

Living the Word

A Bible Study for
Missionary Discipleship

Session 7

Luke 5:27-32

“Follow Me”



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OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, create in us an ever-growing faith, with hearts open and centered in you. Awaken within us the fire of your Spirit, so that your love may fill us more fully, and flow throughout our lives. Increase within us a desire to reach out, to invite and to share, to welcome and accept. Awaken the faith of all your children, especially those who have grown distant from you, those ready to hear an invitation to the love you alone can bring. Awaken us, loving God, to see the fullness of your grace and peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord . Amen

OPENING PSALM

(one person or group take line 1 and one person or group take line 2)

The Inescapable God

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

² You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

¹ Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

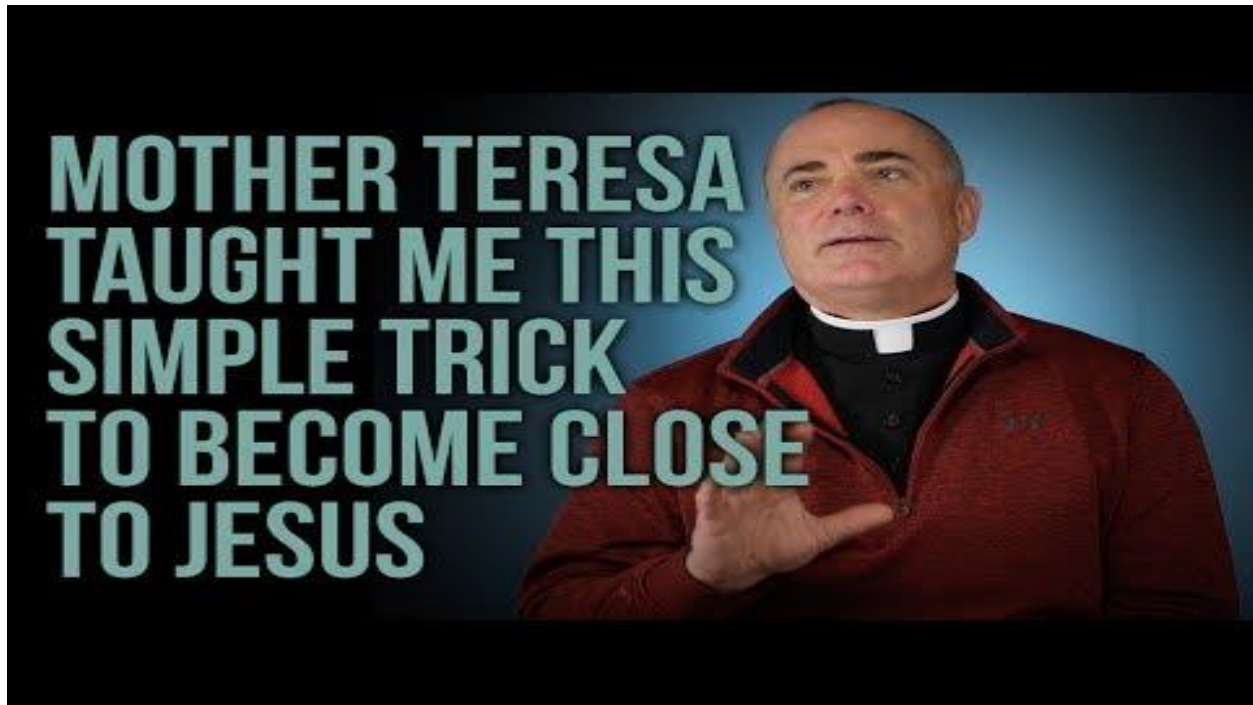
² If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

² For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

OPENING REFLECTION VIDEO

[The first thing Mother Teresa did every morning](#)



THIS WEEKS BIBLE PASSAGE

“Follow me”

Luke 5:27-32

Jesus Calls Levi

²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” ²⁸ And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table^[a] with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ³¹ Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³² I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

REFLECTION

“After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him.” Luke 5:27-28

As Christians, we are called to be missionary disciples, believers who experience Christ, and witnesses to Christ. One way of witnessing to Christ is through accompanying others to an encounter with Him. To properly witness, we must first encounter Jesus ourselves.

For Levi, his encounter with Jesus at the customs post changes everything; it alters everything about his life, so much that he is given a different name, he becomes a new person in Christ. Through his encounter, he leaves behind the life of Levi and becomes Matthew.

Matthew's openness to his encounter with the Lord allowed him to leave everything behind to follow Christ immediately. The transformative encounter with our Risen Lord pushes us to be the missionary disciples that the Church needs today.

We can know all about Scripture and the Church's traditions, but if we do not have a personal encounter with Jesus who transforms our hearts, it will lack its true meaning. If we nurture and foster our relationship with God, there is no doubt that we will bear fruit.

To be in relationship is to be a disciple, and to bear fruit is to be missionary. As Jesus did to Matthew, he does for us; He embraces us and then sends us forth.

Matthew's initial encounter is the start of his journey as an Apostle of Christ. In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, St. Pope John Paul II states, "The burning desire to invite others to encounter the One whom we have encountered is the start of the evangelizing mission to which the whole Church is called."

When we encounter the Gospel, we cannot help but share the Good News! When we encounter Jesus, we cannot help but be transformed. Those among us need an encounter with the living Jesus Christ.

PAUSE FOR SILENT PRAYER

Pray a decade of the Rosary reflecting on the fifth Joyful mystery: Finding Jesus
in the Temple
(Our Father, 10 Hail Mary's, Glory Be)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. As a tax collector Levi was disconnected from the community, after his encounter with Jesus Matthew became a member of the community. How can you invite others into an encounter with Jesus and His Church?
2. Discipleship is tied to holiness, and holiness is nothing more than living in God and allowing God to live in us. How do you open your self so that you live in God and God in you?
3. Jesus wants us to be His disciples and to make disciples of all peoples because it is so much more than we could ever imagine. How can you talk with others about being a disciple of Jesus?

CALL TO ACTION

As we ponder our call to be Missionary Disciples, let us first reflect on our personal encounter with the Lord so that as we share the Gospel with others, the radiance of the Word himself may shine forth from our hearts. As Levi sat at the customs post, his heart yearned for something greater. When the Lord appeared, the encounter transformed his entire life. Are our hearts not yearning for something greater? Should we not expect that same transformative encounter ourselves?

CLOSING PRAYER

Missionary Discipleship Prayer

Leader: *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

*And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone to preach?
And how can people preach unless they are sent? –Romans 10: 13-15*

All: Heavenly Father,
Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire us with these words from Holy Scripture,
so that we might be strengthened to go forth
and witness to the Gospel in our daily lives
through our words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind us:

- If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?
- If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?
- If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

Give us the grace that we might hear the call of the New Evangelization
and become a Missionary Disciple, deepening our faith,
growing in confidence to proclaim the Gospel
and boldly witnessing to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

O Mary, our Immaculate Mother, pray for us.
Inspire us to imitate your example
as the first disciple of your son, Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: *Mary, Star of the New Evangelization*, All: pray for us.

St. Joseph, All: pray for us.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, All: pray for us.

St. John Paul II, All: pray for us.