created and that's not what's best. But we're not going to run from that. We're going to find that. And if it isn't in your home right now, it is going to be in your family very soon.

Think about whatever it is. Whatever it is in your tax collectors, all those that are despised in our society. Recognize the power of the gospel to change any life. It is not in them being a good person.

It is not in Jesus coming around and just choosing a few people that can respond. The power of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. That when you teach the gospel with a weak voice in a living room, with a powerful voice on a street corner, or from the rooftop, it doesn't matter how you proclaim it.

[33 : 18] The power is in the gospel. These are the words of Christ that He uses to draw men to Him. Recognize the gospel demands and deserves a response.

Every one of you in here, the gospel demands a response from you today, and it deserves one. If you're an unbeliever in here today, you should not leave without doing what Lange did, which is raising your hand and going to a room and meeting Jesus Christ in the Scriptures.

Your testimony could be like Lange. I can't promise you'll dress as nice as Lange. That's optional, all right? But I can promise you the same Jesus that saved Lange will save anybody today that will call out to Him and confess that they're a sinner in need of a Savior.

So today we see Levi's response, and will anyone see your response this week? Levi's response was clear, and your response should be clear as well. And I ask you, will anybody see your response to the gospel this week?

It deserves it, and it demands it. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I come to you today, Lord, with a heart wanting to know how to go outside the camp, wanting to know, Lord, who is supposed to be at my table, Lord, wanting to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work in my life.

[34 : 34] And Father, I thank you because I do not feel alone. My brothers and sisters in this room, Lord, I know that they have the same love for you. And rather, Lord, they will come to the altar and pray, or if they're praying in their seat, Lord, I know that there's people wrestling with this question of who would you have us to beseech the day with the gospel, where this is not a game to us.

We do not want to just enjoy the comforts of this life, but we want to take the gospel where you would have us to take it. We want our tables filled with people that nobody thought was able to earn, that was worthy, but you died for them.

With every head bowed and every eye closed and some responding here and you in your seat, I want to beseech you in Christ's stead. Jesus Christ knew you completely. He knew the life you would live.

He knew the sins that you would commit. He knew everything about you when he went to the cross, and he endured the shame, being all alone there on the cross. He died in your place.

And in his love and goodness, he brought you here to a table of other people that have been changed by the gospel that are following him. And would you take that step today, and would you raise your hand as Lang did many years ago, and acknowledge the fact that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

[35 : 51] And if you'll raise your hand, I'll send somebody to you. They'll take you to another room, and they will share with you the Jesus of God's word. If that's you here today, and you're not able to raise your hand, in love, I'm going to pray that the Holy Spirit's conviction does not leave you, and that he continues to convict you, and that the invitation would remain open for you, that you would find somebody today before it's eternally too late.

Heavenly Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters in Christ. I pray that decisions right now will change the life of some other people, and will change the life of some people that will hear the gospel message because of the response to the gospel and these moments together.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, you continue to pray there in your seat. And then when you're done speaking with the Lord, you'll stand and sing with Stephen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.