

“Welcome – Extending Christ’s Embrace”
by Rev. John C. Tittle

Scripture Reading: Luke 5: 27-32 NRSVue

²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, “Follow me.” ²⁸ And he got up, left everything, and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ³¹ Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; ³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. Tax collectors were despised in Jesus’ day for being sold out to Rome and greedy. They were barred from entering synagogues. Who are our modern-day tax-collectors? In other words, who would Jesus hang out with today? Would you be willing to be seen with them and get to know them?
3. What did following Jesus involve for Levi (Matthew)?
4. What does it mean to repent?
5. What are some things we need to leave behind as we continue to follow Jesus?
6. Why do you think parties were such an important part of Jesus’s ministry in Luke’s gospel?
7. Why does Jesus have such a bad habit of hanging out with bad company?
8. Why do you think that the Pharisees struggled so much with Jesus’ friends?
9. Can you think of anyone that might not be happy that you are one of Jesus’ friends?
10. What kind of companions of Jesus do you have a hard time accepting?
11. What do you think of this statement: *We can’t have Jesus all to ourselves—“Jesus and me.” We have to accept Jesus’ friends along with Jesus and share him together.*
12. Jesus also seemed to have a habit of making friends of sinners and making enemies of saints. Why is that?
13. Why is it so easy to judge others and want to keep people out?
14. What do American Christians need to repent of?
15. Jesus said that he came to the sick and the lost. Do you think he came for you or for somebody else?
16. How does this passage challenge your present way of life and attitudes?