

## Meet My New Friend

---

Luke 5:27-32; 7:34; 15:1-2 (cf. Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:14-17)

Your best prospect to reach for Jesus is one of your friends. Friends like to introduce their friends to their other friends.

Matthew (Levi) had a great plan to introduce his friends to his new friend—Jesus. He initiated what is known today as “**dinner evangelism**.”

I read of a young seminary student who managed an apartment complex. He and his wife would establish friendships with their tenants and invite them to their apartment for supper, or out to coffee. This would often lead to an opportunity to witness and present the Gospel.

Another young Christian couple made a practice of inviting unsaved friends and neighbors to their home for dinner. After dinner they would show a Moody Science video or a Christian movie. Usually the ensuing conversation turned easily to the subject of the Bible and the Gospel.

➡ This is how Matthew introduced his friends and co-workers to Jesus.

**I. The BACKGROUND of Matthew’s feast** (v. 27—“*And after these things...*” cf. vs. 17-26). It all happened “*on a certain day*” (v. 17)

A. The **ATTRACTION** of Jesus—Jesus teaching the Word (v. 17).

B. The **ACTIONS** of four men—They brought their friend to Jesus (vs. 18-25).

1. He saw their faith. That’s not what the multitude saw. Jesus sees what other people miss. What is Jesus looking at???

2. The palsied man’s sins are forgiven. Jesus perceived the thoughts of the Pharisees and proclaimed His power to forgive sins. He was implying He was God.

3. The miracle of healing.

C. The **AMAZEMENT** of the people (v. 26).

**II. The BIDDING to Matthew to follow** (vs. 27-28).

A. The **CHARACTER** of Matthew—Matthew was a tax collector for the Roman government (IRS agent). Roman tax collectors were notorious to collect the tax due to Rome and require any addi-

tional tax they could pocket for own profit. They were rich and despised.

- ➡ The Jews especially hated Matthew since he was also Jew who had sold out to the Roman empire. He would be a modern equivalent to a **pimp, drug dealer, or member of the mafia.**
- B. The CALL to Matthew— Jesus called to this despised character to simply, *“Follow me.”*
- ➡ Matthew didn’t have to think about it. That was all Matthew needed to hear. He was already aware of how Jesus forgave the palsied man’s sins. Matthew may have wished his own sins could be forgiven.
- C. The CONVERSION of Matthew. To follow Christ means (1) to **trust Christ**—You must trust before you can follow. It means (2) a **change in direction**—The past is left behind—A new beginning.
1. Name Levi [“attached”] changed to Matthew [“gift of God”] (Luke 6:15).
  2. His life was never the same. He was no longer Levi, “attached” to the Roman tax collecting business. He became Matthew, a disciple of Christ, and wrote the first book of the N.T.

### III. The **BANQUET** for Matthew’s friends (v. 29).

- A. Matthew’s BURDEN. One of the first proofs someone has been truly saved is a burden for their lost friends. Matthew tasted that the Lord is good, and wanted his buddies to have a taste also!
- B. Matthew’s BUDDIES—Publicans and sinners—The despised and rejected. Those no one else wanted, Jesus will receive.
1. The Bible does not specify what their sin was. That didn’t matter. All that mattered was they were lost and needed a Savior.
  2. When does a Christian have the most unsaved friends? Right after they first get saved. As a new Christian grows in the Lord, old sinner friends are gradually replaced with new Christian friends. Therefore the best time to reach your lost friends is as soon as possible after you are saved.

C. Matthew's BANQUET. Being a new follower of Christ, Matthew still had lots of lost friends he wanted to introduce to Christ. So what does he do? He throws a great feast / banquet at his house with Jesus as the guest of honor and invites all his unsaved cronies to come. [Friend Day continental breakfast.]

1. These publicans and sinners accepted Matthew's invitation to come to his feast and meet Jesus. Read Luke 15:1-2. **What drew these people to Jesus?** They knew they were welcomed. Jesus had the reputation of being "*a friend of publicans and sinners*" (Luke 7:34). They **knew Jesus cared** about them and would **receive them** when the Pharisees would not give them the time of day (John 6:37).

---

**Rescue missions** use Matthew's "supper strategy" in reaching street people everyday—Feed them & preach Christ to them.

---

2. If we are going to reach lost sinners for Christ, we must **take steps to assure them they are welcome.** We must help them realize Jesus is their friend (and so are we).
  - ➡ With the attitude some churches have towards lost sinners, they might as well put up a sign: "We are Holy. When You Get Holy, We Will Welcome you to Come."
3. THE CRITICS—When we begin to associate with sinners in seeking to lead them to Christ, there will be critics.

**SUMMATION:** Four lessons **how we can best bring the lost to Christ:**

- 1) After they witness the transforming power of God at work in answer to faith.
- 2) When they know Jesus loves them and cares about them.
- 3) When they are contacted by one of their personal friends. The lost are most effectively won through pre-established relationships.
- 4) In non-threatening environments (over dinner in the home of a friend).

---

Your comments are welcomed. Please [CLICK HERE](#).