

Introduction:

- Tony Campolo an evangelist told how, upon arrival in Honolulu, he made his way unwittingly to a seedy part of town for a snack at 3:30 in the morning, to be surrounded by eight or nine prostitutes who had just taken the night off. He overheard the prostitute beside him saying to her girlfriend, “Tomorrow is my birthday,” but her friend rebutted, “So what do you want from me? You want me to get you a cake and sing, ‘Happy Birthday?’” The alarmed birthday girl protested, “Why do you have to be so mean? I was just telling you, that’s all. Why do you have to put me down? Why should you give me a birthday party now when I’ve never had a birthday party in my whole life?”
- When the prostitutes left, Campolo decided to decorate the place the next night and give the birthday girl a surprise party with the help of the bartender, who happily chipped in the cake. The next day, the stunned girl was so taken back when the whole bar sang a birthday song to her. She first refused to cut the cake, then asked if she could keep the cake a little longer and, finally, for some unknown reason, dashed home with the cake after promising to return with it later.
- Campolo offered to say a prayer for the woman before the stunned crowd, and after prayer, the bartender remarked, “Hey! You never told me you were a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to?” Campolo replied, “I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for hookers at 3:30. in the morning.” The bartender sneered, “No you don’t. There’s no church like that. If there was, I’d join it.” Levi the tax collector found one!
- Mt 9:9-13

I. Jesus Calls Sinners

- A. The commission given by Jesus in Mt 28:18-20 was go and make disciples. And know this: I will always be with you.
 1. He himself demonstrated that commission by going and making disciples.
 - a) It is what He did when He left heaven. Go Jesus, make disciples!
 - b) Mt 28:19 literally reads, “**Where ever you go, however you go, when ever you go...make disciples.**”
 - c) Jesus lived with the constant knowledge that the Father was with Him.
 2. This commission still stands for us today.
 - a) We too are to be going and we too are to be making disciples.
 - b) This happens most often in the context of “**Where ever you go, however you go, when ever you go...make disciples.**”
 - c) Let me put a ‘plug’ in for the small groups starting again soon. Discipleship happens best in small groups because people are sharing the journey of life tougher there. We all are living in that place *where ever, when ever and however*. I want to encourage you to sign up to lead a group or join one when they start again.
 3. Let’s watch Jesus do this.
- B. Mt 9:9 this is an interesting passage. All three Gospels record Jesus calling Matthew. Jesus called fishermen, zealots, etc, but the Gospels do not all record those callings.
 1. But when He called a tax collector to follow Him, He was ‘crossing’ a line. “*As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.*” (Matthew 9:9, NLT)
 2. Besides the Romans tax collectors were the most hated people by the Jews. Because they worked for the Romans and they were thieves that stole from fellow Jews. So when Jesus calls Levi/Matthew to follow him...this was shocking! This was “crossing” a line.

- C. We are all called to ‘go’ and in our going we are called to ‘call’ people.
1. What are we calling people to do?
 - a) Ultimately we are calling people to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives.
 - (1) He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.
 - (2) No man gets to the Father but through Him.
 - (3) He loves like no other person can love.
 - b) We are calling them out of spiritual death and into spiritual life. *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24, NLT) Note: Jesus says this to people who are already following Him.
 - c) We are calling them to step out of their past and into their future in Christ. Everywhere Jesus went he was calling people to Himself. The demoniac, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, Pilate.
 2. How do we call people into being followers of Jesus?
 - a) We use our voices. When Jesus called people. He literally called them to follow Him. We can do that. *“PATTERN YOURSELVES after me [follow my example], as I imitate and follow Christ (the Messiah).”* (1 Corinthians 11:1, AMP)
 - b) We use vision. He called them to a better life. Most people when they get saved still live the same life. They just live it differently...with LIFE! Jn 10:10 He called people to leave what they were behind and become what God created them to be. What most people do not understand is that every Christian has a past and every sinner has a future.
 - c) We use our lives. When we live abundant lives others see that and are drawn to it.
 - d) How did He do it? He literally spoke to sinners to follow Him. He motivated them out. He demonstrated what they could have.
 3. We have to call people to follow Jesus. With out voices, our lives, and with vision. And never forget that He is with us always while we are doing this!

II. Jesus Associated with Sinners

- A. It is one thing to call sinners but it is another thing to associate with sinners. One of the challenges of the church today in fulfilling the great commission is figuring out how to do it without getting ‘sucked’ into the world. *“Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?”*” (Matthew 9:10–11, NLT) Ie. Jabba the Hutt to bounty hunter.
1. I want to answer three questions by learning from Jesus, Matthew and the Pharisees.
 2. The questions are: How do I maintain my witness and yet connect with sinners? How can I a Christian be a friend of sinners? What is the danger of being a friend of sinners? As we learn from Jesus, Matthew and the Pharisees’ you will discover answers to these questions.
- B. Learning from Jesus
1. When Jesus associated with sinners He did it on his own terms. He had a purpose.
 - a) He did not go to Matthew’s house for the wine. He did not go because Matthew had a keg. He did not go because Matthew’s house because he had R rated movies and some cute girls. He did not go to Matthew’s house because Matthew’s mom did not care what they did online.
 - b) Jesus went to Matthews house because He was on a mission/purpose to make disciples. He had a purpose for being there. Your purpose gives you focus and your focus keeps you clean.

If your purpose is not to make disciples out of your sinful friends you probably should not be going to their party. Jesus was not going to Matthews to participate in their sin.

2. Jesus did not hang out with sinners by himself.
 - a) Jesus did not associate with sinners by himself. When you find Jesus associating with sinners you find Jesus with His friends/disciples. His friends were providing accountability...for Jesus and for what others may say.
 - b) When He was by himself, he went immediately to the mission. In 4-woman at the well. Jesus is by himself when a woman comes up and he immediately began to “call her’ to God, to life and out of death. Jesse Duplantis, “You have to embarrass sin before it embarrass’ you.”
 3. Jesus knew the effects of the power of love on a man’s heart. No one really cares about you until they know you care about them. Jesus genuinely cared about Matthew and about Matthew’s friends. That genuine heart opened the hearts of people separated from God to Jesus. Jesus was a friend of sinners.
 4. The company of Jesus makes change natural. When you watch Jesus life among people separated from God, he seems to make change a natural, easily occurring process.
- C. Learning from Matthew
1. Matthew has becomes a follower of Jesus. We do not know how long or short of a time passes before Matthew throws this party inviting all of his friends and Jesus. But he invites: many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners.
 - a) We have already touched on the tax collectors. These men were really hated by the Jews. But what are disreputable sinners? The word for disreputable sinner is word that has a very strong derogatory use. It is both an adjective and a noun implying very derogatory nuances. It is used by those living in a very conscious opposition to God’s will.
 2. Matthew loved tag teaming with Jesus! If we are going to reach lost people, we must partner with Jesus to do it. Working with Jesus to reach others is a supernatural undertaking.
 3. Matthew loved building bridges for Jesus and opening doors for his disreputable friends.
 - a) If you are going to reach people you have to build bridges of friendship not burn them.
 - b) If you are going to reach people you have to open doors of opportunity for friends to come in.
- D. Learning from Pharisees
1. What happens when you call a person ‘scum?’ Usually, it ends up in a fight with either fists or words. It certainly does not bring people together...unless they are gathering to jump you and break all of your Pharisaical bones.
 2. What we learn from the Pharisee’s is that they had a wrong understanding of holiness. They were dealing with the outside of person and not pursuing change on the inside. Jesus, on the other hand, was more concerned with the inside of a person. He knew that if you got the inside right the outside would follow suit.
 - a) Jesus knew His inside was right with God when He went to Matthew’s party. He knew that being with sinners would not defile who He was before God.
 - b) The Pharisee could never be a friend of sinners because they understood that if you associated with sinners you would defile yourself. We will never accomplish the mission of God with that understanding. It naturally drives people away from God.
 3. In Luke 7:37 Jesus is at another house, a Pharisee’s house and a party. A woman comes up behind and begins washing His feet with her tears and drying them with her hair and anoints them with fragrant oil. Here is what the host says, “... *“If this man were a prophet, he would*

know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!'" (Luke 7:39, NLT) The word sinner used here is our term disreputable sinner. It is a derogatory term. I love Jesus response! He looks at the woman and says to the Pharisee, "*Do you see this woman?*" He gives her dignity thereby calling her upwards to God!

- a) James 4:4 *a friend of the world is an enemy of God.* Was Jesus a friend of the world? NO! He was a friend of sinners! He did not go to the party to partake of what the world offers. He went to the party to love people separated from God.
- b) "*And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world.*" (Galatians 4:3, NLT)
- c) World refers to that which is alienated from God. God sent His Son into the world that we might be joined with Him in the age to come...Gk Aion!

III. Jesus Restores Sinners

- A. "*When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."*" (Matthew 9:12–13, NLT)
- B. What you see as scum I see as people. What you see determines if you can actually send the call.
- C. Mercy is shown in close proximity.
 1. "Father forgive them they do not know what they do." Roman "Truely this was the Son of God."
 2. Woman caught in adultery. Jesus, "Neither do I condemn you."
- D. When you people know you care, they will listen to your call.

Conclusion:

- After the war someone once asked President Abraham Lincoln why it was that he treated his enemies with such respect and kindness rather than trying to destroy them. "I destroy my enemy," said Lincoln, "when I make him my friend."
- In Luke 7:34 Jesus is accused of being a friend of sinners. Phileo is the word that is used. One who can be trust. One who is faithful. One who prefers others above himself. Can people who do not know Jesus say that about you.