

Read

Luke 5:27-32

Consider

In August, we are starting a new 5-week series called “Open Table” to explore the meal scenes in the gospel of Luke. We will focus on who Jesus ate with and how He interacted with people he was dining with.

Eating is an essential daily activity for human beings to gain nutrition and stay alive. Sometimes, we eat alone as it is a necessity; other times, we eat as a social activity that implicitly demonstrate the relationship among the people around the dining table. Jesus strategically ate with different kinds of people and some of those were not acceptable by the social and religious norms at that time. Luke 7:34 says “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’”

I encourage you to read slowly from the beginning of the gospel of Luke. In Chapters 1 and 2, Luke describes the narrative of birth of Jesus and his growing up. In Chapters 3 and 4, Luke wants the readers to know Jesus is the Messiah, anointed one by telling John the Baptist prepared the way for Him, the genealogy of Jesus, how Jesus was tested before the public ministry and what he did were prophesized in the Old Testament. As Jesus continued to teach, to cast out evil spirits and to heal, he became popular. In chapter 5:27-32, Jesus did a controversial thing. He went to a house of a tax collector, Levi, and to eat with him and his guests. At the end of the narrative, someone complained “Why do you we eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Tax collector was a person who was designated by the Romans government to collect tax from the Jews. The Jews viewed them greedy and wanted to keep a distance from them. This occupation was extremely unpopular, and no one wanted to be friends with them. Also, Jews did not eat with sinners at all as they wanted to be clean before God and wanted no part with the sinners. But Jesus ate with them, broke the cultural, religious, and social barriers. I am sure those tax collectors and “sinners” must feel the warmth from the wildly popular Jesus. Eating with someone indeed breaks barriers. Who are you eating with most of the time?

Pastor Julian

Pray

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us how to live a life worthy of calling. May the Spirit show us how to use our time and particularly our meals to connect and to build relationship with people who need to experience the love of God. I thank God for your love and reaching out to me when I still sinned against you. Thank you for your grace and love.

In Jesus' gracious name, I pray, Amen.

Diving Deeper

Schedule your summertime in the next 4 weeks to eat with people you would like to engage and demonstrate the love of God. (If COVID situation permitted)

When you are eating with family, how would you use this time to intentionally build relationship with one another in Christ?

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?