

I've Been Changed

Luke 5:27-32 – NIV - Jesus Calls Levi and Eats With Sinners

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."

True story during WW II - the military medical staff used a "color tagging" system to identify the extent of *soldier's injuries*.

***One color (red) = hopeless**; nothing they could do to save them; going to die

***Another color (blue) = their condition is questionable but hopeful.**

They'd make it if they got immediate medical attention

***Last color (green) = they are wounded but they'll make it whether they have medical attention or not.**

During one of the many battles -

- Because of the shortage of medical supplies
- Only injured soldiers in the **2nd (blue) category** were treated...
- Those that would make it **if they got immediate help**

One soldier by the **name of Lou** was badly hurt.

- He had been "**red tagged**" because he was **hopeless!**
- He was basically left to die in the field while others were being helped.

However, one nurse saw that he was **still alive** and thought **she'd make him as comfortable** as she could in his final moments and began talking to him.

- They talked and found out they were **both from Ohio**
- In a few minutes, **the compassion** within this nurse caused her to go **against the rules.....**
- She changed his **red tag** for a **blue** one so he'd get some help!

After months in the hospital, **Lou recovered** from his injuries

- He went on and married another nurse from the hospital
- Although he had only one leg, he lived **a full and happy life.**

All because one compassionate person was willing to break traditions and change his tag from "**helpless to hopeful**".

As I read this story, I thought of **the purpose of the church today!**

I thought about how many of us were hopelessly lost in sin –

- But someone took the time and **gave us attention**
- We're in church today because –
- Someone cared enough to change your **sin tag from red to blue!**

THE Bible is full of scripture that encourages the church

- To reach out and **save the lost**
- To restore the **backslidden**
- To go the **2nd mile**
- To do **whatever you have to do**
- To **save someone** from an **eternity in Hell.**

James 5:20 - NIV

²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Thank God for a **church** that took you in and **loved you!**

Thank God for a **preacher** that preached **the whole plan of salvation** to you.

Thank God for a **saint** that took time **to disciple you** and give you fellowship.

But most of all, **Thank you Jesus** for saving our souls!!!

Luke 5 – Text - We find Jesus making friends with a sinner, a publican named Levi.

- Levi had the usual reputation of cheating people while collecting taxes.
- Just like he did for many of us –
- **Jesus** looked past this **hopelessly sinful man**
- And saw **what he could become** and said to him –
- “Levi **I want you to follow me** and be a **Christian**”

They went to Levi’s house for some fellowship

- A bunch of **Levi’s unsaved family and friends** were there
- They started **complaining about the local church**
- Finding fault - **trying to justify their sinful lifestyle.**
- They were having **“roasted preacher”** for dinner
- Even with **Jesus sitting there!**

They looked at Jesus and wanted to know **why he was there?**

- **No one from the church** had ever had fellowship with them.
- **No one ever associated** with these sinners before...

Jesus answered them, “It is the sick who need a doctor, not those in good health.

- **My purpose is to invite sinners to turn from their sins...**
- **Not to spend time with those who think there already good enough!!!**

Here Jesus sat in the company of people that the Christian society had labeled as **hopeless!**

- They were the worst of sinners
- But Jesus broke all the rules and traditions
- **Jesus changed their tags from hopeless to hopeful!**

This man **Levi** was also known as **Matthew**

- Became one of **the greatest Apostles** that ever lived -
- He wrote the 1st Book in the Gospels; the Book of **Matthew.**

The purpose of the church is not -

- **To sit around and judge people as hopeless sinners**
- But to look at them and say -
- **“Jesus can help them if they get immediate help”**

Jesus can help them if I go against the norm and go out of my way and **win them to God.**

Matthew 5:41, 44 - NIV

⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and **pray for those who persecute you.**

Luke 14:23 - NIV

²³ “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’

Sin had “red tagged” your life but

Ephesians 2:12 - NIV

¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

- Eph. 2:12 was written for people that were **just like US...**
- **Having no hope** and without God in the world.
- **BUT NOW** you belong to Christ Jesus
- And though you were once far away from God
- **Now you** have been brought very near to HIM...
- Because of **what Jesus did for you** with his blood”

You use to be hopelessly lost in sin –

- But now God **made something beautiful** out of your life!!!
- God **washed away your past** in Jesus Name.....
- God **filled you with his Spirit** when **you became a new creature.**

Let's realize **our tags have been changed!!!**

- **Society wrote some of you off**
- **But God** changed you, delivered you, healed your spirit and saved your soul.

You went from **a red tag** –

- **(hopeless and going to die without God)**

To a blue tag –

- Someone that was questionable
- But would make it **if you got immediate help!!!!**

Today; you've got a green tag –

- **You're going to make it** no matter happens in your life.
- **Rooted and grounded** in God!

Ephesians 2:12-14 - NIV

¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

Romans 3:23 NIV - ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 NIV - ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God uses pastors and many saints down thru the years to help get others to glory.

Death, Hell and the grave were robbed of their victim!

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 NIV - ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

CLOSE:

But the real question..... is what kind of tag are you wearing?

One = rooted and grounded in faith; going to make it no matter what!

One = your condition is questionable and you've got hope if you get immediate attention?

One = seem hopelessly lost in sin and don't know if you'll ever make it?

There is a **God that changes tags**

Acts 2:38 NIV

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This world is a battle field for our soul

- But let's leave here today on the victorious side.
- Let Jesus change you right now!