



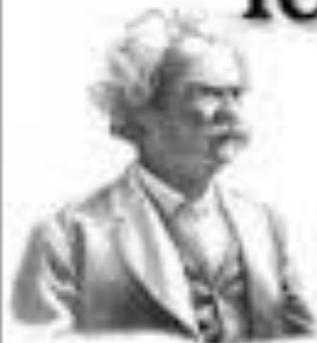
'THE TAXMAN COMETH

Luke 5:27-32

YOU SCARED ME AT FIRST.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE
TAX MAN

Why do we hate the Tax man?

“The only difference
between a tax man
and a taxidermist is
that the taxidermist
leaves the skin.”



~Mark Twain



**PAY
POOR TAX
OF \$15**



“Of course you have a purpose in life. You pay taxes, don’t you?”

This is
why we
pay
taxes



InstaQuote

In a fair society, one of the things tax does is redistribute the wealth created by those who are able to take advantage of the system to those who have been taken advantage of.

Putting all the positivity aside..

- For Jesus Contemporaries, Tax Collectors were traitors or collaborators that had “Joined the Dark Side” to exact a burden on the citizens.
- Assumed they used their connections to gather income for the ruling occupation force while lining their own pockets at the same time.
- And as such were excluded from the community along with other “sinners”

Who were the Sinners?

- Probably includes but not limited to : thieves, the sick (blind, lepers, intellectually disabled etc), prostitutes, solo parents, the divorced, the poor, pork eaters, Sabbath breakers, orphans, those with a different opinion to the Pharisees, anybody else that didn't 'fit in'.
- Question..
 - Should a person be condemned if they have to work on a Sunday to buy food for their starving children?

Understanding the Pharisees

- They wanted God's blessing on Israel
- They saw the Roman occupation as God's curse
- They assumed "Tax Collectors and Sinners" would get in the way of God's purposes
- The result, to exclude them lest they contaminate God's people
- And in excluding them the fears grew and their Judgements got in the way of their mission!

Who are our “Tax collectors and Sinners”?



Jesus Response is different

- Time and Again we read he went to their houses (Luke 15:1, Matt 9:10ff, Luke 7:34)
- He listened to them and ministered to them
- He taught that it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean' (Matt 15:18)
- This action matched his words that the Grace of God was for all
- As Jesus said of Zacchaeus
“this too is a son of Abraham”

Ahh Zacchaeus! Luke 1-10

- Our bias comes through in reading this story
- Most commentaries persist in our assumption that *he was guilty* (of lining his own pockets) because he was rich and paid the money back
- But he says “IF”
- Why are we so quick to judge others on the basis of what we assume, without taking the time to meet them and talk with them like Jesus did?
- Does our judging get in the way of mission?

Two men go up to pray

- Our Bias persists.. Luke 18:9-14
- Do we presume that the Tax Collector is repenting because he is a bad man because of the occupation he is engaged in?
- Do we use this presumption to avoid what Jesus is truly saying, that all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God?
- Have you heard this? “I might have done some wrong but not as much as he did”

All have Sinned

- Doesn't matter about what job, status, religious experiences, age, etc none of us have lived up to God's perfect ideal.
- So what Sin have you committed this week?
Raised your voice, belittled someone, judged someone, lusted after someone or something, imagined doing harm to self or others, forgot to pray, forgot to trust God, let fear creep in, failed to give a full offering to God, fudged your tax??

The path to life

- The Tax man in Jesus story confessed, repented, received his forgiveness and we presume, left again as a taxman.
- Realistic presumption based on John the Baptists word to the Soldiers and Tax Collectors - Luke 3:12-14. (Perhaps Zacc had heard Johns cry?)
- His mission, righteous people in every sphere of life

I'LL DO MY BEST BUT
I CAN'T PROMISE
ANYTHING



*Ipagpatuloy Ang
Kaunlaran*

Jun-Jun Sotto

Keeping it clean and green





Yes, I'm an

ACCOUNTANT

**But I use
my powers
for GOOD**

The world is
moved along not only
by the mighty shoves
of its heroes but also
by the aggregate of
the tiny pushes
of each honest
worker.

Helen Keller



Time to give up our Bias?

- In the Classic Luke 20:20-25 Jesus replies....

Give to Caesar what is Caesars

and to God what is Gods!

- How can you give to Caesar without people employed as taxmen??
- Imagine what an amazing sense of acceptance the tax men would have got from that statement

Give to God what is God's

- Give our 'heart' to God. Jesus offers to enter into your being and thinking (John 14:23) to change you from the inside out, transforming you and the people around you from that perspective in the place that he has placed you.
- We don't need to change our jobs as such.. But our attitudes and purposes and realise who we are really working for!
- Give to God our judgements – it's his job
- Give to God our fear of the future – He Knows!

It brings us back to Levi – Luke 5

- This story could be read that Jesus is calling him from a life of sin (as a tax collector) – but..
- Levi, name of one of Israel/Jacobs sons
- His descendants called to live as witnesses in every part of the Israeli community
- His task to help people celebrate God in their harvest and collect offerings for the poor
- Jesus call to Levi was to use his call for God, not himself or Caesar.

And Levi followed Jesus

- Matthews Gospel fulfils Levis call – witnessing to the good news of God revealed in Jesus Christ.
- As Christians, the metaphor of the Levites could be a helpful way of looking at how we live in community using the talents, spiritual experiences, life, hope and abilities we have to see *“His will being done on earth as it is in heaven”*

So What Now?

- Three points to consider..
 1. Is our judgement of others getting in the way of either our witness or our relationship with God?
 2. Do we need to humble ourselves before God and confess our sin, repent and invite him into our lives?
 3. Do we need to Give to God what is God's and rededicate our life to Jesus and his purposes, no matter the cost?