

THE BIG IDEA: WHO we have in common is more powerful than WHAT we don't.

The Take-Off

Unless you've been under a rock, you already know how much we need this series of teaching

The answer to a divided culture is a unifying Savior, and this look at the original Party of Twelve has definitely highlighted the one statement that we've said every week since we started: **who we have in common is more**

powerful than what we don't

If for some reason you've missed that, you won't be able to after today, because the 2 apostles that we're learning about today drive home the power of that Big Idea perhaps more than any others.

These 2 men would NEVER have been near each other without someone greater bringing them together

That someone, of course, is Jesus, and I'm praying that you allow him to do in you what he did in a tax collector and a nationalist.

Let's learn more about Matthew and Simon and see how their relationship can give us hope.

1. Matthew

- a. **[VIDEO / The Chosen - Jesus calls Matthew]**
- b. Matthew was a tax collector and we need to know why they were so despised:
 - One, no one likes paying the government and the tax collectors bear the fury of that
 - Tax collectors in Jesus' day were JEWS working for ROMANS (the enemy) - they were seen as traitors
 - They were seen as unclean because of their close proximity to Gentiles and Romans / Luke 18:10 (NLT)
 - They were seen as cheaters / Luke 19:8 reveals this about Zacchaeus
 - They were wealthy (at the expense of their own people) and separated
- c. Knowing that, it's easy to see the possibility that Matthew had even collected taxes (i.e., cheated) from Peter and the other fishermen following Jesus
- d. But we can easily see why Jesus loved Matthew and called Matthew
 - Luke 5:28 / first, he gave it all up
 - Matt 9:10-13 / second, he mixed it all up
- e. Some takeaways from Matthew's call:
 - One, there is no circumstance that stops the call of God
 - Two, his past uniquely positioned him in the present to point others toward a better future

2. Simon

- a. Simon may take a bit more backstory in order to fully appreciate the call
- b. Zealots were named because they were zealous for Israel
 - They strongly opposed Roman rule
 - They wanted Israel to be a free nation
 - What first was about religious zeal grew more and more militaristic and they became more nationalists
- c. The zealot movement never accomplished its purpose. In 70 A.D. the zealots so angered the Romans that the Roman army invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the city. The zealots did not succeed in setting their nation free.
- d. Some takeaways from Simon's call:
 - One, the kingdom is about freeing the heart more than freeing a nation
 - Two, what we're for is far more important than what we're against

3. One HUGE takeaway

- a. Before I share one final HUGE takeaway, listen to these words from one of the commentaries I read:

"The fact that Simon and Matthew were both disciples of Jesus is highly instructive. We cannot think of two men more opposite: Matthew was the TAX-GATHERER! Simon was the TAX-HATER! Matthew was the UNPATRIOTIC TRAITOR! Simon was the PATRIOTIC LOYALIST! Apart from Christ, Simon and Matthew would have been great enemies! The fact that these two men could be together, work together, eat together, serve together, and learn together is one of the great miracles of Christ's transforming power."
- b. If you were picking two disciples who were at polar opposites in almost every way, these would be the 2
- c. Turn to **Galatians 3:28 (NLT)** and let's see see the one HUGE takeaway

- d. Paul mentions 3 pairs of divisions in this verse / Jew-Gentile, Male-Female, Slave-Free
- e. In that culture, these were the 3 big divides
- f. Jesus eliminated them all
- g. The HUGE takeaway? Jesus crosses divides that we cannot.

The Landing

The tax collector and the nationalist weren't divided over preference, but principles

We tend to only see Jesus as a small bridge builder, but he's a HUGE bridge builder

He can do the same today, but first we've got to do the one common thing that 2 different men did: laid down what

THEY wanted to follow where JESUS was going

Luke 9:23 / The call is to all, but the price will be paid by few

What we learn from the Party of Twelve is that God only needs a few.

Be one of them.

Let's pray