

Straight Talk Part 23
The Doctor and the Sick
Lk 5:27-32

At times, we all feel like we are misunderstood – and many times it is not a feeling, it's a reality

For example – Pastor tells congregation who ever gives the most in the offering would get to pick 3 hymns.....
Life is full of misunderstandings

And the truth is, it doesn't matter how diplomatic we might be, people are going to misunderstand us

Sometimes we are misunderstood because

- They have ulterior motives
- Of what we say
- Of what we are wearing
- Of who we are with
- Of the expression on our face
- Of the tone of our voice

There are so many things we can do that will cause people to misunderstand us

But take comfort in this, the Lord Jesus was the most misunderstood person to ever walk the earth

- Some purposely took what he said and tried to make something out of it
- Sometimes the crowd couldn't comprehend what he was saying

The people in Palestine during this time were divided into two groups

- The orthodox Jews who rigidly kept the law and all the man-made petty regulations that they added
- And the rest who didn't keep all the minute regulations

Because of the differences in these groups, the orthodox treated the others like second class citizens

How did they treat them?

- They scrupulously avoided their company
- They refused to do business with them
- They refused to give to them or receive anything from them
- They avoided an form of entertainment with them, including table fellowship

Jesus' association with the latter, especially with tax collectors and sinners, shocked the sensibilities of these orthodox Jews

In calling Matthew to be one of his disciples, Jesus picked one of the unlikeliest of men – a tax collector, who by profession was despised by the Jewish people

Lets look at

His Misunderstanding

This misunderstanding took place at the calling of Matthew

- Matthew was a tax collector – as you can imagine this did not make him the most popular man in town
- Some professions are like that –

- an undertaker is probably not someone you want to hang out with
 - you always feel like they are sizing you up for what size casket they you will need

Matthew was frowned upon because of his profession

1. The Jews fiercely hated tax collectors – Why?

- Because they hated being under Roman rule

- The Romans used the people from the country to collect taxes

- Many of them were dishonest – collecting more than they should

- Because they were working for the Romans they were hated and they were not allowed to enter the synagogue – their money was considered tainted

2. Tax collectors were placed in the same category as robbers and murders

So it would seem that Jesus, being a Jew, would not want to associate with a man of this caliber

Suppose you were invited to this social event

- All the ladies had their nice gowns and their beautiful hairdos

- All the men were wearing the best clothing

- You were there but you noticed over in the corner was a hobo that you knew well – he was so dirty you could smell him across the room

Would you walk away from all the well-to-do people and put your arm around him and tell him how good it was to have him
That is exactly what the Lord Jesus did – He went to this tax collector – showing us that He will reach out to anyone

Just because Matthew was a tax collector doesn't mean he was a thief – but just being a tax collector branded him as one of the bad ones

Isn't it a shame that sometimes

One crooked police officer can make all police officers look bad
One crooked politician can make all politicians look bad
One crooked doctor can make them all look bad
One crooked preacher can make them all look bad

Matthew might have been a good tax collector but he was branded with a bunch of crooks

From all the evidence in the scripture, Matthew was not a crooked tax collector

We never read that the Lord made him make restitution to anyone

Remember that was mentioned for Zacchaeus

Lets look at this situation with Matthew more closely

Jesus is walking and He comes across the tax booth that Matthew is manning

He sees Matthew and calls him to follow him

My question is: What does this calling mean?

Does it mean when you become a Christian you have to quit your job?

For some people the answer is yes

Matthew is being called into full-time service with Jesus

But that didn't mean he had to forsake his friends

Instead he wanted his old friends to meet his new friend

What did he do? (vs. 29)

Why throw a party?

To let his friends get to know Jesus

To celebrate his decision to follow Jesus

What better way to celebrate than to introduce your friends to Jesus?!

He saved you, and wouldn't it be wonderful if all of our friends were able to experience the gift of salvation

The religious leaders were taking note of the fact that Jesus was eating and drinking with the sinners and tax collectors (vs. 30)

Matthew was smart enough to realize that the call of Jesus wasn't a call to forsake his friends

So He threw a party so his friends could meet Jesus

How else could Jesus reach them unless He had a chance to make contact with them?

How many people do you spend time with that are not Christians?

We can't reach them if we have no contact with them

This doesn't mean that we should go hang with the fellows at the bar

But it does mean that we make contact at work or social gatherings with people

We don't want to destroy our testimony we want to use it to introduce people to Jesus

Now lets look at

His Message (vs. 31-32)

They misunderstood what He came for – but the Lord makes it clear as to why He came – He came to save sinners

Jesus wasn't hard hearted toward people, and neither should we be

Jesus did not look at lost people as the enemy, but as victims of the enemy

We need to look at every lost person we know as someone who needs Jesus

No matter what they have done or said to us in the past, we need to try to take Jesus to them

The church is not a hotel for the saints – it is a hospital for sinners who need Jesus

This parable is important in that it teaches us many things as Bible-believing church

1. It teaches us that the church today, like the Pharisees, is caught up in all kinds of things, but fails to realize He came to save sinners
2. It teaches us as a church, that if we are going to reach sinners, we need to be involved with people who don't know Jesus

I think about the prayer of Augustine

Lord Jesus, our Savior, let us now come to you: Our hearts are cold; warm them with your selfless love. Our hearts are sinful; cleanse them with your precious blood. Our hearts are weak; strength them with your joyous Spirit. Our hearts are empty; fill them with your divine presence. Lord Jesus, our hearts are yours; possess them always and only for yourself.