

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “FAITHFULLY RESPONDING TO JESUS’ CALL”

For individual study or group discussion

In today’s passage, Luke reports that Levi was a tax collector, one of the most despised people in his society. Not only did Levi collect taxes on behalf of Rome, the empire also gave him the authority to require additional taxes for personal lucre. As you can guess, greed incited many a publican to extract exorbitant levies from the inhabitants of cities in which they operated. Was it any wonder that tax collectors were so despised?

Opinions about taxes and those who gather them haven’t changed much. Maybe you’re familiar with the 1966 Beatle’s song *Taxman*. The lyrics probably would have resonated with the Jews under Roman rule: *“Let me tell you how it will be, there’s one for you, nineteen for me. ‘Cause I’m the taxman, yeah, I’m the taxman. Should five percent appear too small, be thankful I don’t take it all. ‘Cause I’m the taxman, yeah, I’m the taxman.”*

#### **We will be willing to leave everything (vv. 27-28).**

Enter Jesus onto the scene. Luke tells us he went out into the city of Capernaum and saw Levi, sitting at a tax booth. Jesus said two words to him, “Follow me.” And to our amazement, Levi left everything and followed Christ (cf. Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17).

- Jesus called Levi just as he called the four fishermen (Mark 1:16-20), with the simple command, “Follow me.” Note what all five men left behind. What are obstacles people face today when called to follow Jesus?

In the gospels, we repeatedly see Jesus ministering to those who are despised and marginalized by society. Theologian and pastor J.C. Ryle summarizes Jesus’ encounter with Levi this way: *“We must never despair of any one’s salvation, so long as he lives, after reading a case like this. We must never say of anyone that he is too wicked, or too hardened, or too worldly to become a Christian. No sins are too many, or too bad, to be forgiven. No heart is too hard or too worldly to be changed. He who called Levi still lives, and is the same that he was 1800 [2,000] years ago. With Christ nothing is impossible.”*<sup>1</sup>

- Revisit Luke 4:18-19, 43. What did Jesus state was his mission and purpose as he began his ministry? What implications do you think this might have for our ministry as a church to those who are despised by our society?
- Read Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; Luke 18:10-14. What heart attitude does one need in order to receive Christ?

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SPEAKER: Wil/Aaron

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 5:27-32

## Family Dinner Table

According to a 2019 survey in *MoneyWise* magazine, the most hated profession today in the US is that of a politician.<sup>3</sup>

You may be familiar with the name Chuck Colson, a political advisor to President Richard Nixon who fell from grace after being exposed for his part in the Watergate scandal. During Colson’s time in jail, he converted to Christianity. Changed by God’s grace and desiring to introduce other inmates to his transformative power, he started a ministry called Prison Fellowship International whose mission statement reads, *“Engaging the Christian community to pursue justice and healing in response to crime to the end that offenders are transformed, relationships are reconciled, and communities are restored.”*<sup>4</sup>

Like Levi, Colson wanted to share the good news of the gospel with fellow prisoners and tell them of the hope that comes from knowing Christ:

*“...all my achievements meant nothing in God’s economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure—that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation—being sent to prison—was the beginning of God’s greatest use of my life. Only when I lost everything I thought made Chuck Colson a great guy had I found the true self God intended me to be and the true purpose of my life. It is not what we do that matters, but what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn’t want our success; He wants us. He doesn’t demand our achievements; He demands our obedience. Victory comes through defeat; Healing through brokenness; Finding self through losing self.”*<sup>5</sup>

- As a family, discuss how the transformative power of Christ has caused you to want to share the good news with others.
- Find opportunities for your family to be more involved in outreach ministries. Go to [LMPC.org/volunteer](http://LMPC.org/volunteer) and sign up for one of many ways to share the gospel with those in need in your community.

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

City Church Manchester, Pastors Ralph  
Cunnington and Matt Waldock  
Trinity Church Manchester, Pastors Pete  
Evans and Malc Clark



**We will desire to bring other outsiders to Jesus (v. 29).**

Because Levi was transformed by Christ, Jesus' mission and purpose also became his. Therefore Levi called sinners to Jesus. He hosted a dinner party in order to introduce his friends to Jesus, but little did these guests realize that a greater feast was set before them in Levi's honored guest (John 6:41-51).

- In his commentary on Luke, J.C. Ryle states, *"A converted man will not wish to go alone to heaven...This feeling of Levi will always be the feeling of a true Christian. It may be safely asserted that there is no grace in the man who cares nothing about the salvation of his fellow men."*<sup>2</sup> Read Romans 12:9-21. What are the marks of a true Christian?

**We will readily accept His diagnosis (vv. 30-32).**

The Pharisees grumbled to the disciples when they saw Jesus eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners (v. 30). To which Jesus responds, *"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"* (vv. 31-32). But the self-righteous Pharisees thought of themselves as too holy to associate with sinners such as Levi and his friends. Unaware that they too were sick and in need of a physician to heal them, they continued in their blindness to the Messianic function of the Son of God.

- The Pharisees should have been well acquainted with the prophecies like that of Isaiah 65 in which the prophet describes the judgment of God on a self-righteous people and his promise of salvation through the Messiah. Read Isaiah 65:1-12 and compare to the Pharisees of Luke 5. Describe their sins as described by the prophet Isaiah.
- As you meditate on God's word this week, praise God that Jesus is a friend for sinners!

*Jesus! What a Friend for sinners! Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me, he, my Savior, makes me whole.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!*

<sup>1-2</sup> Ryle, J.C. Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels Vol II. Banner of Truth, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Whiteman, D. (2019, January 27). The most hated professions in America. MoneyWise. Retrieved January 18, 2022, from <https://moneywise.com/managing-money/employment/this-years-sleaziest-professionals>

<sup>4</sup> Profile, GuideStar. "Prison Fellowship International." Prison Fellowship International - GuideStar Profile, <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/51-0247185>

<sup>5</sup> Nikkel, Ron. "Chuck Colson: A Redemption Story." HuffPost 26 June 2012, [www.huffpost.com/entry/chuck-colson-redemption-story\\_b\\_1450214](http://www.huffpost.com/entry/chuck-colson-redemption-story_b_1450214)