

### I. Call to Worship

- A. Robert Robertson was probably last guy you'd expect to be in church
  - 1. Normally he'd be out with all his rowdy friends... actually he was
    - a. They decided to disrupt evangelistic meeting and big cause ruckus
    - b. This was 1750's and that what rowdy young men did to be rowdy
  - 2. Story is reminder that getting to church can be important... regardless
  - 3. People might have false motives, but God might something up sleeve
- B. God was at work that night; revival was preached by George Whitfield  
*(He was so eloquent that ladies would faint just to hear him pronounce "Mesopotamia")*
  - 1. Whitfield had his "A-game" that night; his message touched Robertson
    - a. It didn't just touch him; it changed his life— *rather Jesus changed it*
    - b. A few years later, Robertson wrote a hymn reflecting on that night  
*I was lost in utter darkness till you came and rescued me;  
I was bound by all my sin when You love came and set me free*
  - 2. Let's sing a slightly updated version of hymn— "*Come Thou Fount*"
    - a. It reminds us we've been rescued despite our sin & unworthiness
    - b. Knowing that, how can we not worship Him with all that we have?

### II. Introduction

- A. It's a great story; in day with security concerns, would it go differently?
  - 1. Man come to church very late— obviously homeless and drunk (or high)
    - a. He staggered all the way down to the front and sat down on floor
    - b. One of elders got up and walked to front; it was all very dramatic
      - 1) It was like the theme music to High Plains Drifter was playing
      - 2) When he got to front, the elder sat down on floor beside man
  - 2. If the church is to welcome strangers, we don't get to pick-n-choose
    - a. Most churches think they're friendly-n-welcoming... few really are
      - 1) Most of us are pretty selective who we give friendly welcome
      - 2) Jesus warns us about only greeting people like us (**Matt 5:47**)
    - b. If we're going to follow the example of Christ, that must change
    - c. That change will mean we go from comfortable to uncomfortable

B. We continue today with *Outcasts: Meeting Those that Jesus Met in Luke*

1. Luke has a particular interest in showing Jesus with outsiders
  - a. Luke is a Gentile; he spends the book of Acts on the Gentile mission
  - b. He focuses on lepers, women, poor, Samaritans... and tax collectors
2. Luke mentions tax collectors more than Matthew & Mark combined
  - a. All have today's story– call of Matthew and banquet that follows
  - b. Only Luke has Zacchaeus, parable of two prayers, “lost parables”
3. Rome basically sold franchises to collect taxes from certain areas
  - a. Tax collector was charged for the privilege of that tax franchise
  - b. What he collected over and above that amount was his profit
    - 1) The more he cover-charged, the more he was hated by people
    - 2) But more he was hated, he better he felt about over-charging
4. Tax collectors were outcasts, but were outcasts of their own making

### III. Tax Collectors and Sinners

A. Our story begins as Jesus calls a tax collector to follow (**Luke 5:27-28**)

1. Matthew calls himself “Matthew.” In Luke and Mark, He is “Levi”
  - a. People sometimes go by more than one than just one name, right?
  - b. Who is the guy that is the main apostle– the brother of Andrew
    - 1) Sometimes he’s Peter, sometimes Simon, sometimes Cephas
    - 2) Some people can have more than one name– Matthew Levi
2. More confusing than his name is how quickly his life seems to change
  - a. He’s sitting at his tax table and Jesus comes along, “*Follow me*”
    - 1) Luke says (only one), “*Levi got up, left everything and followed*”
    - 2) If that seems like it happened quick to you– *it did to him as well*
  - b. There is a sense in which Matthew Levi takes the biggest risk here
    - 1) Peter and his friends could go back to fishing (in fact, they do)
    - 2) Matthew is giving up his tax franchise in order to follow Jesus
    - 3) He didn’t literally leave money on table (*someone pays for party*)
  - c. When he walks away from table, he is walking away from his life!
3. What would go through your mind if walked away from your life?

B. Matthew Levi had no regrets; what he did have was a party (**Luke 5:29**)

1. He stepped into his new life as a disciple by throwing a party for Jesus
  - a. There were no regrets... and no respectable people present at party!
  - b. If you're a tax collector, only friends you have are tax collectors
    - 1) Maybe the dinner was a way to say good-bye to his old friends
    - 2) Or opposite, to introduce his old friends to his new friend Jesus?
  - c. Jesus clues us in later that he had something of reputation (**Lk 7:34**)
    - 1) John the Baptist ate bugs; people went to hear him in wilderness
    - 2) Jesus ate with everyone; we was known to spend time at parties
    - 3) He wasn't a snob; two verses later he eats at Simeon the Pharisee
  - d. Jesus reminds us of importance of table fellowship and relationships
  - e. Can we share gospel with people without sharing food and lives?
2. And a good time was had by all... until the party-poopers arrive (**5:30**)
  - a. What were the Pharisees and their scribes doing at the party?
    - 1) Party was likely in an open courtyard that's visible to public
    - 2) Later we'll meet "sinful woman" who pops up at Pharisee party
    - 3) She wasn't on the guest list; host was horrified Jesus interacts
  - b. Reason for throwing party was to impress community with guest list
3. Pharisees were shocked that Jesus was eating with tax collectors
  - a. They complain to disciples (*first time they are called "disciples"*)
    - 1) Why would anyone ever eat with tax collectors and sinners?
    - 2) Mishnah forbid any table fellowship with known sinful people
    - 3) Eat implied acceptance, acknowledgement, approval, agreement
  - b. **Remember:** Touch something/someone unclean– become unclean
  - c. The way to preserve your own holiness is stay away from sinners

C. Jesus interrupts by clarifying his mission to sinners (**Luke 5:31-32**)

1. Tony Ash suggests Jesus accepts responsibility and gives cover
  - a. Sick people need doctors; he didn't come to hang out with the holy
  - b. **Point:** There weren't any holy– just people who thought they were
    - 1) Tax collectors flocked to him because they recognized their need
    - 2) Pharisees? Not so much. But they needed saving just as much

2. Jesus didn't come to party with sinners; but to "*call them to repentance*"
  - a. The party was only a means to an end– it got him a hearing
  - b. He is very clear as to his mission, right. He calls us to repentance.
  - c. **Question:** Why didn't Pharisees already follow him as disciples?
    - 1) It's hard to repent if you're busy being proper and respectable!
    - 2) They didn't need to repent– they just needed to avoid sinners
  - d. It's a shame that none of this has any application to us, right?
    - 1) When he says sinners need to repent– that included Pharisees
    - 2) Problem: They didn't know they needed the doctor just as much

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. Leon Morris has this great quote in his commentary (Robert Munger)
 

*The church is the only fellowship in the world where the only requirement for membership is the absolute unworthiness of the candidate*

  1. We can't stand on our own respectability and hope to follow Jesus
    - a. To follow Jesus, we have to see our unworthiness and brokenness
    - b. But then we also must be willing to leave our old life at the table
  2. Means there are three things the church must remember "*at the table*"
    - a. **First**, we must first repent and leave our own sin at the table
    - b. **Second**, we must accept/receive sinners and outcasts at the table
      - 1) Jesus makes it clear He's there to call sinners, not please saints
      - 2) Somewhere along the line, church got that priority mixed up!
    - c. **Third**, we must call sinners to repent at table, not across trenches
- B. Song we're getting ready to sing reminds us that God uses broken things
  1. Ken Young uses the metaphor of dying family farms in West Texas
    - a. Family farms caught between changing climate and changing lives
    - b. The song is a prayer for the God to use the broken things of life
  2. Song isn't really about farming; it's about a God who recreates
    - a. He takes a tax collector and creates an apostle that writes gospel
    - b. He takes the Pharisee of Pharisees and creates apostle to Gentiles
    - c. He can takes the broken things of your life and make them new