

PP Summer in Galilee

The Call of Matthew Lk.5:27-32

(Stand to read Scripture)

Luke 5:27-32

²⁷ ***“After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.”***

²⁸ ***And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.***

²⁹ ***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.***

³⁰ ***And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”***

³¹ ***And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.***

³² ***I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”***

-----Pray-----

1) PP I Hate You:

There are some professions that are hard to love. There may be lovely Parking Wardens - and debt collectors who are wonderful human beings - but they'll have an uphill struggle to convince anyone of their good points.

Here MSN Money reveals 10 of the most hated professions - and why. Starting with #10

10. Bouncer

I'm not going to comment on this because I've never had the opportunity to be at a place that they were present or needed. I'm pretty naïve about this job.

9. Mechanic

For many people, a trip to the mechanic can be pretty stressful, especially when we don't know anything about fixing cars. This also puts us entirely in the hands of the mechanic, leaving them to treat us (and charge us) as they feel fit. You may just go in for an oil change, but there's a good chance you'll come out with a lot more than that.

8. Car salesperson

The old stereotype has been around since the first model went on the market. Whether you're buying new or used, there is nothing more annoying than having to deal with a money-starved salesperson who would sell you rust on wheels if it would make them money.

7. Paparazzi

Us normal folk tend to have a hard time feeling sorry for celebrities who flaunt all their money and fame, but sometimes the paparazzi take it too far. Even the most famous of people do deserve to be able to walk from their car to a restaurant or hotel without being blinded by hundreds of flashing cameras.

6. Parking wardens

Trying to find somewhere to park in any built up city is hard enough, without having to worry about whether you're allowed to park there and trying to figure out how much you should put in the meter. There's also that sinking feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when you head back to your car, wondering if you're going to find that pricey little ticket sitting on your windshield!

5. Dentist

Who really enjoys going to the dentist? Having teeth pulled, visiting the hygienist, having fillings: none of it constitutes a fun day out! Dentists take a bad rap, but if you ask my wife, she loves our dentist and can't wait to go and get her teeth cleaned.

4. Lawyer

In the 16th century one of Shakespeare's characters famously said: "Let's kill all the lawyers." More than 400 years later and lawyers are still not on the top of the popularity pile when it comes to professions. There are some great lawyers in the world but there are also many amoral, unethical and self-serving.

3. Politician

From the extreme to the stupid, politicians come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but one thing is certain, even the most noble of leaders can find themselves the brunt of much criticism.

2. Debt collector

Although it may not be the debt collector's fault that you're in debt, they're definitely the last people you want to see or hear from when you've hit hard times. And getting a call from one of them can fill you with a mixture of anxiety, hatred and fear.

1. Telemarketer

Whether they're peddling legitimate services or taking advantage of the elderly and the vulnerable, there's really never a good time to get "that call". In fact, telemarketing is so annoying that it has actually become illegal in some places. This apparent soulless person on the end of the phone inflicts you with a script that is clearly not written for a human audience.

There's the top 10 most hated professions.

One other poll I looked at: here are the top 5 of the most hated jobs, 1. Politician 2. Lawyer 3. Real estate Agent 4. Banker and 5. Police Officer

The thing I found interesting about this list is that all these positions are all represented in our church. And I find each one of these people full of integrity who love and serve our Lord

In Bible times a tax collector was the most hated profession

PP Question: "Why does the Bible speak so negatively about tax collectors?"

In every culture, in every part of history, from the tax collectors in ancient Israel to the IRS agents of today, the tax man has received more than his share of scorn and contempt. The New Testament reveals that the occupation of "tax collector" (or "[publican](#)") was scorned by most people.

The [Pharisees](#) communicated their disdain for tax collectors in this confrontation with Jesus. Here, Lord was eating a meal with "many tax collectors and sinners . . ." When the Pharisees noticed this, "they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?'" ([Mark 2:15-16](#)). A "sinner," to a Pharisee, was a Jew who did not follow the Law (plus the Pharisees' own rules). And a "tax collector" was considered a traitor to the Jewish people and their religion.

Jesus, also, used this opinion of tax collectors as an illustration of the final stage of church discipline: when a person is excommunicated, Jesus said to "treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector" ([Matthew 18:17](#)). In other words, the one excommunicated is to be considered an outsider and someone who needed to be evangelized.

There are a few reasons for the low view of tax collectors in the New Testament era. **First**, no one likes to pay money to the government, especially when the government is oppressive like the Romans were. Those who collected the taxes for such a government received the brunt of public displeasure.

Second, the tax collectors in the Bible were *Jews* who were working for the hated Romans. They were seen as turncoats, traitors to their own countrymen. Rather than fighting the Roman oppressors, the publicans were helping them—and filling their own pockets at the expense of their fellow Jews.

Third, it was commonly known that the tax collectors cheated the people. They could, and would collect more than required and keep the extra for themselves. Everyone understood that was how it worked. The tax-collector, Zacchaeus, in his confession to the Lord, talked his dishonesty (Luke 19:8).

Fourth, because they skimmed off the top, the tax collectors were well-to-do. This further separated them from the lower classes, who resented the injustice of having to support the publicans' lavish lifestyle. The tax collectors, ostracized as they were from society, formed their own clique, and this resulted to further separate them from the rest of society.

Given the low esteem people had for tax collectors, it is noteworthy to see that Jesus spent so much time with them.

PP Mark 2:15 ***“And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.”***

One thing I found very interesting is that the position of tax-collector was a job that you would bid on. And it was always the wealthy who would bid, because the taxes for each community would be paid to the Roman government in advance by the tax collector and he would then collect the taxes from the people and if he happened to collect a little extra, well, that was to his benefit. That's how they made their money was by charging extra on the tax bill.

2) **PP I Forgive and Heal You:**

Let's look at Matthew and speculate as to why he would just get up and leave everything when Jesus called him to follow Him.

- **PP He was rich and getting richer** as he would cheat the people while collecting the taxes, but found that that really didn't bring happiness or contentment to his soul.
- **PP What was he accomplishing** for the betterment of people around him except for selfish gain? It was a very lonely and thankless job.
- The fact that **PP everyone hating him** had to play havoc on his psyche.
- **PP He must have seen and heard about** all that this Man, Jesus, was doing in the region and was drawn to Him. He heard about the miracles and good He was doing.

So, when Jesus said, “Follow Me,” he jumped at the chance to experience love, acceptance, and forgiveness that can be found in following our Savior. Here was someone who loved and accepted him as he was.

That's the same for us. If you've been searching for true contentment and fulfillment in the world and all it's pleasure and fame, you'll never find it. It's only in following Christ and receiving HIS forgiveness. You won't find it in the world's system or in religion. It's only in a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior. In the story just before the call of Matthew where Jesus healed the paralytic, He says in

PP Luke 5:20 ***“And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”***

When people come to Jesus by “faith,” He forgives.

Don't you want to experience that forgiveness? Don't you desire to feel the love of our Savior in your life? Jesus said in

PP Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ ***Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

²⁹ ***Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

³⁰ ***For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.***

I would be failing you if we didn't talk about Jesus' response to the Pharisees and scribes when they accused Jesus of eating with "sinners and tax collectors:

PP Luke 5:31-32 ***"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."***

Some people, maybe even yourself, may feel that you are beyond God's forgiveness. That is the lie of the Devil and one that he uses to discourage you from giving your life to Christ. If God is the Author and Perfecter of our faith, do you think that there is anything that can keep you from His love and forgiveness? I know many people who felt that way, but came to faith and their life was changed radically.

PP ***Watch this short video about Billy Sunday.*******

Please make the decision today, as we never know when the end of our life will be and I don't want you to miss out on the peace you can experience in this life and the joys of eternal life.

The Pharisees saw tax collectors as enemies to be shunned. Jesus saw them as the spiritually sick and who needed to be healed. The Pharisees could only offer a list of rules to follow. Jesus offered forgiveness of sins and the hope of a new life. No wonder the publicans liked to spend time with Jesus:

PP Luke 15:1

"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him."

And tax collectors like Matthew were forgiven and transformed by the gospel and then left everything to follow the Lord.

Matthew was one of the tax collectors whom Jesus's forgiveness and mercy saved. When called by Jesus, he immediately left his tax collection booth and followed the Lord. **PP Matthew 9:9**

"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him."

He left behind the source of his riches; he left his position of security and comfort for traveling, hardship, and eventual martyrdom; he left his old life for a new life with Jesus.

You will notice that in our text, as Jesus is coming out from just healing the paralytic and sees "Levi" sitting in the tax booth. We know that Levi and Matthew are the same person, according to other references and the Book of Matthew itself states that Jesus came up to Matthew.

Why would he change his name? **PP** Levi means— "Joined or attached". It was the name of Jacob and Leah's third son and one of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was a common name back then. What was wrong with that name?

PP On the other hand, Matthew means— "Gift of God."

What was Levi "attached" to? His money and power, the lies and corruption.

By changing his name from Levi to Matthew, he was taking on a whole new focus and goal. I see the name change as a promotion. He was being detached from money and power and received the "gift of God". Matthew was not the Gift, but Christ forgiveness, love and mercy were.

3) PP I Follow You:

In verse 27 when Jesus said: "Follow Me", the text says that Matthew got up and "followed Him."

What does “following” Christ mean? It doesn’t mean that Matthew was sitting around waiting for Jesus to go on a stroll and he would join Him. No, it meant that he was watching where Jesus was heading and not only followed Him but also did what Jesus did and said what Jesus said. He began to believe what Jesus was teaching and in turn began teaching it himself to others.

When the Bible talks about following something, it implies that that something becomes an integral part of us and we do nothing other than what we are following after.

In other words; when we say we are following Jesus; we will do nothing except what He asks us to do. We begin to follow our Savior whole-heartedly. We follow hard after Christ and where He is leading us and taking us as individuals and collectively as a church, we will do it with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

We see in Matthew’s life that he started immediately to do God’s will. What did he do? **PP Luke 5:29 “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.”**

What was the purpose of that? He wanted to let all his friends know of the decision he just made. What a change Jesus had made in his life, he just couldn’t leave without showing his friends and family members what had happened to him and allow them the opportunity to make the same decision.

Think about that for a moment and ask yourself: What did I do or who did I tell about my experience with the Lord? Did I step up and be bold with my new found faith, or did I shy away from sharing it?

PP I was reading in **1 Thessalonians 2:1-2** How that Paul had boldness, but notice the 3 words after that: **“For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.”**

Matthew followed Jesus and it took him to many places in that region of the world. We are to, also, follow Jesus wherever it may take us.

How did Matthew die? **“Matthew preached in Ethiopia, Judea, Macedonia, Syria and Parthia (in northeast Iran). There are two versions of his death, the first being that he died a natural death but the second one says he angered a local king who ordered him nailed to a bed, covered his whole body with paper, brimstones, oil, asphalt and brushwood and set him on fire.”**

If you’re looking for a life and ease and comfort, you will NOT find it in following after the Lord. Look how He lived His life during the 3 years of ministry.

What did He tell those who wished to follow Him? **PP Matthew 8:19-22**

¹⁹ **“And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”** ²⁰ **And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”** ²¹ **Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”** ²² **And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”**

Let’s ask ourselves the tough question. 1, Am I truly born again? Do I and others see the fruit of that salvation? 2, Am I willing to follow after Jesus, wherever that may lead?