

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

FOR THE CITY – WEEK 3

What Kind of Church are We?

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, ²⁸ and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

²⁹ Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

³¹ Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

In this study, a recurring theme for us is to be a church that seeks the peace of the city.

What are the core practices that must be part of us?

We must be a community of welcome – that extends the invite to anyone and to everyone. Remember the theme song for the “Cheers” sitcom? Words that tell us “everyone knows your name and is glad you came.”

Jesus welcomed outsiders. He is accused of eating with the wrong people. “He welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

There is a difficulty here – we tend to be exclusive people, rather than inclusive people. It’s Us vs. Them.

Being on the wrong side of exclusion is painful.

Lives are changed when we are people that welcome.

Levi – (also known as Matthew) a lowly tax collector – hated by everybody! Jesus says to him, “Follow Me.” Levi leaves everything and follows Jesus.

Many are “just an invite away” from life with God.

Levi invites his friends to a banquet with Jesus. All are having a great time except for the Pharisees. THEY GRUMBLE!

The Pharisees always needed to be righteous, always sought to exclude the unrighteous,

Jesus calls us to repentance and heals us.

Three Things That Must Distinguish Us!

- 1) We have to go out of our way to welcome “outsiders.”

The Lost Coin - The Lost Sheep - The Lost Son (Prodigal)

- 2) We must recognize and repent of our tendency to exclude others.

Human tendency is to exclude, rather than include.

- 3) We must remember that Jesus’ welcome heals people.

We want to be part of the “inner ring.” Our greatest fear is being left out. Jesus welcomes us right where we are.

Jesus wants us - He wants them.

Are we stating it? Are we living it?