



AROUND THE TABLE

January 22, 2017

read

Luke 5:27-32

The Common English Bible (emphasis added)

²⁷ Afterward, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.”

²⁸ Levi got up, left everything behind, and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their legal experts grumbled against his disciples. They said, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

³¹ Jesus answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. ³² I didn’t come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.”

pray

We are gathered at the table, Lord,
to share what you have provided.
For food,
for friends,
for your presence among us,
we give you thanks.
Amen.

read

Tim Chester in *A Meal with Jesus*:

Discovering Grace, Community & Mission around the Table
(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), p26

Grace can’t be integrated with self-righteousness and self-importance. It’s radically different, radically new...

Compare the old way with the new way. The new way is gracious rather than religious, inclusive rather than exclusive, welcoming rather than unwelcoming. It is characterized by feasting rather than fasting, rejoicing rather

than grumbling. It recognizes its need and finds hope in the Savior rather than feeling self-righteous and therefore rejecting the Savior.

Look at those two lists: gracious, inclusive, welcoming, feasting, rejoicing, and recognizing your need, compared with religious, exclusive, unwelcoming, fasting, grumbling, and self-righteous. Are you living as someone who belongs to the new way?

discuss

That wasn’t rhetorical: “Are you living as someone who belongs to the new way?” Are you gracious, inclusive, welcoming, feasting, rejoicing and recognizing your need for a Savior? *OR*, are you religiously dogmatic, exclusive, unwelcoming, fasting, grumbling, and self-righteous? Be honest.

The Pharisees believed that coming into contact with an “unclean” person would make them “unclean.” Jesus challenges that and says that he has come for “the sick,” to come alongside “sinners to change their hearts and lives” (Luke 5:32). Do you think more like a Pharisee? believing that being around “unclean” people will make you “unclean”? *OR* do you live like Jesus? Not afraid to be among “the sick” so that they might find salvation and be healed? How does the company you keep at the table speak to your beliefs?

God’s grace is scandalous. “God is indiscriminate. He chooses all the wrong sorts of people. He invites everyone to his great party. He invites the best and the worst, the highest and the lowest” (Chester, p32). When was the last time you participated in the scandal? How might you live and build upon the scandal of God’s grace—a grace that reaches out to and embraces all people?