**FIVE QUESTIONS EVERYONE SHOULD ANSWER**

Brentwood Campus | Summer Series 2023

When we adopted our current mission statement and vision frame, the leadership team made an important decision. While most churches measure “mission metrics” to gauge ministry effectiveness, we instead developed five questions that every growing disciple should be able to answer. We spend the month of July asking ourselves these important questions.

**July 23 | Who are the lost people you are praying for and having gospel conversations with?
Luke 5:27-32**

Philip went and told Nathanial. Andrew went and found Peter. Levi threw a party. Everyone has a best friend they have to tell their best news to. Each and every family at BBC can host a social (party) for Jesus and our friends. Luke describes how easy it is and what can be the outcome if we are obedient to introduce Jesus to our friends. If Jesus is the best thing that’s ever happened to you, then, who do you have to tell?

**INTRODUCTION**

*Who are the lost people you are praying for and having gospel conversations with?*

*What kind of social (party, banquet) can you host in which you can invite these friends, co-workers, neighbors, hobby enthusiasts?*

**(BBC offers Host Starter Kits to help you gather your friends for socials and Gospel conversations. Stop by the Welcome Center to pick up yours today.)\***

Jesus befriended tax collectors, and in His day, tax collectors were not highly thought of. Tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes for Rome, which was seen an oppressive regime to the Jews. Tax collectors collaborated with the enemy. On top of that, they had liberty from Caesar to collect above the required taxes so they could earn a living. So they were viewed as traitors and extortionists. Yet, Jesus took time to eat with them, and He even called Matthew from tax collecting to apostleship. Yes, the tax collectors had a bad reputation, and yes, much of it was earned. However, they were people in need of grace just like everyone else, and so Jesus ministered to them.

**UNDERSTANDING**

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 5:27-28.

*What is so surprising about these two verses?*

*What do you think led Levi to abandon everything so quickly to follow Jesus? What did Levi abandon besides his tax booth? What have you left behind in order to follow Jesus? Whatever it was, it could be a good conversation starter with a friend.*

Levi gave up his livelihood in order to follow Jesus. He left a life of easy money. Jesus was not fazed by the fact that Levi was a tax collector. He called Levi anyway, and Levi, also known as the Apostle Matthew (Matt. 9:9), would prove to be a faithful apostle. The religious leaders, who one would assume would be righteous and follow Christ, wound up rejecting Jesus.

We cannot tell how someone will respond to the invitation to follow Christ. If Levi the tax collector can find faith and repentance, then anyone can. Levi’s testimony is encouraging because it demonstrates that Jesus can save anyone, and it is convicting because he so quickly and willingly introduced his friends to Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 5:29-30.

*What was the first thing that Levi did after leaving everything to follow Jesus?*

*Who did Levi invite?*

*Who will you invite to your “banquet”?*

The first thing that a new believer ought to want to do is to share the good news with others. Levi did just this. After he left everything to follow Jesus, he threw a banquet for Him and invited all of his friends to sit and eat with Him. It is natural for us to try to reach our community, hobby, neighborhood, work-place, or family that God has put us in. For Levi, that was a community of tax collectors.

*Why do you think that the Pharisees and scribes complained? What were they assuming?*

The Pharisees and scribes had heard Jesus teach just as Levi had. They were following Jesus around, or else they could not have known that Jesus ate at Levi’s house. Despite hearing Jesus teach, they could not understand why Jesus would hang out with such “sinners.” They probably expected that the Messiah would shun such persons. Instead, Jesus ate and drank with them, which was a kind of friendship and fellowship that one might do with an equal.

Jesus did not despise anyone. Instead, He followed His own command of “just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them” (Luke 6:31). This allowed Him to spend time with great sinners, to show them love, and to call them to repentance.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 5:31-32.

Jesus did not come to save the righteous; He came to save sinners. Of course, we know that the Bible teaches us that “all have sinned and continue to fall short of God’s glory” (Rom. 3:23). We also know that “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10). Therefore, Jesus came for everyone, even the Pharisees and scribes who scoffed at Him eating with sinners. They were sinners, too. They needed Jesus’ grace as much as anyone, but because they thought they were righteous, they would not come to Him.

As Christians, we must know that no one is any better off or worse off than we are spiritually. We all need Jesus to be saved. Everyone needs Jesus, and they need to hear the gospel to be saved. We ought to all be looking for the opportunity to share the gospel with anyone we have an opportunity to share with. Who knows? It is not in our biblical role or expectation that they respond to our invitation to follow-Christ, that is his job. Our role is to share our story.

**APPLICATION**

Prayer and evangelism go hand-in-hand. In prayer, we cry out to God for the lost and searching around us. As we pray, the Spirit opens our eyes and ears to gospel conversation opportunities around us.

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*Consider attending a Gospel Conversation equipping opportunity.*

[*Share Anywhere online, self-paced study.*](https://brentwood.church/groups/group/?id=10591)

[*How to Share Your Faith article.*](https://s3.amazonaws.com/brentwood_uploads/GospelConvo_pro%2Btips_allcampuses.pdf)

[*Praying for Gospel Opportunities*](https://brentwood.church/sermons/praying-for-gospel-opportunities/) *sermon.*

[*3 Circles Evangelism Training videos*](https://www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles/)*.*

*Who is in your immediate sphere of influence that you could share the gospel with as Levi did?*

*Could you invite a coworker or friend to your home to build a better relationship with that person in order to show him or her what Christ has done for you?*

**PRAYER**

Close with a time of prayer. Begin by thanking Jesus for coming to save sinners by calling us to repentance. Ask the Lord to open our eyes to help us see those who need the gospel: friends, co-workers, neighbors, hobby enthusiasts?

Pray for one person in your life that you know needs to hear the gospel. Ask the Lord to open doors for you to share with them.

Ask the Lord to show you practical ways that you/your group can share the gospel with others.

**COMMENTARY**

Luke 5:27-32

5:27-28. One day Jesus encountered Levi. The rebel with a cause against religious power structures met the man who represented foreign power structure at its worse—a man whose profession was to collect money for the Romans. Luke took up the Markan call narrative refrain: Follow me (Mark 1:17). Levi showed how to join the proper power structure. He left everything he had—his profession, his profits, and his personal identity. He followed Jesus.

5:29-30. Following meant more than just wandering the countryside listening to Jesus teach and preach. Following meant using your influence and skills for Jesus. Levi left the tax table to invite people to the supper table. Following Jesus meant telling others what Jesus had done for him. The others were friends Levi had known for a long time—not new acquaintances formed for convenience and prosperity.

5:31-32. In typical Jewish teacher fashion, Jesus cited a proverb to emphasize his message. Wellness did not drive people to the doctor. Illness did. Jesus was the spiritual doctor. He came with a message of repentance. That message seemed misdirected. It did not save Israel and the Middle East, where political confusion reigned. It saved those religious leaders considered unworthy of God’s attention. Power began to reveal true positions in life. Who was sick? The tax collector’s friends, people willing to work for the Roman government and thus against Israel? Or religious leaders who knew more about God than God did? The title Righteous One given them by humans was the only title they would ever receive. Jesus picked out the lowest social positions as the positions through which he would work.