

## Sermon Outline November 4, 2012

### “New Wine, Wonderful Grace”

Luke 5:27-39

As wonderful, amazing and marvelous were Jesus’ great miracles of healing, his healing of the paralytic, telling him “Take up your bed and walk” etc.... NO LESS WONDERFUL were (and are) His stupendous miracles of GRACE! The conversion of Levi (the tax collector) is just one example of this. Paul (the converted persecutor) claims the title Chief of Sinners and becomes a chief of Saints! John Newton (the converted slave and slave trader) sings of the Amazing Grace; that saved a wretch like him! Note he not only sang that song but wrote it! Yet, Levi (the converted tax collector) who becomes Matthew (which means Gift of God) is not far behind either of them, both in pre-Christ sinfulness or in after-Christ grace!

#### I. What kind of man was Levi the tax collector?

Pastor Philip Ryken, Pastor at Tenth Presbyterian in Philadelphia says “He was a tax collector; in other words, he was a thieving sinner.”

I would probably add “he was a hated thieving sinner!”

1. Tax collectors were among the most hated people in Israel, and for good reason –
  - A. The Romans subcontracted the collection of taxes to the highest bidders – maximizing what they would collect!
  - B. Tax collectors attained great wealth because they were allowed by this system to take whatever additional money they could, for themselves!
  - C. As an Israelite, working for the dreaded occupying Roman Empire, and getting rich doing it, Levi, would have been considered a trader to his people.
2. Note too, when Jesus called him, he is actively plying this trade –

After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. Luke 5:27

- A. He was not a lazy slacker but he was a diligent thieving sinner!
- B. As Jesus caught Paul on the road to Damascus, in action,

persecuting the church ... Here he catches Levi, in action, cheating people out of their money!

#### II. Yet, be amazed at how QUICKLY and powerfully this wicked man is CONVERTED! The result of GREAT GRACE!

And He said to him, “Follow Me.”<sup>28</sup> So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

What happened to poor Levi?

1. He was one of those chosen by God, obviously by Jesus Christ –

A. Jesus said as much to all His disciples –

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you ... (John 15:16 NKJ)

B. Paul, inspired by God, tells us all of us who are believers were elected, chosen by God, even before the creation of the world –

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, (Ephesians 1:4 NKJ)

2. He was chosen by God to be “holy” and I believe he became this as well, he was converted, CHANGED –

Consider the words of Jesus were words Matthew (Levi’s new name) recorded –

NKJ Matthew 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup> Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: <sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. <sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. <sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. <sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. <sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. <sup>12</sup> “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:1-12 NKJ)

- A. His recording of this sermon differed slightly from Luke’s record of the same –<sup>20</sup> Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 NKJ)

Neither is wrong, Jesus probably said both things; or different people hear things others do not in a sermon but while Luke hears "blessed are you poor" Matthew, old Levi, who was, at the time of his conversion, a filthy rich tax collector WAS POOR in spirit!

He may have been rich in worldly wealth but he knew he was spiritual bankrupt! He mourned over his sins! He became pure in heart! His heart which was once totally FOR the riches of this world was changed, for he wrote, quoting Jesus –

<sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJ)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33 NKJ)

3. He also and it seems fairly immediately became an assistant evangelist to Jesus –

<sup>29</sup> Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. (Luke 5:29 NKJ)

This feast had a purpose –

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup> "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Luke 5:31-32 NKJ)

- A. The purpose was GRACE!
- B. The purpose was GREAT GRACE!
- C. Great grace is needed by GREAT SINNERS! Like Levi and his friends ...
- D. Great grace is appreciated by GREAT SINNERS! Like Levi and his friends ... Levi threw a PARTY!
- E. Yet, some people did not appreciate Jesus' great grace –

III. The scribes and Pharisees did not appreciate Jesus' GREAT GRACE, because they did not think themselves GREAT SINNERS –

And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" (Luke 5:30 NKJ)

1. Implication is the Scribes and Pharisees were not sinners, were they?
2. Jesus thought so –

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (Matthew 23:27 NKJ)

3. They were so self-righteous that they preferred their own dour religion to that of Christ's gracious happy gospel –

<sup>33</sup> Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" (Luke 5:33 NKJ)

- A. John's disciples fasted as preparatory to Christ coming
- B. The Pharisees fasted all the time to show off their supposed righteousness which was shown by "a sad countenance" –

<sup>16</sup> "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. (Matthew 6:16 NKJ)

IV. Jesus graciously corrects them with a wonderful illustration and parable –

<sup>34</sup> And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

<sup>36</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. <sup>37</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> "But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. <sup>39</sup> "And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" (Luke 5:34-39 NKJ)

1. There are times for joy and times for fasting - :35-36
2. The New WINE of Jesus' happy Gospel, most likely celebrated with wine at Levi's party will not be contained by the stale, unhappy, "we are superior", unbiblical wineskin religion of the scribes and Pharisees! Wineskins / old wine both = religion of Pharisees
3. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees ... don't let unbiblical convictions spoil your joy in Christ ...

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