

INTRODUCTION 引言

Most families in our midst own a house. When you live in the same place for a while, things gradually wear out. It makes sense to invest money to renovate some of the amenities – the roof, windows or floor. A reality show named “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” takes this restoration idea to the furthest. Each episode features a family whose house desperately needs major repairs, but they could not afford the bills. It may be a family of single-parents, people suffering from economic hardship, or plagued by a natural disaster, etc. A contractor crew is given seven days to make a complete face-lift. That includes the inside, outside and landscaping. If the building is in a really bad shape, construction workers will demolish the house and build a new one. Everything is done for free. The family will be sent away on a one-week paid vacation. On their return, the production team and neighbors will come when the new home is unveiled. Without exception, there will be joy, tears and gratitude. At the conclusion of every show, the host always ends with the same remark to the family: “Welcome home!” In our passage today, there is a different kind of overhaul. Jesus renovated the soul of a man named Levi. The lesson for us is very simple: If Jesus could save a person like me, then He can save anyone.

我們中間大多數的家庭都擁有房子。當你在同一個地方居住了一段時間後，東西就會逐漸損壞。投資一些錢把某些設施整修是很值得的（例如屋頂、窗戶或地板）。有一個名為“超級大翻新”的實況劇將這個裝修的想法帶到了極端。每一集節目都有一個家庭得到幫助。他們的房子迫切地需要大修，但他們卻負擔不起費用。他們可能是個單親家庭、遭受經濟困難或是受到自然災害的破壞等。承包商有 7 天的時間來翻新，包括內部、外面和庭園的美化。如果房子的狀況實在是很差，建築工人便會把房子拆掉，然後蓋一幢全新的房屋。一切花費全免。那個家庭還會被安排出去免費度假一週。新房子揭幕時，節目的工作人員和鄰居都會一起來慶祝。毫無例外，都會有歡笑、眼淚和感謝。在每次節目結束時，主持人總是與那個家庭以相同的話作終結：「歡迎回家！」在我們今天的經文中，有另一種的大翻新。耶穌重整了一個名叫利未的人的靈魂。今天信息的教訓很簡單：如果耶穌能拯救一個像我這樣的人，那麼他就能拯救任何人。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Invitation 邀請

Let us look at three things as we go through the story. The first word I would like you to consider is “invitation.” Jesus passed by a certain place. He saw a man named Levi sitting at a tax booth. Jesus then invited Levi to follow Him. Levi was a tax-collector. This profession had a bad reputation among the Jews. Rome was the ruler in the New Testament world. The Roman government allowed people to bid for the right to collect tax. Those authorized collectors would add whatever surcharge they liked to the citizens. After they submitted the required amount to the government, they could pocket the rest. That was why the Jews saw tax-collectors as traitors because they robbed from their own people, and they worked for the Romans. Levi might not be

a chief collector. But the passage said he later held a huge party at his home. Therefore, he should be rich anyway. On that day, Levi's job was to collect toll from people passing by his station. How did Levi respond to Jesus' invitation? **Verse 28** tells us: and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. There was no hesitation! Levi did not say to Jesus: "Let me take care of my children's college fund and my retirement savings first." He left everything – his career, his money and his future – and followed Jesus. To where? Levi would go after Jesus wherever the Lord would lead him. **The direction becomes less important when the leader is identified.** Why was Jesus' invitation so appealing to Levi? It was because Jesus gave Levi an opportunity for a new beginning. Did Levi know that what he did in his job was wrong? He surely did! People who steals, slanders and gambles know that those behaviors are bad. The problem is that they do not know how to stop. Here, Levi determined to change for the good. In **Matthew 5:3**, Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Only those who realize that they are bankrupt in their spirit will humble themselves before God and turn to Him. Levi might have a huge bank account, but he was poor in his spirit. His money could not redeem his broken relationship with God. He longed for the acceptance from people and from God. Levi used to burden people by requesting more tax. Now Jesus relieved Levi's burden of his sin debt. Jesus welcomed Levi to be His follower. Jesus' invitation is still valid today. What is hindering you from following Him? Is it your lifestyle, your face or your insecurity? Come to Jesus! Only He can give you a new life. Levi gave up everything to follow Jesus. Have you set aside everything to follow Jesus too? He may not ask you to sell all your possessions and become a missionary overseas. But **have you surrendered the ownership of what God gives you in the first place?** Will you submit to the Lord if He asks you to give people a ride to the church or open your house for a home gathering? Also, have you reprioritized your life and put Jesus first? How much time do you spend on entertainment, shopping or mingling with your friends? There is nothing wrong about those leisure activities. But do you spend some time to build a relationship with God first through Bible reading and attending church meetings? Do you look for opportunities to help others and serve in ministries? If you say you are a Christian but you are still living a "me-centered" life, then you need to ask the Lord to help you make some adjustments.

讓我們從三方面來看這個故事。我們來思考的第一個詞是「邀請」。耶穌經過某個地方，他看到一個名叫利未的人坐在稅關上，耶穌然後邀請利未來跟隨他。利未個稅吏。這個職業在猶太人中聲譽不怎麼。新約世界的統治者是羅馬帝國，羅馬政府允許人們競標徵稅權。那些被授權的稅吏便會隨意地向人民增加附加費。他們把該繳的金額交給政府後，其餘的錢便袋袋平安。這就是為什麼猶太人將稅吏視為走狗，因為他們搶劫自己的同胞，並為羅馬人工作。利未可能不是稅吏長。但是後來他在自己家裡舉行了一個大型的宴會。因此，他應該也是個富翁。那天利未的工作是向經過的人收取過路費。利未如何回應耶穌的邀請？第 28 節告訴我們：**他就撇下所有的，起來，跟從了耶穌。**他完全沒有猶疑！利未沒有對耶穌說：「讓我先照顧孩子的大學基金和退休儲蓄。」他捨棄了一切 - 他的職業、他的錢和他的未來 - 來跟隨耶穌。去哪裡？無論主指引他到哪裡，利未都會追隨耶穌。**確定領袖之後，去向便變得不太重要。**耶穌的邀請為什麼如此吸引利未？因為耶穌給了利未一個重新做人的機會。利未是否知道他的工作不對？當然！偷竊、講別人閒話和賭博的人都知道這些行為是不好的。問題在於他們不知道如何停止。在這裡，利未決心要痛改前非。耶穌在馬太福音 5:3 中說：**「虛心的人有福了！因為天國是他們的。」**唯有那些意識

到自己在靈裡是破案的人才會謙卑在神的面前，並轉向祂。利未的銀行帳戶可能有很多存款，但是他在靈裡卻是貧窮的。他的錢不能贖回他與神的破裂關係。他渴望得到人們和神的接納。利未過去常常通過徵稅來加重人們的負擔。現在，耶穌免除了利未罪的重擔。耶穌歡迎利未成為祂的跟隨者。耶穌的邀請今天仍然有效。是什麼阻礙了你跟隨祂？是你的生活形態、面子還是缺乏安全感？來到耶穌面前！唯有祂才能給你新的生命。利未放棄一切跟隨耶穌。你是否也已經撇棄了一切跟隨耶穌？主可能不會要求你變賣所有的財產並成為海外宣教士。但是，**你是否已經放棄了神賜給你一切東西的擁有權？**如果主要你接送別人去教會聚會或是開放自己的房子作家庭聚會，你順服從主嗎？另外，你是否已經重新安排了生活的優先次序並將耶穌放在首位？請問你花多少時間在娛樂、逛街或是跟朋友相聚上？這些休閒活動本身沒有什麼不對。但是，你有否花一些時間通過閱讀聖經和參加教堂聚會來與神建立關係？你有沒有尋找機會幫助他人或參與服事？如果你說自己是基督徒，但仍然過著以自我為中心的生活，那麼你需要請主幫助你作一些調整。

2. Indignation 不滿

Levi accepted Jesus' invitation to become His follower. A bad guy came clean. Everyone should be happy about his change. Everyone except the Pharisees and the teachers of the law! They showed indignation toward Jesus and His disciples. The Pharisees and teachers were the Jewish religious leaders in those days. They had a hostile relationship with Jesus because our Lord disclosed their hypocrisy. Those leaders knew the Old Testament Law thoroughly. But their hearts were not toward God. They even created man-made rules. They enjoying picking on people who violated those standards. Jesus condemned their sins. In the story, Levi invited some colleagues to his home for a big party. It could be a celebration of his new life and a retirement party. Levi gathered his friends to share about his decision. That leads to my following question: did you tell your family and friends when you became a Christian? Some people may say that religious belief is a personal thing, and you should not offend others who do not believe in Jesus. Wrong! You do not want your close friends to miss some good deals on Black Friday. How much more eager should you tell people about the good news of eternal life? New believers are often the most enthusiastic evangelists. All you have to do is to **share how you came to know Jesus and how He changed your life.** Getting back to the story. What were those religious leaders indignant about? Listen to their complaint in **verse 30**: ... “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” They were unhappy that Jesus and His disciples ate with Levi and his friends. The Pharisees were big-time party-crashes. They were always spying for opportunities to criticize Jesus. In many cultures, eating together means friendship. After all, you will not just “eat-and-run” when you are at people’s home, but you “chow-and-chat.” The religious leaders did not want to ruin their image by mingling with people whom they despised. In contrast, Jesus welcomed everyone. In the gospels, Jesus got near to children and women, poor and sick people, non-Jews and people with moral problems. The religious leaders labeled Levi’s guests as “sinners.” They were indignant because Jesus allowed even a person like Levi to be His follower. They did not think that Levi deserved a chance to get back to the right path. By getting near to the people who were abandoned by the society, Jesus won the hearts of everyone. That steals the publicity from the religious leaders. In fact, the Bible tells us that jealousy was a reason why they nailed Jesus to the cross. Do you share the same feeling of indignation when certain people became Christians? It may be someone who are not friendly to you or even hurt you at one time. Or it may be some prominent criminals. We get mad when people like them are saved.

We say: “It’s not fair!” We determine that they do not deserve God’s grace. What if one day the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un makes a public confession that he decides to follow Jesus? Don’t think that is impossible! Remember: if Jesus could save a person like me, then He can save anyone. Isn’t that what God’s grace is all about? If God is to judge us, we only deserve to go to hell. We are all natural-born sinners. The difference is that we sin in different ways. According to the Bible, we do not choose to be saved. Rather, Jesus came and invited us to come to Him.

利未接受耶穌的邀請成為祂的跟隨者。一個壞旦改邪歸正了。大家都應該為到他的改變感到高興，除了法利賽人和文士之外！他們對耶穌和祂的門徒表示不滿。法利賽人和文士是當時猶太人的宗教領袖。他們與耶穌之間有敵對的關係，因為我們的主拆穿了他們的假冒偽善的面具。那些領袖們精通舊約律法，但是他們的心並非向著神。他們甚至添加了一些自己定的規條，而且他們還喜歡挑別人的毛病。耶穌譴責他們的罪。在故事中，利未邀請了一些同事到他的家參加一個大型派對。這可能是對他新生活 and 退休的慶祝會。利未招聚了他一些朋友來分享他的決定。這就引出了我的以下問題：當你成為基督徒時，你有否跟家人和朋友分享？有些人可能會說宗教信仰是個人的事情，你不應該冒犯其他不相信耶穌的人。這樣的說法是不對的！你不希望你的好友錯過了黑色星期五的一些優惠。你豈不是應該更積極地告訴人們有關永生的好消息呢？剛剛信主的人常常是最熱心的福音使者。你只需要分享你如何認識耶穌，以及耶穌如何改變了你的生命。回到故事裡。那些宗教領袖到底對於什麼事表示不滿？聽聽他們在第 30 節中的抱怨：...「你們為什麼和稅吏並罪人一同吃喝呢？」他們不高興耶穌和祂的門徒與利未和他的朋友一起吃飯。法利賽人最愛破壞別人的派對。他們總是尋找機會批評耶穌。在許多的文化中，一起吃飯意味著友誼。畢竟，當你在別人家中時，你不會吃飽就閃人，而應該是邊吃邊聊。宗教領袖們不想跟他們看不起的人混，以免影響自己的形象。相反，耶穌歡迎所有人。在福音書裡，耶穌接近兒童、婦女、貧窮和患病的人、非猶太人和道德上有問題的人。宗教領袖稱利未的客人為「罪人」。他們很不滿，因為耶穌甚至允許像利未這樣的人成為祂的跟隨者。他們認為利未不配獲得機會回到正途。耶穌接近那些被社會漠視的人群，使祂贏得了眾人的心，從而奪取了宗教領袖的知名度。實際上，聖經告訴我們嫉妒是他們將耶穌釘在十字架上的原因。當某些人成為基督徒時，你會否感到同樣的不滿？可能是一個曾經對你不友善，甚至傷害過你的人。又或者是一些知名的罪犯。像他們這樣的人得救時，我們會生氣。我們說：「這不公平！」我們認為他們不配得到神的恩典。如果有朝一日朝鮮的領導人金正恩公開承認他決定要跟隨耶穌，那麼你會有何感覺？別以為那是不可能的啊！記得嗎？如果耶穌可以拯救像我這樣的人，那麼他可以拯救任何人。這一切不都全是神的恩典嗎？如果神要審判我們，我們只配下地獄。我們都是天生的罪人。不同之處在於我們以不同的形式犯罪而已。根據聖經，不是我們選擇得救。相反，是耶穌來邀請我們到祂跟前。

3. Inspiration 啟發

Besides Jesus’s invitation and the religious leaders’ indignation, the third word we will focus on is inspiration. Jesus inspired everyone at the scene by how He valued people’s lives. Look at **verses 31-32**: 31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Jesus reacted to the accusation of the religious leaders. He implied: “You are right when you call these people sinners. That’s exactly why I am here!” Those who admit that they have a physical illness will look for a doctor.

Likewise, only those who confess that they are sinful will look for the Savior. The religious leaders were happy with their self-righteousness. Therefore, they did not think that they had to repent and receive Jesus. But the number one sin they had was pride. When a person believes that he has everything in this life, then he does not think that he needs Jesus. Have you met people like that? They are everywhere in any society. They believe that Jesus is for the most miserable people. For example, the orphans, widows, poor, refugees or people with mental or terminal diseases. In Luke chapter 19, Jesus saved another tax-collector named Zacchaeus. Some people grumbled why Jesus accepted a well-known sinner like Zacchaeus. Jesus told them the reason in **Luke 19:10**: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Throughout the human history, Jesus has been in this search-and-rescue mission. The gospel is for everyone. Most people, even Christians, think, that heaven is for “good” people. Absolutely wrong! No one can earn his/her way to heaven. The Bible says our good works are nothing but filthy rags. We can never live up to God’s requirement for perfection. No one can be saved unless God shows us His mercy. Salvation is 100% God’s grace and zero percent our effort. The truth that God saves worthless sinners like you and me should inspire us and motivate us to follow Jesus’ example. Our church doors should always be open to anyone who seeks after Jesus. We should not agree with lifestyle and moral values that are contrary to God’s truth. But we should welcome people with God’s love. God hates sins but He loves sinners. After all, didn’t we all make some wrong choices and indulge in sins when we were still unbelievers? Therefore, **any church should be a hospital for the sick rather than a hotel for the fit**. A recent song titled “Church” points to that truth. Part of the lyrics read: “*Tried to walk on my own but I wound up lost. Now I’m making my way to the foot of the cross. It’s not a trophy for the winners. It’s a shelter for the sinners, and it’s right where I belong.*” **Jesus did not save the winners, but only the losers**. Therefore, if we are so afraid that some people coming into our church will mess up our party and kill the fun, then we have completely missed God’s mission. The question is: are we ready to invite people who need Jesus? They may be people with a broken-heart, burdened by monthly bills or feeling lonely. They need friendship, love and acceptance. But they need Jesus the most. They may also be people who are highly-educated, who sit at the top of their career and who live in big mansions. They may lack nothing in this life. But without Jesus, they will be lost in eternity. As I always say, there are only two kinds of people on the earth. Not male and female. But people who follow Jesus, and those who do not.

除了耶穌的邀請和宗教領袖的不滿之外，我們要注意的第三個用詞是啟發。耶穌通過重視人們的生命來啟發現場的每個人。看看第 31-32 節：**31 耶穌對他們說：「無病的人用不著醫生，有病的人才用得著。32 我來本不是召義人悔改，乃是召罪人悔改。」**耶穌對宗教領袖的指責作出回應。祂暗示：「你們沒說得沒錯，他們的確是罪人。那正是我在這裡的原因！」那些承認自己患病的人會去找醫生。同樣，只有那些承認自己有罪的人才會尋求救主。宗教領袖對他們的自以為義感到滿意。因此，他們覺得沒有需要悔改並接受耶穌。但是他們犯的第一條罪就是驕傲。當一個人認為自己人生一無所缺時，他就不感到需要耶穌。你碰過這樣的人嗎？他們遍佈在任何的社會中。他們相信耶穌只為走投無路的人預備的。例如：孤兒、寡婦、窮人，難民和患有精神疾病或絕症的人。在路加福音第 19 章中，耶穌拯救了另一個名叫撒該的稅吏。有些人抱怨耶穌為何要接納像撒該這樣的著名罪人。耶穌在路加福音 19:10 中告訴他們原因所在：**「人子來，為要尋找，拯救失喪的人。」**在整個人類歷史中，耶穌一直在進行這項尋找和拯救的任務。福音是給所有人的。大多數人，甚至連一些基督徒也以為天堂是給「好人」的。絕對錯了！沒有人可以靠自己

進入天堂。聖經說我們的善行不過是像骯髒的破布。我們永遠無達到神完美的要求。除非神向我們施憐憫，否則任何人都無法得救。救恩是 100% 神的恩典，完全沒有我們的功勞。神拯救了像你和我這樣不配的罪人這個真理應該啟發並激勵我們效法耶穌的榜樣。我們教會的大門應該是對任何尋求耶穌的人敞開的。我們不應認同與神的真理背道而馳的生活方式和道德價值觀。但是我們應該以神的愛歡迎所有人。神厭罪罪惡，但是祂愛罪人。畢竟，當我們未信主時豈不是做出各樣錯誤的選擇並沉迷在罪中嗎？因此，**任何教會都應該像是為病人而設的醫院，而不是給健康的人準備的旅館。**最近一首名為「教堂」的詩歌指出了這個真理。歌詞的一部分寫著：「試圖獨自行走，但我迷路了。現在我要來到十字架前。那不是贏家的獎杯，而是給挫敗者的避難所。那正是我的歸屬。」**耶穌不是拯救勝利者，而只是拯救失敗者。**因此，如果我們擔心某些人進入我們的教堂會搞亂我們的派對並扼殺我們的快樂，那麼我們就完全誤解了神的使命。問題是：我們準備好邀請需要耶穌的人了嗎？他們可能是一些心靈破碎、每月的賬單負擔沉重或感到孤獨的人。他們需要友誼、愛和接納。但是他們最需要的是耶穌。他們也可能是受過高等教育、坐在職業生涯的頂峰或居住在豪宅中的人。他們一輩子可能什麼都有。但要是沒有耶穌，他們將在永恆中沉淪。我經常說，世界只有兩種人。不是男生和女生。而是跟隨耶穌的人和不跟隨耶穌的人。

CONCLUSION 結論

Jesus is always in the business of renovating lost souls. If He could save a person like me, then He can save anyone. On that day, Levi received a new life. After that, God gave Levi some important assignments. In case you do not know, Levi's another name is Matthew. That is right! That was the same Matthew whom Jesus later recruited to be one of His twelve disciples. He was also the author of the gospel of Matthew. God used a sinner like Levi to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ. He will use you and me in the same way. Are we willing to be sent by God to be a messenger of the salvation story? Even today, many non-believers are waiting for Jesus to call them: "Welcome home!"

耶穌一直在進行迷失靈魂重整的工作。如果耶穌能拯救一個像我這樣的人，那麼祂就能拯救任何人。那一天，利未獲得新生命。此後，神給了利未一些重要的任務。如果你不知道的話，利未的另一個名字是馬太。沒錯！他就是後來耶穌招募的十二位門徒之一的同一位馬太。他還成為馬太福音的作者。神使用像利未這樣的罪人來傳達耶穌基督的好消息。祂將以同樣的方式使用你和我。我們願意接受神的派遣成為救恩信息的使者嗎？就算在今天，許多非信徒仍在等待耶穌呼召他們：「歡迎回家！」