

# The Doctor will see you now

Luke 5:27-32

---

## ILLUSTRATION

### Unshakable Faith

Have you ever made a commitment—or recommitment—to follow God and put him first in your life, only to find that life gets harder, not easier? Often our expectation is that God should bless us and make our lives easier when we give more, worship more, and serve more. While that does sometimes happen, it is not always the case. Sometimes a commitment to greater faith in Jesus leads to suffering and persecution (John 15:20). This was the case for Nokseng, the first Christian convert from a community in Meghalaya in India. According to P. P. Job, when Nokseng's tribe found he was a follower of Jesus, the village chief threatened to harm him if he did not renounce his faith. Nokseng responded by declaring, "I have decided to follow Jesus." Following the execution of his children, he continued, "Though no one joins me, still I will follow." This led to the execution of his wife. Finally, before his own death, Nokseng sang, "The world behind me, the cross before me." The unshakable faith of this new Christian in the face of persecution led to the chief's conversion to Christianity and became the foundation of the hymn "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" ("The Story Behind the Song 'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus,'" *Bibliatodo Reflection* [blog], August 21, 2022, <https://www.bibliatodo.com/En/christian-reflections/the-story-behind-the-song-i-have-decided-to-follow-jesus/>).

The words and traditional folk melody were adapted and organized into a hymn by: [1, 2, 3]

- **Sadhu Sundar Singh:** An Indian Christian missionary who is widely credited with putting the martyr's words to music.
- **Simon K. Marak:** An alternative tradition attributes the composition to this pastor from Jorhat, Assam.
- **William J. Reynolds:** An American hymnologist who discovered the song in an Australian collection and arranged the version widely published in 1959. [1, 2, 3, 4]

## PASSAGE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT INFORMATION

+5

The *publicani* were **private Roman contractors and tax farmers who bid on government contracts**. Originating primarily from the wealthy equestrian class, they collected provincial taxes, managed public works, and supplied the military. Their aggressive practices often led to extreme extortion and exploitation of provincial populations. [1, 2, 3, 4]

### How the System Worked

- **Bidding for Revenue:** The Roman Senate auctioned the right to collect taxes in the provinces. The highest bidding *publicanus* or financial syndicate paid a lump sum directly into the Roman treasury. [1, 2, 3]
- **The Profit Margin:** To recoup their costs and make a profit, the *publicani* collected taxes from the locals. Any amount collected above their initial bid was kept as profit. [1, 2]
- **Corporate Structure:** They often formed joint-stock companies, or *societates publicanorum*, pooling capital to manage massive territorial contracts. [1, 2]

### Responsibilities

- **Tax Collection:** Gathering tributes, port duties, tolls, and tithes.
- **Public Infrastructure:** Overseeing the construction and maintenance of roads, aqueducts, and public buildings.
- **State Operations:** Leasing and managing state-owned assets, such as salt mines and agricultural lands.
- **Military Logistics:** Providing food, armor, and supplies for Roman legions on the march. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

### Historical Impact

Because these private corporations were financially incentivized to maximize their collections, they became notorious for their ruthless extortion. This systemic greed is the historical reason "publicans" (the anglicized term) are frequently criticized in the New Testament of the Bible, where they are grouped together with "sinners" due to their exploitative nature. [1, 2, 3, 4]

To curb the widespread corruption and mistreatment of provincials, Roman emperors—starting notably with Augustus—began phasing out the *publicani* system in favor of salaried, state-controlled civil servants known as *procurators*

## 1 - THE CALL (VS. 27-28)

### EXPLAIN THE TEXT

1. THE CALL (VS. 27-28) 27 Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. A. He still sees/He still calls Matthew (Gift of God) was his Greek name and Levi was his Jewish name. Tax collector – Worked for Rome and was seen as a traitor. They would have been rejected by their families, but would've been seen as having rejected their family and nation for money. He would have been part of the Publicani (publicans). Oppressors of their people Can you imagine the responses from the other disciples? The fishermen would have been taxed by Levi (he would've been really excited about their great catch) Simon the Zealot - part of a political faction that actively sought to overthrow the Roman government. Would've hated tax collectors. Jesus specializes in tax booths Jesus Saw - "Jesus looked at him" a considered observation This Call was a display of grace 1 Cor 1:26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy [g] when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, [h] things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. Jesus doesn't call the worthy, He calls the willing 28 So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. B. "He saw" – The leper saw Jesus/Jesus touched and healed him, Jesus saw the faith of the men lowering down their friend/He forgave and healed the man, and now He sees Levi and calls him.

- i. What would it have cost Levi/Matthew to walk away from his career? Everything, literally everything.
- ii. He would be replaced by Rome in a heartbeat. The fishermen could always go back to their boats, Levi would never be able to go back.
- iii. But what did he gain in walking away? More than he could image. Matthew, though not able to go to synagogue, knew the Old Testament well. In fact, he quotes from it more the other three Gospel writers combined. It is interesting that Jesus didn't call Matthew for his accounting skills, the disciples wouldn't have trusted him. Judas had that job and their trust, unfortunately.

### ILLUSTRATION

## 2 - THE PARTY (VS.29-30)

### THE PARTY (VS.29-30)

29 Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with **Jesus as the guest of honor**. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them.

- This was a party meant to honor Jesus. The key is that Jesus would be honored there.
- Levi used his wealth to introduce his friends to Jesus
- Is the goal for our evangelistic outreaches to honor Jesus?
- Levi did what some of the other disciples did upon meeting Jesus, he invited his friends to meet Him.
- Tax collectors were on the same level (based on rabbinical writing) as murderers and robbers. They couldn't testify nor could they go to synagogue.
- Levi throws a party, not a Bible study or prayer meeting. He threw a party where Jesus was the guest of honor.
- "Grace produces parties, not pretense. Grace turns out people who are authentic, not perfect." Swindoll

30 But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?"

- Scribes at the doorway
- **Complained** - those who confer together secretly; of those who discontentedly complain
- They didn't complain directly to Jesus. They went to His disciples.
  - Cowardice always characterizes self-righteousness
- They kept on grumbling. Children of Israel in the wilderness.
- **Luke 15:1-2** Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. **2** This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!
- **1 Cor. 5:9-13** **9** When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. **10** But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. **11** I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a

drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. **12** It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. **13** God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

- You can't reach people with whom you have no contact.

Remember you are not the Savior, so there must be safeguards put up in our lives.

1. Know your limits and temptations as you go into the world
2. Keep a redemptive purpose or goal in mind as you go
3. Christ is our holiness
  - a. Store up His word in your heart & always pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit

## QUOTE

Be humble or you'll stumble.

D.L. Moody,

## APPLICATION

Has your faith made you more sociable toward the lost, or less?

## BIBLE PASSAGE

*Isaiah 26:5-6 (NIV)*

5: He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust.

6: Feet trample it down— the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor.

*Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

### 3 - Third Set of Verses

#### EXPLAIN THE TEXT

**31** Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.

- **Psalm 147:3** He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.
- **Isaiah 53:5** But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.
- Because He is still the Great Physician, the Church must remain a hospital, and our houses Hospitality ER's.

**32** I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

- **to Call - to invite** equivalent to **to rouse, summon**: to do something
- They (the religious ones) really loved when Jesus (and John the Baptist) called them sinners
- Called to change, called to repent - He is calling people out of their sin, not affirming it.
- **Matt 21:28-32** "But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.'<sup>29</sup> The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went anyway.<sup>30</sup> Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go.<sup>31</sup> "Which of the two obeyed his father?"They replied, "The first."Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. <sup>32</sup> For John the Baptist came and

showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.

**Revelation 3:17** You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

If you were diagnosed with a life threatening disease, you wouldn't refuse to go to the doctor because the waiting room is full of sick people.

## **APPLICATION**

Jesus came for the people who know they are sick, and the only thing keeping a person from Him is the illusion of being well.

The thing that disqualifies someone from the grace of Christ is not the depth of their sin, but rather the height of their self-estimation.

As a church, we don't want this place to become a refuge for the respectable. It needs to remain a hospital for the sick and our houses should be little hospitality centers.

## **BIBLE PASSAGE**

### ***1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV)***

15: Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

*Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

## **BIBLE PASSAGE**

### ***Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)***

6: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7: Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8: But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

*Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®  
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

## **CONCLUSION**

1. There is a standard of health (righteousness before God)
2. We have fallen short of it
3. There is a physician (Jesus)
4. He treats those who acknowledge that they are sick

His office is open 24 hrs a day and He is always on call.

Just like Levi, He sees you and is calling you. And just like Levi, it's time to leave the old life behind, throw a party where Jesus is the Honored guest, and follow Him.

## **COPYRIGHT**

Copyright © 2017 Sermonary