

The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent ~ Sunday, December 22, 2024

“Christmas According to Jesus ~ Invitation”

Luke 5:27-32

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:31)

These words were spoken in the context of a dinner party held by Levi, the tax collector, who responded personally to Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ to follow Him. And now, having been converted, in his great joy, Luke tells us that Levi invites Jesus to have dinner with a group of his fellow tax collectors in his home.

Tax collectors, in those days, were considered to be traitors for \_\_\_\_\_ with the Romans by collecting taxes from their own people on behalf of their oppressors. They were notorious for \_\_\_\_\_ and intimidation, for charging extra and keeping some for themselves. Their handling of Roman currency also made them ceremonially \_\_\_\_\_, which cut them off from the synagogue, which was the centre of Jewish community life.

This was seen as \_\_\_\_\_ by the Scribes and Pharisees, who were horrified that Jesus would not only enter the home of a tax collector, but also break bread with sinners.

Jesus responds to this criticism by explaining His \_\_\_\_\_ in coming into the world in the first place

Christmas happened so that Jesus could call sinners to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question #1:** \_\_\_\_\_?

Our reading from Luke’s gospel is also full of \_\_\_\_\_.

“He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth and He said to him, ‘Follow me.’” (Luke 5:27)

The invitation that’s at least implied in verse 29, when having come to Christ, and having been \_\_\_\_\_ forever by Christ, Levi now invites all his tax collector friends to a great banquet at his home.

The whole passage is building to the \_\_\_\_\_ invitation in verse 32 that, as it turns out, actually describes the very reason for Jesus’ birth on that first Christmas morning, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Jesus was born that day in Bethlehem, the Word was made flesh, the Light of the

World stepped down into dankness, to issue a call, an \_\_\_\_\_.

Christmas is all about God’s great invitation given to \_\_\_\_\_ in His Son Jesus.

And like all invitations, God’s great invitation requires an \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question #2:** \_\_\_\_\_?

Jesus doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ for a moment the characterization that the religious leaders make about the guests at the party that night in Levi’s home.

*Pharisee* =

The Pharisees sought to lead lives distinguished by strict \_\_\_\_\_ to all of the ritual and moral requirements of the laws and traditions of their fathers. They sought to be holy, devout, and pure in all things and an \_\_\_\_\_ to the rest of Judaism.

The Pharisees were correct in their \_\_\_\_\_ of the problem among all the guests at the party in Levi’s home. However, even though their diagnosis of the party goers was sound, their diagnosis of themselves was \_\_\_\_\_ inaccurate.

The Pharisees couldn’t have been more wrong about their condition and their \_\_\_\_\_ standing before God. Not only were they sick, but their disease was \_\_\_\_\_. Even though they outwardly obeyed all of the Law of Moses, they were still not as righteous as they claimed. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ Between their outward actions and what was in their \_\_\_\_\_.

Like the tax collectors at Levi’s party, they too were \_\_\_\_\_. However, the key difference between Levi and his friends and the Pharisees wasn’t their sin or their need of a Saviour. The key difference was their \_\_\_\_\_ of their sin and their need of a Saviour.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Jesus extends this call, this invitation He was born to make, to every single \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus came to extend a \_\_\_\_\_ call.

We all have need of His call, we have need of His \_\_\_\_\_, mercy, and forgiveness, because, guess what, we’re all sinners. We all make mistakes. We all do things that \_\_\_\_\_ us from God and from each other. Not one person here

this morning innocent or \_\_\_\_\_.

We can sometime be like the Pharisees. What I mean by that is, we look at the people around us—people like Levi and his friends—and we think that we're \_\_\_\_\_ than they are.

Its crucial that we understand this because in order to find a place among the guests, we have to \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus was born to extend the invitation of God to every sinner, but \_\_\_\_\_ to sinners.

It's not until we let go of our \_\_\_\_\_ and spiritual blindness; it's not until we acknowledge our \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus, it's not until we acknowledge that we're sinners in need of salvation, and turn to Jesus in faith, that we can \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of heaven.

**Question #3:** \_\_\_\_\_?

• **It's an invitation to \_\_\_\_\_.**

Repentance means to \_\_\_\_\_ the set of the mind, to turn one's self around and to go in a new, moral direction.

This involves doing the work in \_\_\_\_\_ that needs to be done; taking full \_\_\_\_\_ of the sinfulness of our sin, of the depth of our spiritual need, of our utter helplessness and \_\_\_\_\_.

The second part of repentance is we must turn to \_\_\_\_\_.

Sometimes as we begin to repent, and our \_\_\_\_\_ feels the sting of sin and brokenness so keenly, that we get so overcome by \_\_\_\_\_ that we stop there. We get lost in the weight of our sin and fail to turn to Jesus. We get stuck and our repentance is \_\_\_\_\_.

Repentance is a turning from sin and self to Christ and His grace and then, by His \_\_\_\_\_, to a life lived for His \_\_\_\_\_.

We need to stop \_\_\_\_\_ our sin, stop trivializing repentance in order to avoid ever feeling \_\_\_\_\_, on the one hand. And on the other hand, we need to make sure, as we begin to \_\_\_\_\_ our sin, that we know where to turn with it—to the One who says, "Follow Me.

This isn't a call to mere behaviour \_\_\_\_\_. It's a call to \_\_\_\_\_ with

Him and to a life that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, will increasingly \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

• **It's an invitation to \_\_\_\_\_.**

Jesus isn't referring to physical sickness here, but \_\_\_\_\_ sickness; the sickness of \_\_\_\_\_ in the sight of God, that leads to \_\_\_\_\_. We need to resist the temptation toward the \_\_\_\_\_ here, as though our main problem is that we're internally dysfunctional and Jesus has come to fix us. We need to go \_\_\_\_\_ than that.

Our main problem, the real disease of our soul, is that we've \_\_\_\_\_ the law of God, and we continue to do so by nature, habit, \_\_\_\_\_, preference, and choice, and we're desperately in need of His \_\_\_\_\_.

Even more than that, when we come to Jesus, He makes us a whole \_\_\_\_\_ creation!

• **It's an invitation to \_\_\_\_\_.**

The banquet he holds with all his tax collector friends is a celebration of joy that has \_\_\_\_\_ and what He's done at its heart.

There is, of course, a kind of \_\_\_\_\_ that ought to always to mark every follower of Jesus. A sorrow for what we see of our own \_\_\_\_\_ sin still festering in our heart, a sorrow for the many all around us who are \_\_\_\_\_ of the love of God in Christ, or who \_\_\_\_\_ His gracious invitation.

There should also always be this profound sense of \_\_\_\_\_ because we know, having come to the great Physician, He has made us \_\_\_\_\_, and now indeed, it is well with our souls!



The living God has come in person in Jesus Christ to invite you into \_\_\_\_\_ with Himself, a fellowship that will be utterly \_\_\_\_\_; that will make you \_\_\_\_\_ and be the spring of \_\_\_\_\_ in your heart that will well up forevermore.

In order to fully experience this joy, we need to get our \_\_\_\_\_ right. We need to know that we're sinners, in need of God's \_\_\_\_\_. We need to hear His voice calling us to follow Him. And we need to \_\_\_\_\_.



**God's invitation to you is the greatest invitation you'll receive this year.  
How are you going to respond?  
How will you RSVP this Christmas?**