

Discussion Guide: The Social Outcasts

Opening Questions:

What is your favorite meal of all-time? What makes it so good?

What is it about sharing a meal that brings people together?

Looking at Scripture:

Read Luke 9:9-13. Over and over again in the Gospels we find Jesus calling the most unlikely of people to follow him. Why was Matthew so unlikely? Who in your life seems unlikely to be interested in Jesus or in connecting with you?

What is so significant about the fact that Jesus called Matthew? How does that change the way you label or view the people in your life?

As soon as Matthew leaves his tax booth to follow Jesus, we find them in one of the most safe and comforting spaces of our lives: the table. How was Matthew's table changed? What's so significant about this space?

The Pharisees confront the group at Matthew's house, concerned that a religious teacher like Jesus would be found eating with people of a different social status. Jesus responds, telling them to learn what it means to desire mercy, not sacrifice. In your own words, what was Jesus teaching the Pharisees?

Jesus also mentions to the Pharisees that he came for the sick, not the healthy. What does he mean? Don't the Pharisees need Jesus as much as anybody else?

Application Questions:

This week we discussed that **LIFE'S MORE ABOUT THE GUEST LIST THAN THE CHECK-LIST**. In other words, life with Jesus is more about the people at our table than the things we do to please God. Is this frustrating to you? Wouldn't life be easier if we just had to complete a checklist instead of loving messy people? Why?

Do you think seeking our own personal comfort is more natural than showing compassion? How does our own comfort keep us from living the life Jesus has called us to? How does reminding ourselves of the grace we've received help us love others well?

Jesus changed Matthew's table forever. Looking back at your life, what spaces of brokenness have been transformed into places of new life and restoration?

What does it look like to reach out to different people? For example, how would you approach your neighbor, or a stranger on the bus? What are some easy ways to connect with others?

What does the guest list of your life look like? Who is God nudging you to invite to your 'table' this week?

End your time together praying. Ask God to bring to mind moments of restoration in your life. Ask him to bless you with the courage that comes with living a compassionate life, and to remind you of the people in your life who haven't yet come to the table.