

Not The Righteous, But Sinners

Group Study Guide
Gospel of Luke Series

Main text: Luke 5:27–32

In the story of Jesus calling Levi (Matthew) to follow him, we get to see a glimpse into the heart of God toward those who are far from him. Jesus initiates an invitation for Levi to follow him, then Jesus eats with him, and then after being criticized by the Pharisees, Jesus defends his actions with a clear statement of purpose: he has come to call sinners to repentance.

Questions:

- Levi was a tax collector, which meant that he would have chosen money over community acceptance and synagogue involvement. He would have been notorious for his corruption and for being a traitor. Who are the tax collectors of our day? Who would it be hard for you to sit next to in church?
- Jesus approaches Levi and asks him to become one of his followers. This would have been a great honor for Levi to be asked this by a rabbi, and Levi leaves everything to follow him. Have there been things that you've left behind to follow Jesus? Did it feel like an honor or like a sacrifice?
- Levi throws a party for Jesus. He invites tax collectors and others. The Pharisees get upset that Jesus is eating with tax collectors and they label the others "sinners." Have you ever been labeled by someone? Why are labels so harmful?
- Jesus doesn't defend against the label sinners, but instead flips it on its head by saying that sinners are the ones, rather than the righteous, that he's come to call to repentance. What do you make of the wideness of Jesus' call?
- Jesus calls sinners to repent. Discuss the meaning of repentance. What has this word meant to you personally?