

# *You Can Begin Again*

## **When You Let Go of Your Past**

Pastor Derwin L. Gray – October 22, 2017

1. Open in prayer.
2. Pastor Derwin said, "Your past can hold you hostage." What did he mean and why is this important?
3. Read Luke 5:27-32.
  - a. Levi (Matthew) was a tax collector. He was...
    - An enemy of Israel (because he collected taxes for King Herod and the Romans)
    - Corrupt
    - Driven by greed
    - Ostracized from religious and social events
  - b. Discuss what you've learned about Levi and why it's important.
  - c. Levi (Matthew) dealt with...
    - Guilt: I did it. I deserve the punishment I receive.
    - Shame: I am what I did.
    - How does living in guilt and shame negatively effect our lives?
4. Pastor Derwin said, "For a Jewish Rabbi to ask a tax collector to follow Him would have been scandalous!" Read Luke 5:27-28.
  - a. Pastor said, "What does 'Follow Me' mean? It means allegiance to learn from a rabbi, to become like the rabbi, and not to use the rabbi for your purposes."
    - Note: God the Holy Spirit, empowers the Life of Christ in us, to be conformed into the image of Christ. Our role is faith. Let God be God in our lives in all arenas of life.
    - Discuss the importance of what it means for Jesus to say "Follow Me"?
  - b. Read Psalm 25:8-11. Discuss this text.
5. Pastor Derwin said, "A receiver of grace invites others to experience the Giver of grace, Jesus." Read Luke 5:29. What insights do you gain from Levi's response to honor Jesus and invite tax collectors and sinners to the party?

6. Read Luke 5:30-32.

**Note:** Jesus ate with the socially and religiously outcast as a way of initiating a religious dialogue with them. They flocked to Him because He acted so different from the self-righteous rabbis and scribes. Eating was a special event in the ancient Near East which expressed friendship and acceptance. <sup>1</sup>

**Note: 5:30 "Pharisees"** These Pharisees were present at the dinner, but were not a part of the dinner. It seems unusual, but in the ancient world anyone could come and stand around the walls or look in the windows and participate in the conversation without being an official guest at the dinner. Apparently "the Pharisees" was another name for "the scribes," who were mentioned earlier in this context. They were a group of committed Jews who followed a particular tradition, affirming the oral tradition of the Jews (the Talmud). Notice that they confronted the disciples and not Jesus Himself. Jesus, by eating with these notorious sinners, was expressing fellowship and friendship. John the Baptist had come earlier as an ascetic and the Jewish leaders had rejected him; now they rejected Jesus, who came as a more social person (cf. 11:19; Luke 7:34). They even accused Jesus of being a "wine-bibber," which meant a "glutton" or "one who over-drinks." Quite often religious conservatism has an ugly and self-righteous side. <sup>2</sup>

- What insights do you gain from the text and background commentary?

**Soul-tattoo:** 1. Give Jesus your past 2. Invite the "Levis" of your life to your TC Home Group.

- Spend some in prayer giving Jesus your past (Read Romans 8:31). And pray for the "Levis" in your life to invite to your TC Home Group and to a weekend service.

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<sup>1</sup> Utley, R. J. (2004). The Gospel according to Luke (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 5:29). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

<sup>2</sup> Utley, R. J. (2004). The Gospel according to Luke (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 5:30). Marshall, TX: