

#43

Good news

Good news: we will not go hungry

⁴ As he continued along, he saw Levi, Alphaeus' son, sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ Jesus sat down to eat at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples. Indeed, many of them had become his followers. ¹⁶ When some of the legal experts from among the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why is he eating with sinners and tax collectors?"

¹⁷ When Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to call righteous people, but sinners."

Thank you for wonderful Sunday last week. Thank you for the beautiful choir, for leading, for the words you have shared. I am very grateful. Thank you for your grace to me.



Today we have a celebration again. Today is the World Communion day. Think of all the people gather around the Lord's table. Think of all languages, all cultures and nations coming to receive Christ in their hearts and lives. Think of different kind of bread people are using, different kind of grape juice or other juice/ wine they will receive. But it there is a unity through all the differences and it is because of one God, one Savior. As we will join all the saints in heaven and on earth, let's prepare out hearts by opening to the word and the Spirit of God.

“As Jesus continued along, he saw Levi, Alphaeus's son, sitting at the kiosk for collecting taxes”. When Jesus walks along he sees. He might has agendas and plans but along the way he sees people. Sometimes I like just watch people. Just sit and watch people. But what I see and the reason I watch it is not the same as Jesus sees them. I just sit and watch. Jesus goes and sees. When Jesus sees the person he comes to it. He is not afraid to make contact, a relationship. Jesus comes to Levi, who was a tax collector.



Tax collectors were regarded as unclean by the Jewish rabbis on three counts: politically, because they were in the employment of the hated Roman occupation of Palestine; ceremonially, because their job brought them into constant contact with Gentiles; and morally, because they were almost always dishonest.

Are there people you would avoid not to talk? Maybe you see them, or maybe purposefully trying not see. Good sign, they are the ones God's wants you to meet. Jesus comes to the Levi. He says two words to him: "Follow me". Jesus invites Levi to become a follower. Invites him to become his disciple. I loves the cluster seminar we had. Ann Handschu talked a lot about disciple. She said, that disciple is who develops a mind of Christ. You follow Christ 24/7. The Bible study we started this week os all about that we would move from being fan of Christ and become followers. We love to hear about God, we cheer for Him. But after the game, the worship service we leave and we are not longer followers. We are fan just a short term. We never step up to follow, we sit and we cheer up for Jesus. Levi left where he was and followed Jesus.

What I like about this story is we have to see where they ended up. Yes, he followed Jesus, but where did they go?



“Jesus sat down to eat at Levi’s house”. They ended up at Levi’s home.

“Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples”. They ended up at the table eating. I am a little bit, maybe more than just a little bit amazed how much is all about food. Or I should say a priority for food. I know for sure nobody will go hungry if they will hang out with methodists. We had our charge conference last Sunday. Churches around this area shared the ministries they are involved. I am sure there were not even one church who would not have a food ministry. I find it fascinating. I love the food, very much, love sitting and eating with a good company. But for me is just so interesting that all gathering is mostly around the food. There is nothing wrong with that. It is actually nice, because I do not have to cook. But also I am thinking that we can use table as a bigger opportunities to share the gospel and expand our table to others.

Jesus was eating with many, many tax collectors and sinners. He purposefully chose to reach and eat with those who he supposed not to. Company around the table was different. I think Levi was so excited that he invited all his friends. There is joy in following Jesus. One thing for sure, we will not go hungry. But I think because Jesus knew, how much we love to eat, was always using that opportunity to point to something bigger. One, to be a follower of God means you are reaching and eating with those who need to meet and know Jesus. You eat not only with your family, your friends, but those, those ugly sinners. Mark writes: Indeed, many of them had become his followers. Indeed, when you eat with Jesus, you kind of become one of His followers.



Today as we celebrate World Communion Sunday, we are called to commune with Jesus. We are called to come to His table. We all seek communion, or fellowship of some sort, in the hope that it will bring us happiness and fulfillment. We all seek fulfillment somewhere, in something, whether it is positive or negative, healthy or not. Some people seek a kind of communion with their possessions. Others seek communion with themselves by relying on their own egos, reputation, or social status in the quest for ultimate satisfaction. Still, for others the way to try to make life complete is marked by professional success, hobbies, or another human being through friendship and love. We are created to fellowship, even if we like some time alone.

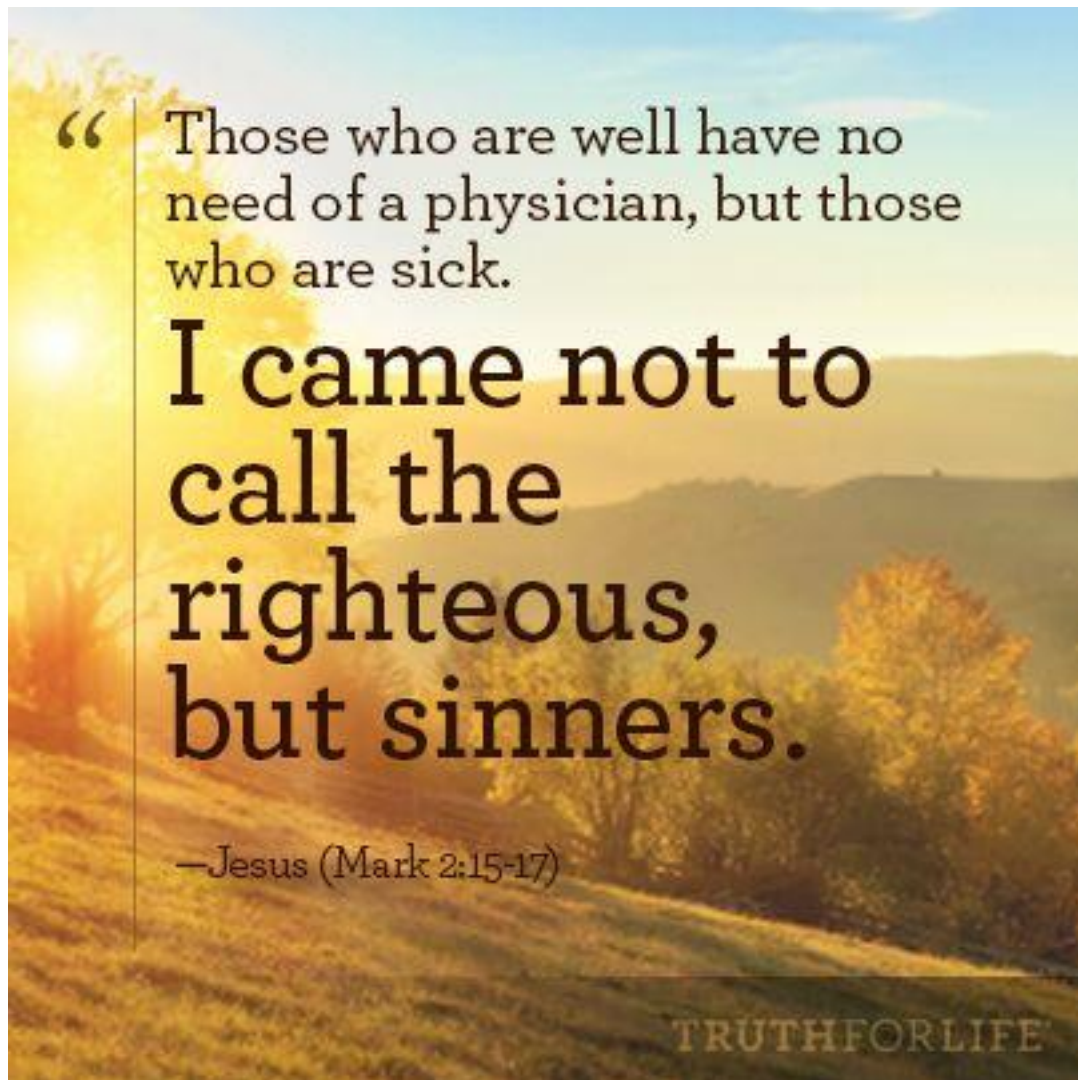
Today we come to the table. I say come purposefully, because we will do it differently. Sometimes when we do the same all the time, it can become just a tradition, just a religious action. But Holy Communion should always be very reflective, focusing, repentful and receiving. Today I invite you to come, if you can and may you coming forward would be a sign of your active faith, your walking would be remembering and renewing your faith. Jesus calls and we follow. We walk. Today make a walk to follow Jesus. May you every step be your commitment to follow Him. We have also prepared one Cup, as a sign that we are one, one body in this church and body with the whole world. Communion is when we come together, when we reconcile with each other and we commit to be one in Christ. If you can not do that for some reason, you are still welcome to come to the Table. We do have separate cups for you. May nothing will take you away from receiving what the Lord has prepared. It is a bread and juice. Yet this sacred meal is a gift of God that directly addresses the hunger of the human heart. What makes Holy Communion holy — set apart, special, and of God — is the spiritual nourishment that it provides through the work of the Holy Spirit in our ongoing relationship with God. Be open in faith, that Christ is present and is by taking bread and juice is coming into your life. To heal you, to be with you, to forgive you and give an eternal life.

Holy Communion is not first something that we do, but a divine doing that we experience, by faith, as we receive these gifts of God that draw us more deeply into the mystery of our redemption through Christ.

When Jesus ate with sinners, with those people, “some of the legal experts from among the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, “Why is he eating with sinners and tax collectors?” Why would you eat with those?

We've got to ask ourselves where we fit in the drama. Are we like Matthew Levi, or are we like the Pharisees, or are we like Jesus? Their attitudes are contrasted. Every one of us belongs somewhere. This is for you and me. Am I a follower of Jesus? Am I sitting to eat with the sinners? Or I am criticizing those who follow? Am I criticizing and trying to find a fault in Jesus words? In Jesus himself?

Jesus finally said: “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn’t come to call righteous people, but sinners.



“ Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

—Jesus (Mark 2:15-17)

TRUTHFORLIFE

Jesus comes to those who realize their sinfulness, who realize they need a Healer. All who believe, repent and are ready to follow Jesus are welcome to this table.