



## Preparing For His Coming - Part 2

### Jesus: "The Convicter"

**Luke 5:27-23**

**Westport Christian Church**

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*"After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.*

*The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:27-32)*

Centuries ago a number of workmen were seen dragging a great marble block into the city of Florence, Italy. It had come from the famous marble quarries of Carrara, and was intended to be made into a statue of a great Old Testament prophet.

But it contained imperfections, and when the great sculptor, Donatello saw it, he refused it at once. So, there it lay in the cathedral yard, a useless block. One day another sculptor caught sight of the flawed block. But as he examined it, there rose in his mind something of immense beauty, and he resolved to sculpt it.

For two years the artist worked feverishly on the work of art. Finally, on January 25, 1504, the greatest artist of the day assembled to see what he had made of the despised

and rejected block. Among them were Leonardo da Vinci, and Pietro Perugino, the teacher of Raphael.

As the veil dropped to the floor, the statue was met with a chorus of praise. It was a masterpiece! And the succeeding centuries have confirmed that judgement—Michelangelo's David is one of the great works of art the world has ever know. (Source Unknown)

Jesus saw in the flawed life of Levi the tax collector, a Matthew, the writer and evangelist. Jesus still sees men and women with His accomplished artist's eye today. Jesus sees within each one of us a masterpiece waiting to be chiseled out of flawed material.

Last week we saw that Jesus' purpose in coming was to seek and save the lost, but we must understand along with that, His purpose in coming was to convict us of our sins, so that we might come to Him to have those sins removed and replaced with His righteousness.

What is our reaction to Jesus, "The Convicter? Our first reaction should be to . . .

#### I. RECOGNIZE OUR SIN

*"There is none righteous, not even one."* Rom 3:10

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Rom 3:23

*"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."* Rom 5:12

From these verse and many more, we learn that there is not a person who has ever existed who has not sinned. I have sinned, you have sinned, our parents have sinned the pope has sinned, Billy Graham has sinned, everyone has sinned. The most godly person you have ever known or heard about, no matter how good they are, have sinned. The problem with sin is a universal one—"all have sinned."

The first action we must take in response to the conviction Jesus brings us is to recognize our state of sinfulness.

In our text we find there are some who take this all-important step and there are others who do not! Those who Jesus describes as "healthy" and "righteous" are those who have yet to recognize their state of sinfulness.

Now, those terms, "healthy" and "righteous" would usually be used to describe those who have it all together. But, in this case they are used to describe those who although they think they have it altogether, they do not.

The sickest and biggest sinners in this world are those people who refuse to recognize their own sinfulness. Sometimes they are religious people like the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law. Sometimes they are people who think they are above the law. Many times they are people who would describe themselves as "good, moral, law-abiding citizens."

The one thing all of these people have in common is that they believe that somehow they have either attained righteousness on their own, or they have no need for righteousness at all. In so many words, Jesus is saying, "I didn't come for people who aren't willing to recognize their sin—I'm here for those who know they're sinners and are ready to do something about it."

To come to Jesus we must first recognize that we are sick people in need of a cure—we are sinners in need of cleansing. Matthew did exactly that—he knew he was a sinner—he was willing to look deep down inside his heart and see that it was black with sin because of his rebellion against God.

Have you seriously looked at your heart lately? What do you see? If all you see is righteousness and goodness, you need to quit fooling yourself and recognize that you, just like everybody else have sinned and are in need of a cure.

Our second reaction to Jesus' conviction should be to

## II. RESPOND TO HIS CALL

Once we have recognized that we are sinners, we need to do something about it. And that "something" we need to do is follow Jesus, accept His offer of forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus said that He came to "call...sinners to repentance."

To "repent" means to change! To change your mind—to change your direction—to change your behavior. It means to quit following the sinful nature and begin to manifest the nature of Christ in your life. It means to kick the sin-man out the door and let the God-man in! It means to give possession of yourself to Jesus Christ and let Him take control. Jesus said that He was calling us to "repent."

There are only two responses to Jesus' invitation to repentance. The first possibility is rejection. This is seen in the response of the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law. The reason they rejected Jesus' invitation is because they had not yet recognized that they were, in fact, sinners! Instead of turning to the One who could save them, they placed themselves on the throne of their own righteousness and asked, "why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

They thought that they were too good for the people Jesus was keeping company with—they believed that they were holding to the high moral ground. But, through their rejection of Christ, they were proving that they were more immoral than the rest of the crowd.

The second possible response to Jesus' invitation is reception. This was the choice that Matthew made. Now, there are several things we can say about this tax-collector. We know his father's name was Alphaeus. He no doubt had skills of writing and record keeping. He was apparently well-versed in the Old Testament since the Gospel he wrote quotes more from it than any other gospel writer. He left a great position to follow Jesus. His occupation was one that offered a good income. We can surmise this because he was able to hold a banquet at his house. Matthew was willing to give it all—for Jesus.

What about you? Where do you find yourself? Are you still holding on to self? Do you like the idea that Jesus has come to save you, but your not sure about the Lord part? You see, I truly believe that is the problem with so many people today. They want Jesus to save them, but they are not hip on the Lord thing. One of the biggest problems that I see is there are those who want to hold the name, but don't want to join the family.

They want to say they are a Christian if it is in their advantage. They have this misconception in their mind that if they just say they are when they want to be, then they don't have to act like it when they don't want to be. That is actually called role playing. People have the concept if they just say this prayer a certain way then their saved. I know others who will tell you, "well I've been baptized," yet nothing of a Christ-like life exist in them.

Matthew knew and understood and totally sold out to Jesus. What's holding you back from surrendering **all** to Him?

Now after we recognized our sin and respond to Jesus' calling by being born again, we need to do something else. . .

### III. REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Do you know what is 750,000 miles long, reaches around the earth 30 times, and grows 20 miles longer each day? It is the line of people who are outside of Christ!

Those who have responded to Jesus' call are expected to reach out to others. In our text, Matthew held a banquet "for Jesus." I believe the purpose of this banquet was to introduce people to Jesus. To give them the opportunity to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.

Did you notice who Matthew invited? He invited people who needed to know Jesus. He invited sinners, those people who would be receptive to the gospel message. These are the people that Jesus came to save. If we want to bring people to Jesus, then we need to be looking for those who are looking for something. Let's not kid ourselves, people who are outside of Christ and His church are NOT going to be beating down the doors of this building trying to get in. They need for us to show them the way, but that can only happen when we build a relationship with them and they see we really care.

An artist, seeking to depict on canvas the meaning of evangelism, painted a storm at sea. Black clouds filled the sky. Illuminated by a flash of lightning, a little boat could be seen disintegrating under the pounding of the ocean. Men were struggling in the swirling waters, their anguished faces crying out for help. The only glimmer of hope appeared in the foreground of the painting, where a large rock protruded out of the water. There, clutching desperately with both hands, was one lone seaman. It was a moving scene. Looking at the painting, one could see in the tempest a symbol of mankind's hopeless condition. And, true to the Gospel, the only hope of salvation was "the Rock of Ages", a shelter in the time of storm.

But as the artist reflected upon his work, he realized that the painting did not accurately portray his subject. So, he discarded the canvas, & painted another. It was very similar to the first: the black clouds, the flashing lightning, the angry waters, the little boat crushed by the pounding waves, and the crew vainly struggling in the water. In the foreground the seaman was clutching the large rock for salvation. But, the artist made one change: the survivor was holding on with only one hand, and with the other hand he was reaching down to pull up a drowning friend.

That is the New Testament picture of evangelism—that hand reaching down to rescue the perishing. Until that hand is extended, there is no Gospel and there is no hope for the world.

Conclusion; Jesus the Convicter has given us three marvelous opportunities today. The opportunity to recognize our sin. The opportunity to respond to His call, to repent of our sins, confess Him not just as Savior, but as Lord as well. The opportunity to reach out to the lost world with the message of hope and salvation.

You and I need to take advantage of those opportunities if we are to be all that Jesus has created us to be.

AMEN