

The Call of Matthew the Publican Luke 5:27-39

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon explores the calling of Matthew the Publican, emphasizing Jesus' mission to seek and save sinners and the transformative power of following Him.

Scripture: Luke 5:27

Topics: "Discipleship", "Reaching the Lost"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the transformative calling of Matthew the Publican, emphasizing Jesus' intentional choice to seek out Levi, a despised tax collector, and invite him to follow. The sermon highlights Matthew's immediate response to leave his lucrative but morally questionable profession, showcasing the radical change that comes from accepting Christ's invitation. Torrey discusses the significance of Jesus associating with sinners, challenging societal norms and religious criticisms, and illustrating that true goodness is found in reaching out to those in need of redemption. The message encourages believers to reflect on their own call to follow Jesus and to actively engage with those who are lost, just as Matthew did. Ultimately, the sermon underscores the joy and purpose found in discipleship and the importance of sharing the Gospel with others.

Transcript

(See also Matthew 9:9-17; Mark 2:13-22)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Calling a Publican, vv. 27, 28 To what place did Jesus go? (Mark 2:13.) For what purpose? (Mark 2:2, 13; John 1:43.) Why did Jesus seek Levi out? When Jesus came where Levi was, what did He do? What is the exact force of the word "beheld"? (See R. V.) Why was Jesus so interested in him? What was a publican? How were they commonly regarded by the Jews? (Matt. 5:46; 9:10; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31; Luke 18:11.) Would a self-respecting Jew take the office of publican? Of what must a Jew have an inordinate love before he would consent to take this office?

To what did the necessities of the business usually drive them? (Luke 3:13; 19:8.) What was the actual character of publicans? What was the publican doing as Jesus passed by? Why wasn't he with the throng that followed Jesus and hung upon His words? What was the result of Jesus' study of Levi? For what position did Jesus wish Levi? What was there about Levi that fitted him for the apostolate? (1 Cor. 1:27-29; Luke 7:42, 43; 2 Cor. 1:4.) What other name had Levi? (Matt. 9:9.)

For what was Levi to become best known in the Christian church? In what way had Levi's business fitted him to be the writer of one of the Gospels? What characteristics of Matthew's Gospel show the influence of his training as a publican? Was a publican a man who was likely to be imposed upon? Does that fact give any additional weight to Matthew's testimony to the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ? What was the invitation that Jesus extended to Levi? What did that invitation mean? (Luke 9:59, 60.)

What would the acceptance of the invitation involve? (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:57, 58; 18:22.) Of what is following Christ the indispensable condition? (Matt. 16:24; 10:38; 4:19; John 12:26.) What will be the result of following Jesus? (John 8:12; 12:26; Matt. 19:28.) In what sense are we today called to follow Jesus? (1 Pet. 2:20, 21.) What is our one calling no matter what others do? (John 21:22.) How did Levi receive the Saviour's invitation? Did it cost Levi anything to do that?

What was it so quickly transformed the keen money-getting publican that hadn't time to leave his business and follow the crowd that hung on Jesus' lips, to the devoted disciple that forsook all and followed Him? Are men who are sharp and successful in business matters usually easy to win for Christ? Have we any other instance of the same kind in this Gospel? (19:1-10.) What was it touched the heart of both Levi and Zaccheus? Did Levi wait to straighten up his business and get out of it what he had put in it before he obeyed Christ's summons?

When Jesus calls us to do a thing what is the thing to do? How long did Levi think upon Christ's invitation before he accepted it? How long ought we to think upon Christ's invitations before we accept them? Must we forsake everything we have in order to follow Christ? (Luke 18:22; 5:11; 9:59-62; Matt. 10:37; 2 Tim. 2:4; Luke 14:33, R. V.) Did Levi get as much as he gave up by forsaking all and following Jesus? (Matt. 19:27, 28; Phil. 3:7, 8.) 2. Eating with Sinners, v. 29 How did Levi show his appreciation of his new-found Master?

What was Levi's purpose in making that feast? Whom did he invite? (Matt. 9:10.) Why did he invite them? Would it be the proper thing today for one whom Jesus had found to invite his old sinful companions to come together to meet his Saviour? What about the means that Levi took to get them together? Did Levi get many of his old friends to come? Did Jesus like to associate with that sort of a crowd? Why? (Luke 19:10.) Ought a follower of Jesus today to associate with that sort of people?

How can we reconcile this with 2 Cor. 6:17 and 1 Cor. 5:11? What was Jesus' purpose in eating with these publicans and sinners? What definite purpose with regard to the ungodly must we have in our hearts if we are to associate with them safely? If we associate with them without this definite purpose in our hearts what will be the result? Into what channel did Jesus direct the conversation at Levi's feast? When we associate with the unsaved, into what channel ought we to endeavor to direct the conversation?

Is it always wise to begin on that subject at once? (John 4:7.) 3. Answering Critics, vv. 30-38 Did Jesus' action in this matter meet with universal approval? Were they respectable parties who criticized Him? What was their position? Can we expect that we will always meet with the approval of all respectable people and religious leaders if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus? Did the Pharisees utter their criticism aloud? Did they aim it directly at Jesus? Do men nowadays try to injure Christ by murmuring against His disciples?

What was the ground of criticism on the part of the scribes and Pharisees? Was this criticism upon Jesus' action made on other occasions? (7:34, 39; 15:1, 2; 19:7.) According to Pharisaic ideas how was the goodness to manifest itself? According to Christ's idea how will real goodness manifest itself? (vv. 31, 32;

Luke 19:10; Matt. 20:26-28.) Which conception of goodness is more popular, the Christian or the Pharisaic? What was Jesus' answer to the question and the carping criticism of the Pharisee?

According to this answer, in what light did He regard Himself? Where is it a physician's business to go? Is there any answer here to those who say: "I am too sinful to come to Christ," or: "I want to get better before I come to Christ"? What does Christ's answer imply as to those with whom He most delighted to associate? (Luke 15:4.) Whom did Jesus not come to call? Why not? Are there any such on earth? (Ro. 3:10; 1 John 1:8, 10.) Whom did Jesus come to call? Whom does that mean? (Ro. 3:23.)

What further criticism was made on Jesus' conduct, and that of His disciples (v. 33)? What was Jesus' answer to this criticism? What was the point of Jesus' answer? When is the time for Christ's disciples to fast? Is the Bridegroom away from us now? What does Jesus call Himself? Against what does Jesus warn them in verses 36-39? What is the new wine? What are the old wine skins? Are there any today who are trying to combine law and Gospel? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus

Seeks most the society of those who need Him most, reads men's thoughts, 30, 31; silences men's criticism, 31, 32, 33-38; has no use for righteous men, 32.

2. Jesus and Sinners

Jesus seeks sinners out: came to earth to find sinners, 32; sought them out diligently while here, 27; associated with sinners, 29; gazed into the hearts of sinners, 27; called sinners to repentance, 32; to fellowship, 27; to following, 27; transformed sinners into apostles, 27.

3. Levi

(1). What he was.

A publican, despised, degraded, loved money more than honor, too much immersed in money-getting to go to hear the great Prophet of his people, 27.

(2). What happened to him.

Sought out by Jesus, scrutinized by Jesus, called by Jesus, 27.

(3). What he did.

Listened to the call immediately, made no excuses, forsook everything for Jesus, followed Jesus, 28; made a feast for Jesus, brought others like himself to Jesus, 29.

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