

## Jesus' Precious Raw Materials

**Story No. 1:** “I have very bad CV; I spent most of my life doing nothing good. My days were with wine, and my nights were with women. I am idle, waiting to be disposed or maybe like garbage to be thrown! Is there someone who will like me? Do you think God loves me?”

That’s what he said when I first saw and talked to him. I invited him to follow Jesus after I shared to him the Love of God in Christ. The first response I received was just a shake his head, and then looking to the ground sorrowfully he said with a low voice, “What about my sins?” When I heard that from him, I was glad and by leading of the Holy Spirit I took my Bible and I read to him this passages:

**“After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.” Then Levi held a banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law who belonged to their sect complained to His disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:27-32**

I explained to him the passage and at the end of our meeting he accepted Jesus as His Lord and Saviour.

**Story No. 2:** Two days after, another man who heard the first story came to me. He was angry because the man accepted the Lord. He justified his anger by saying. “That man is a drinker, an adulterer; he is a dirty fish with a bad smell, or a ship about to sink down. Tell me, what can he do for Jesus? He will be useless, or he will just bring shameful things and bad image to Christianity and even to the society.” The bitterness in his heart and his anger did not give me the chance to explain to him what Christianity and the message of Jesus is all about, but I just read to him this verse from the Bible. **“But go and learn what this mean: I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Matthew 9:13)**

The calling of Levi is present in the gospel of Luke, Matthew and Mark. Levi was a tax collector, and to the Jewish society, tax collectors are considered as sinners for the following reasons: *First*, they force the people to pay their taxes. *Secondly*, they collect extra fees for themselves or may even use the money for usury. The combination of the authority given to them plus their sin of greed made them a crooked, dishonest and detestable to the people who then try to avoid them.

From another corner, because of the bad reputation brought by the profession they have, they keep negativism in their hearts: 1) a guilty feeling being sinner. 2) Inferiority complex that they are less honourable than others in their sect. 3) separation from the rest of the society and joining other group of sinners. 4) a feeling of hopelessness beyond repair.

Other groups of people in the society that share the same with the above emotions are the gamblers, the prostitutes, the homosexuals, the alcoholics, the drug addicts, the burglars, the prisoners, etc. These groups may be described as down trodden or the outcast of the society. In fact they are cheap, broken, second hand used things, but they are *‘Jesus’ precious raw materials!*”

These groups of people, in addition to the above description of their inner most being as sinners, have the strong desire to leave the life of sin and take the life of righteousness but they cannot do it alone. They need a power to bring them out from darkness where they are slave to sin to a life full of light. The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is directed to the above type of people, it is directed for sinners.

Let us focus on what happened between Jesus and Levi to get a fine conclusion:

**1.** Levi was called while he was at the sin station: **“He was sitting at his tax collector booth.”** He was practicing the detestable act, while *Jesus said to him “Follow me.”* Jesus may call a harlot from a hostel or a drinker from a pop!

**2.** Levi was waiting for Jesus’ call: **“And Levi got up”** without reluctance. Levi was sad in his life of sin. He knew he was sinner, and he was waiting for that call for a long time and he was ready for repentance. He got up because he was able to recognize the power of Jesus that can free him from the bondages of sin. Levi was ready for the call so he **“left everything and followed him.”**

**3.** Levi became a faithful disciple to Jesus: Sometimes even to those who understand Jesus’ ministry they cannot imagine that a thief, a gambler, a greedy merchant or other sort of sinners can become a faithful servant of the Lord. Levi or who is Matthew became a faithful disciple and servant to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“But the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law who belonged to their sect complained to His disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”** They were unhappy with what they saw because they did not understand the mission of Jesus, and they saw themselves as self righteous. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law, who belong to their sect, are the people who know and practice the Law of Moses. They offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to the Lord. They see others as sinners and they see themselves as the only righteous, religious, and who have the only right to serve and be with God. They don’t want Jesus to interfere with the sinners. They don’t want Jesus to show the love, the mercy and the compassion of God toward sinners. And they forget what God said in His word, **“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hosea 6:6)**

A person who is doing sin is bringing himself to sickness. Jesus, when He forgives our sins. He releases us from illnesses, and that is why He simulates Himself with a doctor when he said to them, **“It is not the healthy who needs a doctor, but the sick.”** Jesus is the only one who can forgive our sins because He has the full authority from God. *But, the self-righteous did not understand that no one in the world is righteous:* They don’t know that no man in the world is without sin. And if we cannot recognize ourselves as sinners, simply we cannot accept the Lord, because the essential step before acceptance is *repentance*. This explained what He told them, **“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**

**My dear and beloved:** If you are from the sect of the self-righteous and you are with the theme of the second story this is the time for you to confess your sin and repent, or you will perish. But if you sympathized with Levi and with the theme of the first story, we want to tell you that no matter how big your sin is, no sin can stand against the bleaching power of the blood of Jesus if you repent. *Because, Jesus loves you.*

**My Prayer:** *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to me eternal life. Lord I commit myself in your hand, I repent from these sins \_\_\_\_\_ . Lord take and mold me and transform me in the way that you want me to be. Help me Lord to love you more and to love the lost, and make me the instrument that you will use to bring sinners into your kingdom. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*