

The Gospel of Luke

A Call Unheard by the Righteous

Luke 5:27-32¹

Suggested Memory Verse: 2 Cor 9:6-7

1. Jesus Calls Levi the Tax Collector (vs.27-29)

A. The Situation of Levi's Call (v.27).

Levi, also called Matthew (cf. Matt 9:9; 10:3), was working in his tax booth somewhere between the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum (cf. Mark 2:1, 13) when Jesus called him to follow. While he is present in all of the activities of the apostles going forward, the only specific information about Levi as an individual is found in the accounts of his calling.

B. Levi's Personal Response (v.28)

Similar to how the apostles Jesus had already called, he responded by leaving his livelihood in order to follow Jesus (cf. Luke 5:11). The willingness to follow Jesus without reservation is the pattern of discipleship in the gospels (Luke 18:18ff).

C. Levi's Public Response (v.29)

Levi likely had acquired some wealth from his vocation, and once he responded to Jesus he chose to invite many of his former colleagues and acquaintances into his home to be personally introduced to Jesus as well.

2. The Pharisees Grumble at Jesus for Dining with Sinners (v.30)

The Pharisees were not happy that Jesus would seek out and welcome those who were seen as outcasts, renegades, and the unrighteous. They then not only wanted to know why Jesus was dining with them, but why His disciples were too (cf. Matt 9:11; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30).

3. Jesus Responds to Their Grumbling (vs.31-32)

Jesus makes it clear that He will associate with anyone who will hear His message. The message of Jesus Christ was, and is, for anyone who knows of his or her need for Jesus' forgiveness (cf. Luke 5:20-25). It was not, and still is not, for those people who put their trust in their own righteousness (Luke 18:9) and think that they have no need of repentance (cf. Luke 15:7).

¹ Parallel gospel accounts for this passage can be found in Matt 9:9-17 and Mark 2:14-22.