

A Conversion, A Celebration & A Clinician!

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 I moved our Communion** from this morn to Wed. Join Romulo & I, *Wed 7pm*, for a time of extended worship & communion. [Goal? A personal *love fest* w/your Savior]
- B. **Slide#3 Justice Matters:** Only 13 days away! Get Signed up in *info booth* today. [read workshops]
- C. **Slide#4 Divorce Care:** We have our next Divorce Care program starting up tomorrow night 6:30pm.
 - 1. **DC:** 13 week faith based support group program. [folks don't need to attend CM]
 - a) Addresses anger, depression, children, finances, loneliness, forgiveness, etc.
 - b) *Weekly video series (New & Updated)* & discussion groups. And, *new* workbooks.
 - 2. **DC4K:** Ages 5-12. Combines *games, crafts, activities, music & video's* to help children cope w/their situation.
 - 3. **Teen program:** 13 & up. Deals w/the difficulties teenagers often experience.
 - 4. *Rick & Lorraine DeLeon are in info booth.*
- D. **Slide#5 John & Lisa:** Directors of our Machaca Camp in Belize. **4 Things:**
 - 1. **Discipleship:** speak to the ministry you offer. Parents of seniors.
 - a) *You start?* Usually Jan. *Opening* April/May? *How long?* 1 yr.
 - 2. **Hwy 62** (Is.62:10 *Prepare the way for the people; Build up, Build up the highway!*)
 - a) 2 Yr plan. Expensive on families. How can we as a body help you with this? (sponsorships thru businesses; raise funds; CM its our ministry CM!)
 - 3. **Warrior Week:** Opening up for the 1st time? (1 week) [survival skills, PT, B.S., Outside!]
 - 4. **Staff Opportunities:** ?

II. Slide#6 **Intro:**

- A. **Outline: A Conversion; A Celebration; & A Clinician!**
- B. Read Jason's Mower story:
- C. Slowly *the synagogue door* was **closing** on Jesus.
 - 1. The guardian's of Jewish Orthodoxy was *declaring war* on Him.
 - 2. *So...to the seaside He goes.* Open air, fresh breeze, short walk...let's join Jesus on the shore of Galilee, in Capernaum.

III. Slide#7 **A CONVERSION! (13,14) An Invitation to Follow!**

A. BACKDROP!

- B. **Tax Collector** – We have many tax collector jokes.
 - 1. *Slide#8a A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.*

2. **Slide#8b** In order to simplify tax collections in the near future the IRS will issue a new easier to use tax form.
 1. How much money did you make this year? _____
 2. SEND IT IN
3. **Slide#8c** IRS agent to taxpayer: "I'm afraid we can't allow you to deduct last year's tax as a bad investment."
4. **Slide#9** *IRS - Be audit you can be*
 - a) Today we make jokes, but in biblical times...they were **Hated!**
- C. **Tax office** – This was a **tax station** in Capernaum on an important trade route. **Tax collectors** were also used to **excise taxes for port duties & fishing tolls**.
 1. **Slide#10** **map** Traveling from the Roman province to the N/E the 1st town a traveler would come to was Capernaum(see **blue arrow**). Thus the tax office was placed on this busy thoroughfare.
 - a) 2 main roads: **Via Maris**(in purple), **King's Highway** (in red). [The imp land bridge between Europe & Africa] All traffic must go through here. It was 1 of the great roads of the world! ["Via Maris" is Latin and means "*the Way of the Sea*" from Mt 4:15]
- D. **The Romans collected their taxes through a system called "Tax Farming"** (like our *Franchises* today)
 1. They **assessed** a tax figure, **then** sold the right to **collect taxes** to the highest bidder.
- E. **There were 2 kinds of taxes in those days: Stated Taxes & other Duties**.
 1. **Slide#11** **Stated Taxes** – **Poll Tax** (all men 14-65, women 12-65 had to pay just for being alive); **Ground Tax** (1/10th of all grain; & 1/5th all wine/oil produced); **also** there was a **Tax on fish** (which is what Capernaum was famous for); **Income Tax** (1% of one's annual income).
 2. **Duties** – Here was the most opportunity for **abuse**.
 - a) These were taxes for: using roads, harbor docks, sales tax, import/export duties.
A Tax was even paid on a cart...each wheel was taxed!
 3. If you didn't have the money to pay NO PROBLEM!...they also **loaned money...at an exorbitant rate!** (*today we call them credit cards*)
 4. They were "Trained Extortionists"!
 - a) Barclay said, "So rare was honesty in the profession that a Roman writer said he once saw a **monument** to an honest Tax collector!"
 5. **Slide#12,13**The **Jewish** tax collectors were most despised(as Daffy Duck wud say **despicable!**)
 - a) **These Jews** couldn't serve as a judge or a witness in a court session.
 - b) They were **excommunicated** from the synagogues!
- F. All of this made Jesus' dealing w/Levi, the tax collector **incredible!!!**
 1. **Yet**, didn't this become one of Jesus' **trademarks** in His ministry?

2. Saving such individuals like: **Mary Magdalene** (7 demons); **Zacchaeus** (another tax guy); **The adulterous woman** that was brought to him; **The 5 time divorcee** at the well. **Oh & You & I.**

G. (14a) **As He passed by** – Even as he is walking along He was looking for opportunities!

1. **Jesus was never off duty!**
 - a) Lord, help us to **look** for men/women who need **You...as we walk!**
2. And Jesus wanted the man...no one else wanted! :)

H. **Mark** says, **He saw Levi** - **Luke** states, *He saw a tax collector*; **Matthew** says of himself, *He saw a man*.

1. **Levi was a well hated man.** Jesus you want a **Tax Collector** as a disciple???
2. When “*low-life Levi*” got **saved**, do you think that many said, “he won’t last”?
 - a) Did anyone doubt whether **you’d** last as a Christian?
3. **Levi** received a name change to **Matthew**...“*Gift of God*”!

4. Centuries ago a number of workmen were seen dragging a great marble block into the city of Florence, Italy. It had come from the famous marble quarry of Carrara, & was intended to be made into a statue of a **great OT prophet**. But it contained *imperfections*, & when the great sculptor Donatello saw it, he refused it at once. **So** there it lay in the cathedral yard, a *useless* block. **1 day another sculptor caught sight of the flawed block.** But as he examined it, there rose in his mind something of immense **beauty**, & he resolved to sculpt it. For 2 years the artist worked feverishly on the work of art. **Finally**, on Jan.25, 1504, the greatest artists of the day assembled to see what he had made of the despised & rejected block. Among them were **Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, & Pietro Perugino**, the teacher of **Raphael**. As the veil dropped to the floor, the statue was met w/a chorus of praise. **It was a masterpiece!**

Slide#14 Michelangelo’s David is 1 of the greatest works of art the world has ever known.

- a) Jesus saw in the **flawed life** of **Levi...a Matthew!** (writer/evangelist)
- b) Jesus sees in **us** what no one else sees!
- c) Jesus wanted the man **no one else wanted!**

I. **Slide#15,16 He arose & followed him** – Luke adds, *So he left all*, rose up, & followed Him.

1. This was 100% commitment!
 - a) Remember the Chicken & the Pig walking by a restaurant & noticed a charity was going on, serving Bacon & Egg breakfast. The **Chicken** said, “let’s go in & **give** to the charity”. The **Pig** said, “No way! For you it’s only a *contribution*, but for me it’s a **commitment!!!**”
2. **Matthew gave up all!**
 - a) James & John, Peter & Andrew could always go back to fishin...*as they did later!*
 - (1) **But not Matthew, he burned his bridges completely!** Walking away, he would never get it back.

- (2) Yet, some time in *every life* there comes *the moment to decide!*
3. Matthew staked everything on Christ!
 - a) *God never goes back on the man who stakes his all on Him!*
 4. Matthew received clean hands, a mind at rest, & a new name.
 - a) Now he could look people in the face.
 5. Matthew left everything...**except his pen!!!**
 - a) Writing one of the most important documents of all time! *The Jesus' Story.*

IV. Slide#17 **A CELEBRATION! (15,16) An Invitation to Dinner!**

- A. (15) **So, Levi throws Him a party!** (Lk.5:29)
1. And Jesus throws down *the gauntlet of defiance*...and goes! (Barclay)
 - a) Slide#18,19 And weird, the *outcast of society* seemed to be comfortable around Jesus.
 - (1) Note: Picture is strange/shocking...but its supposed to be!
 - b) You'd think they'd feel like *a porcupine in the middle of a bunch of kittens*....but that wasn't the case.
 2. **New believers**, there's no finer time to win others for Christ as there is when you 1st get saved!
 3. There is the natural response of a truly regenerated soul!...**To honor Christ!**
 4. Lk.15:32[NIV] **But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.**
- B. Have you become *too good* to dine w/your pagan family members or friends? (If so, who are you more like in our story?)
1. **But**, my uncle **Larry the lush** will be there. My aunt **sleazy Sally** & cousin **Carl the cusser** are coming. **Not to mention, bad mouth brother Bob & cigarette Sue.**
 - a) Surely I shouldn't subject my children to that!
 - b) **Or, join the real world!**...& teach your children through it (there is a line of course!)
 2. Slide#20 Remember, the Christian's life is **not one of isolation, nor assimilation, but Mission!**
- C. We would never see ourselves as Pharisees but the question is, do we **act** like them?
1. We seem to arrange our lives so that we are with non-believers as little as possible!
 - a) We attend Christian bible studies where almost everyone is Christian, we play sports with Christians, eat dinner w/Christians, go to Christians doctors, call Christian plumbers, & even take our pets to Christian vets!
 - b) We are to "*keep the faith*", but not from others!
 2. Listen carefully to Jesus' prayer, **My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.** Jn.17:15(niv)

- a) **Not** to **remove them** from danger/opposition **but** to **preserve them** in the midst of conflict!
- b) **Like** Daniel in Babylon; **or** the saints in Caesar's household. (Phil.4:22)
- 3. History records that when Oliver Cromwell ruled England, the nation experienced a crisis: They ran out of silver & could not mint any coins. Cromwell sent his soldiers to the Cathedral to see if any **silver** was available. They reported back that the only **silver** was the statues of the saints, to which Cromwell replied, "Melt down the **Slide#21** saints & get them back into circulation."
 - a) **Is that Gods nudge for you this morning?**
- D. (16) **Sinners** - a technical term for **common people**, as opposed to **Law keepers**.
- E. While **the Scribes & Pharisees** stood on their lil **soap boxes** of **scorn**; looking down their **noses** of **neglect**; **& scanned** w/their beady eyes One who was **scandalous**. **It was then that Jesus** donned his **white Doctors smock** **&** went to work in a **hospital** of **hurting souls!**
 - 1. **Slide#22** Once again, the Pharisees & Scribes missed the fact that the symbol for Christianity would be a **Cross** **NOT** a **Ladder!**
- F. About now, Jesus was "*taxed*" with the scribes & Pharisees shocking conduct.
 - 1. Pretty disgusted with their **pygmy hearts**.

V. **Slide#23 A CLINICIAN! (17) An Invitation to Wholeness!**

- A. A **Clinician** is defined as *a doctor having direct contact with and responsibility for patients, rather than* one involved with theoretical or laboratory studies.
- B. (17) This was a well known **Proverb**...**And**, a statement of **His mission!**
 - 1. Jesus was saying, "To people who think they are righteous, I have nothing to say. **But** to those who know they have need, I have come."
 - 2. **Slide#24** The Message Bible says, *I'm here inviting the **sin-sick**, not the **spiritually-fit**.*
- C. If you say, "I am an honest, moral, upright, person"...**Then** I have no gospel to preach to you!
 - 1. **Why send a doctor** to someone who is not sick?
Why offer financial help to a man who is not poor?
Why throw a life preserver to a man not drowning?
- D. "The 1st link between my soul & Christ is **not** my goodness, **but** my badness; **not** my merit, **but** my misery; **not** my standing, **but** my falling; **not** my riches, **but** my need."
 - 1. **Slide#25** **So**, the only **Passport into His Presence** is a **Passport stamped with SIN**.
 - 2. The Psalmist nailed it when he said in Ps.107:20 NLT **He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death.**
 - 3. **Slide#26** **C.T. Studd** [1862-1931] – Pioneer missionary. One of the group of students known as the "Cambridge 7" [The 7 from Cambridge went & worked with Hudson Taylor in China] **said**,

Some want to live within the sound - Of Church or Chapel **bell**;
I want to run a rescue shop - Within a yard of **hell**!

- E. Matthew was not only called to **leave** everything, **but** also to **find** a friend/companion for the coming pathway! *Fellowship was offered!*
1. **Slide#27,28** This morning, *Jesus offers you an Invitation to **Conversion**; an Invitation to **Celebration**; an Invitation to Himself...the Great **Clinician**!*
 2. **Jesus says, Follow me!** – stop wandering around, cease your questionings, your intellectual debates, come & travel w/me, & find all your answers in my friendship!
 3. **Jesus says, Follow me!** – young & old, men & women. **Today!**