

How to get Into Heaven (and get Heaven Into you)

Mark 2:1-22

#11 in our series "Jesus Stories"

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Prayer

[Peter enters while pulling a large suitcase behind him. He sets the suitcase behind him on the stage and before the communion table.] Father we ask in Jesus' name that you would help us to preach, so that I wouldn't just be blabbing up here but you would be speaking to our hearts. Amen.

Message

I used to subscribe to *Leadership Journal*. It's a periodical published for pastors by *Christianity today*. For years, it was the leading resource for Protestant Evangelical pastors. Each issue contained a section for preachers titled: "To Illustrate." It contained little stories and what they perceived to be the meaning of each story.

Several years ago I read the following:

In January 1985 a large suitcase, unmarked and unclaimed, was discovered at the Los Angeles International Airport. When U.S. Customs agents opened the suitcase, they found the curled up body of an unidentified young woman.

She had been dead for a few days, according to the county coroner. As the investigation continued, it was learned that the woman was the wife of a young Iranian living in the U.S. Unable to obtain a visa to enter the U.S. and join her husband, she took matters into her own hands and attempted to smuggle herself into America via an airplane's cargo bay.

While her plan seemed to her simple though risky, officials were hard pressed to understand how such an attempt could ever succeed. Even if she survived the journey in the cargo bay, she would remain an illegal alien, having entered through improper channels.

Then they comment: "Some people believe they'll enter the kingdom of God on their own since they've been unreasonably good citizens or church attenders. But entry plans of our own design prove not only foolish but fatal."

They make the point that she had the "wrong" entry plan, which was "her plan," and I guess not God's plan.

She was an illegal alien trying to enter the Kingdom of the United States through "improper channels" in an "improper container," which is the "improper way." She had no way. All she had was faith, hope, and love for her bridegroom

"How foolish" and "How fatal," comment the experts in leadership journal. It was the "wrong way." And God does seem to be awfully concerned about the right way to enter His kingdom.

In the Old Testament, the temple in Jerusalem was like the Kingdom of heaven on earth. There were volumes of regulations regarding the proper way to enter. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the whole nation would fast as the High priest performed rituals and made sacrifices for the sins of the people so that he could enter the Holy of Holies, for if he entered the Holy of Holies, Israel would be forgiven—if he entered and lived.

So obviously people want to know: “What’s the plan of salvation?” “Who has the plan of salvation?” And “Pastor, tell me what I need to know to get in and not be cast out.”

Clip from *South Park*

Hell Director: *Hello newcomers and welcome. I’m the Hell director, it looks like we have about 8,650 newbies today. For those of you who were a little confused, you are dead and this is Hell, so abandon all home and yada yada yada. We’re now going to start the orientation process which will last about...*

Protestant: *Hey wait a minute, I shouldn’t be here; I was a totally strict and devout Protestant! I thought we went to Heaven.*

Hell Director: *Yes, well I’m afraid you were wrong. I was a practicing Jehovah’s witness.*

Jehovah’s Witness: *You picked the wrong religion as well. Well, who was right? Who gets into Heaven? Well, I’m afraid it was the Mormons, yes...the Mormons had the correct answers. [Disappointment from the crowd: Awww!]*

Sorry! I just love that clip. Because that’s how we think it will be...maybe not Mormon...but Presbyterian, or Lutheran, or Broncos fans. People want to know: “What do I need to know?” And “How do I apply what I know?” “Give me some of that ‘knowledge of good and evil,’ and tell me how to apply it.”

Pastor tell me: “Can I watch HBO?”

“How much do I need to give?”

“Do I have to fast, and if yes, for how long, and can I have juice?”

“What’s right—so I can make myself right and be sure to get in?”

In Jesus’ day, the guys that knew the answers to all these questions were called scribes. They were the theologians, pastors, and experts. Of the main three branches of Judaism in Jesus’ day, the Pharisees held the views closest to that of Jesus. So it was the scribes of the Pharisees that would have published the first century *Leadership Journal*.

Well, in Mark chapter 2, Jesus starts to clash with the scribes and Pharisees. It happens when a fellow enters a church service through a rather “improper channel.” We preached on it last week. So I’ll review it now and keep going.

...Many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And [Jesus] was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of

the crowd, they “unroofed the roof” above him, and when they had made an opening they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay, and when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “son, your sins ‘have been’ forgiven.”

In any culture, it’s terribly improper to enter a church service by destroying the roof and interrupting the sermon (particularly one that’s being preached by the Son of God.) And this guy didn’t only enter the building—he entered the Kingdom.

Jesus says, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

AND YET:

This guy didn’t confess any “right beliefs.”

He didn’t know any “plan of salvation.”

He didn’t do any “right actions” (He’s paralyzed.)

And Jesus says, “your sins have been forgiven.”

This guy was a whole lot of wrong, but Jesus saw something that was right...like a little seed in a pile of dirt. He saw a little faith, hope, and love. The man wanted in, and Jesus said, “You’re in.”

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Well, Jesus heals the guy and announces that his sins have been forgiven.

[The man] rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God saying, “We never saw anything like this!” He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi¹ the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

Levi is a tax collector (a profession forbidden by the scribes and despised by the people). Tax collectors had sold out to the Herodians and Roman oppressors. They grew rich through extortion and dishonesty—taking a cut from those they taxed.

The whole crowd was chasing Jesus, and Jesus was chasing Levi (the only guy who knew he was a “sinner”).

And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

Tax collectors and sinners (probably prostitutes) party with Jesus. How did they get in? Extortion and prostitution is not a “proper channel” for entry into the Kingdom.

How did they get into Jesus? And how did Jesus get into them? I mean if thieves and hookers throw a party they usually don’t say, “Hey! Let’s invite

¹ Levi is probably another name for Matthew.

the pastor.” Because even if the pastor’s in their party, his eyes will say, “You’re out of God’s party.” Yet, Jesus’ eyes must’ve said, “You belong in God’s party. For you He throws a party. He wants you in...and now you want in. So look! You’re in.”

...tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” And when Jesus heard it he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

“NOT the *righteous* but the *sinners!*”

Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but our disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

The wedding banquet was a picture of heaven.
The Messiah was the groom and his people the bride.
Not only do Jesus’ followers get in, it’s like they’re already in.

So how do we get in? Do we fast or don’t we fast?
What’s the right thing to think?
What’s the right thing to do?
What’s the practical application point Jesus?

They said, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

Mark 2: 21

So Jesus, do we fast or do we not fast? What does He want? What does God want? The paralytic gets in. Levi gets in. Sinners get in. What do we have to do to get in? Moses will tell you. Muhammed will tell you. Jesus will tell you...a story and a riddle.

“Jesus! Just tell me, should I fast?”

I have two friends that fasted for a month. One friend set out to fast, and when I heard about his fast I was thoroughly impressed with him, and ashamed of myself. I felt separated from him.

My other friend fasted for a month as well, but he didn’t set out to fast. I suspect that he wasn’t even aware that he was fasting, though fasting is exactly what it was. When he told me the story, I didn’t feel separated from him but even closer to him.²

² My friend didn’t set out to fast. He followed a girl into the wilderness. Jesus fasted for a month and He didn’t set out to fast. He followed the Holy Spirit into the wilderness and there are no restaurants in the wilderness.

One summer in college, my friend Mark Reinke followed this girl to California. He sold everything, left his home in Colorado and lived in a little trailer in California just to be close to Diana. (It was utterly foolish and could've been fatal.)

He spent all his money on rent and didn't have any left over for food. She broke up with him, but he wouldn't leave. He wanted her more than food. He finally broke his fast in a hunger-induced delirium. He broke into her house late one evening (not through the roof but a window) still an "improper channel."

Delirious with hunger, he found a big bowl of Jello that Diana's mother had prepared for a special event the following day. Having lost all control, he took it from the fridge, placed it on the floor and just started inhaling big fistfuls of Jello.

He told me that when the sugar hit his brain he suddenly realized what he was doing. He panicked, put the cellophane back on the bowl, put the bowl back in the refrigerator, and snuck out of the house. Diana's mom could never figure out what kind of thief would break into a house, eat only the Jello, put the cellophane back on the bowl and put the bowl back in the refrigerator, and then sneak out of the house. Well, it's the same foolish thief that married her daughter and fathered her grandchildren, for Diana let Mark in—into her temple—her heart. They formed a covenant, celebrated communion, and bore fruit.

Well, when that first friend told me about his fast, I was impressed with *him*, and ashamed of me. But when Mark told me about his fast, I forgot about me and was impressed with Diana. I thought: "Wow Mark! Diana must've been totally impressive." So you see, Mark's fast wasn't to his credit but to her credit. Mark fasted by grace, Diana's grace.

He didn't want to fast.

He wanted Diana and that made him fast.

He didn't want to be righteous.

He wanted Diana, and that was righteousness;

That was faith, hope, and love.

By the end of the summer, she looked at Mark and thought: "So much is wrong, but that one thing is right! He really wants me. I'm gonna let him in."

So maybe it really isn't about whether you fast or don't fast...but *why* you fast or don't fast. In other words: What do you want?

The scribes and Pharisees wanted to be right. They wanted to be right in a way that made them wrong. But the paralytic, Levi, the tax collectors, and sinners wanted Jesus and that made them right.

So what do you want?

In verse 17 Jesus said something crazy. He said, "*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*"³

³ He keeps referring to sin as a disease like a disease of the will. So you can't just decide not to sin because the thing you decide with is sin or at least enslaved to sin, and sick with sin. You don't heal sick people by blaming them for their sickness. And maybe you don't save sinners by blaming them for sinning.

But it gets crazier than just that. Jesus says, *"I didn't come to call the righteous. I came to call sinners."* So ask yourself, "Am I one of the righteous or am I a sinner?" OK...show of hands...no...just kidding. But with the question, I'm not kidding: "Am I one of the righteous or am I a sinner?"

If your answer is: "One of the righteous," well I guess Jesus isn't calling you because: *"He didn't come to call the righteous."* And if you're not called, you're not in...but out.

"Many will say on that day: 'Lord Lord, did we not prophecy in your name? And did we not cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name?' And he'll say, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.'"

But if you answered, "I'm a sinner..." Well, Jesus is calling you, for He came to call sinners. He knows you, and He's chosen you. Romans 8:29 *"Those whom he foreknew he also predestined, and those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."*

"I came not to call the righteous but sinners." And he didn't say, "some sinners" just "sinners." Sin is the Greek word *hamartia* and sinner is the Greek word *hamartolos*. It literally means "to miss the mark."

If you said to yourself, "I'm one of the righteous," it's probably because you've told yourself: "I've hit the mark." And you've defined the mark as a set of laws that give you the "knowledge of good and evil." The good is: *not* murdering, lying, or stealing. The evil is: murdering, lying, and stealing. Or maybe the good is voting a certain way and having a good job, and the evil is voting the other way and losing your job.

It really doesn't matter what the law is but that you use the law to judge yourself and judge others. You use the law and probably even adjust the law to make yourself righteous and others unrighteous. I mean be honest, when you're driving down the freeway, it doesn't matter what speed limit is posted, people going slower than you are going too slow, and people going around you are going just to damn fast!

You're the judge and you're the law. And you use the law to judge who's in, and who's out. And the more that are out, the better you feel about being in. In fact, you compete with others to be righteous and set yourself apart.

In Hebrew: *parash*, which means "set apart." It's where the name *parshee* "Pharisee" comes from. They were those who set themselves apart from sinners. They used the law to set themselves apart from sinners.

Well, in making yourself righteous, you make yourself totally unrighteous. For to make yourself righteous, you compete with your neighbor and try to beat your neighbor. When the whole commandment is: *"Love your neighbor."*

So, if you think you've made yourself righteous, you've made yourself *unrighteous*. It's not just that you haven't fulfilled some detail of God's law but that your righteousness is unrighteousness. So your righteousness is a lie. So God looks at that self-righteous you and says, "I don't know you" because He doesn't know lies.

He's not calling you—the false you—not *that* you. And by the way, that you is no fun at parties, and heaven is a party.

And now, if you're thinking, "Oh God...he just described me! I'm not righteous; I'm a sinner." Well, good news! Jesus is calling you—that you—the real you, the true you, the naked you—no longer hiding in fig leaves pretending to be something you're not.

You're a sinner!

And that's good news!

If someone says, "You've failed." Say, "Well, what did you expect from a sinner?" The pressures off, and you're not alone. You're a sinner. And isn't that great news...to know that you're not better than anyone else? You're not separate; you're not a Pharisee. Just turn to your neighbor and say, "I'm a sinner." And now say, "You're a sinner too."

If you can actually admit: "I'm a sinner," maybe....

You can enjoy a party. Maybe...

You can forget yourself...because....

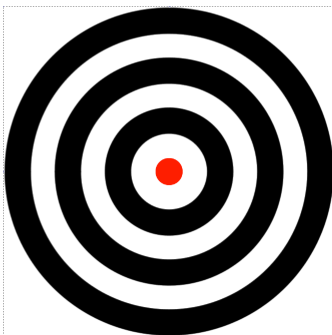
You're not stuck on yourself.

You're not full of yourself.

You're not stiff.

So, if you just thought, "I'm not righteous; I'm a sinner...Hallelujah! The pressure's off." You're not alone, and you my friend are being individually called by Jesus and those whom He calls: *"He also justifies, and those whom He justifies He also glorifies,"* and that means...YOU'RE IN! He said, *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Now some will say, "Wow! Shall I sin that grace may abound? Shall I try to sin?" No. You've already got plenty of sin and besides I don't think you actually can sin by trying to sin.



I mean, to sin is to "miss the mark." Like shooting at this target and missing the bulls-eye. Well, you can't miss the mark if you don't try to hit the mark. If you aim for the outer ring, you make it the mark, and can't miss the mark by hitting the mark.

We all agree that there is a mark. We call it what's "right." We may disagree on the details of what's "right" and how best to do what's "right," and hit the mark, but we all try to hit the mark. And so no one makes it their aim to be a sinner.

Just like no one aims to be an addict.

They aim for rest and try to hit the mark with a lot of drugs and alcohol.

No one aims for adultery, broken hearts, and broken families.
They aim for communion. And they break communion trying to get it.

No one aims for murder, war, or even genocide.
They aim for security, peace, and justice
And kill people in the process, and then kill more people just to convince themselves and everyone else it was righteous.

The most dangerous sinners aren't sinners that admit they're sinners but sinners desperately trying to convince themselves that they're not sinners...but just right.

To admit you're a sinner is to admit: "I'm not right." Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*" Well, you can't "hunger and thirst for righteousness" if you're full of righteousness.

To "hunger for righteousness" is to admit you're empty of righteousness, to admit you're a sinner, to admit you want righteousness but can't make yourself righteous. You want the right but can't make right. To admit you're a sinner is to hear the call of the Righteous One and realize you're not right.

So what's right?

Eve and that first Adam wanted to know what's right. So they took the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (that's called the law). They took the law to make themselves right. And it's as if God said, "You want law? I'll give you law. But it won't make you right, and taking it will make you wrong...and dead.

The law describes what's "right." But it can't make *you* right. It only reveals that you're wrong. The law describes love and Love is right. And God is Love. And so, of course you can't make yourself right. That's like trying to make yourself God. God is not a "practical application point." You can't apply Him to your life...but maybe He could apply you to His life.

You can't make yourself right. You can't make yourself in His image. But He can make you in His image. He can make you right. "*No one is righteous,*" says Scripture. "*No one is good but God alone.*" If you think you've made yourself righteous, you won't want God to make you righteous until you realize you're unrighteous—a sinner.

Well, to make yourself God would be like killing God. And how could we ever kill God? Well, Jesus is God. He is the mark. And now, I hope you know the story. Aiming to make ourselves right and convince ourselves we were right, we crucified the right. We nailed Him to our "tree of knowledge," and He made it His "tree of life."

We took His life, and yet He gave His Life. He *forgave* His Life crying, "*Father forgive!*" He hung naked on a cross saying, "Father forgive!" It appeared "utterly foolish" and it was fatal.

It certainly appeared to be the “wrong way,” and yet “He is the way.” He’s the only way into the temple of your heart. He is Love and He is The Mark.

Just before we took His life, He gave His life. He took a cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (The covenant—like a marriage covenant); “take and drink of it all of you.” Wine that’s blood and blood that’s wine—new wine.

And now back to our text:

The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins. (new wineskins)

Mark 2:19-22

In those days, people made wine and stored wine in skins. As the wine fermented the skins would stretch. But old skins grew stiff and would no longer stretch, so new wine would burst old wineskins.

Well, as Jesus gave up His spirit and poured out His life, and the “life is in the blood,” the curtain in the temple separating God from us ripped from the top to the bottom, and in one generation that temple was destroyed.⁴

Maybe the law and the stone temple were like an old wineskin. And maybe you’re an old wineskin, if you think you’re righteous. Maybe you’re stiff.

Steve Brown writes, “It’s worth noting that Jesus didn’t condemn bad people. He condemned “stiff” people. We condemn the bad ones and affirm the stiff ones. One of the most radical statements Jesus ever made was this: “*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.*” The righteous don’t want righteousness but sinners *do* want righteousness, and Jesus is righteousness.

What does God want?
What does Jesus want?
What does the Great Bridegroom want?
He wants you to want Him!

Well, the new wine destroys old wineskins that don’t want new wine. Maybe the “righteous” are old wineskins, and Jesus doesn’t call them; He destroys them. His blood is judgment upon them, and His blood is the new wine. His blood is righteousness. Maybe the righteous are old wineskins, and I know sinners are the new wineskins.

Jesus calls them and fills them like a bridegroom fills His bride, and she bears fruit, fruit of righteousness. So any righteousness in you is His life in you. If you claim it as your own,

⁴ Jesus fulfilled the moral law (right belief). The knowledge of good and evil, and Jesus fulfilled the ritual law (right action). He is the way into the Holy of Holies.

you kill it; you kill Him. Any love in you is God in you. If you possess the Love...you crucify the Love.

See? The self-righteous are old wineskins. And I think I have an old wineskin, but I am a new wineskin made by God to hold the new wine. Maybe the new wine is destroying my old wineskin even as it fills me—the new wineskin.

My old wineskin is my ego and my pride. It's my self-righteous self; it's a lie and it's a prison, and I'm free when it's destroyed.

I have an old wineskin, but I am a new wineskin.

I want for righteousness like an empty wineskin wants for wine.

I want for righteousness like a bride longs for her groom.

I want for righteousness,

And that itself is a seed of righteousness.

It's faith, hope and love growing in me.

I'm a sinner, and so I want for righteousness. Jesus is righteousness. So when you want to be right, when you want to be true, when you want to love what are you longing for? You are longing for Jesus. I'm beginning to want Jesus. I want Jesus and that's what it takes to get in.

If you want to get into Heaven, you must want Heaven to get into you, and to want Heaven to get into you, you must admit that you're a sinner. And to admit that you're a sinner, you must be called by the Righteous One.

So if you think, "Gosh, I'm a sinner," good news: you're being called. Righteousness Himself is calling you and making you to want Him. God is not testing you to find out what you know. And God is not testing you to discover what you can do. God is romancing you. He's calling you to create in you a longing for Him, for you will be filled with Him.

There isn't a plan of salvation that you can do. There's only a plan of salvation that God has done. And that's to "unite all things in Christ" making peace by the blood of His cross (Ephesians 1:10 and Colossians 2:20). The new wine.

"The great and merciful surprise," writes Richard Rohr, "is that we come to God, not by getting it right but by getting it wrong." So, it seems that getting into the Kingdom of Heaven is not like getting into the kingdom of the United States.

And so, they found the body of Kataun Safaie, twenty years old, newly married, Iranian bride curled up in a large suitcase of Los Angeles airport. Unable to obtain a visa, she tried to enter through "improper channels." All she had was faith, hope, and love, a longing for her bridegroom.

And so, she became a bad example in sermons all over our country, for we love laws and thinking we can fulfill laws making ourselves righteous, for if you can save yourself you don't need a Savior.

Well, Kataun Safaie needed a savior. And now, you might be wondering: "Hey are you saying that Iranian gal got saved?" Well, not exactly...but why not? Scripture says, "Love

is of God, and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.” And what she did sure looked like love. Foolish and fatal, she sacrificed herself for love. God is love, and Jesus is the way.

So maybe when she sees Him she'll recognize Him and run to Him. And he'll tell her His name. Maybe Jesus was at Los Angeles airport, and He opened the suitcase first, and He said, “Kataun, I'm your Bridegroom. I'm the One you're seeking and all who seek find. I am Love. I suffered and died for you, and now you have suffered and died for me. And that's not your plan; it's my plan. I Am the Way.

They may not accept you in the Kingdom of the USA. They may not accept you in the Kingdom on the institutional church but sweetheart...my Kingdom is *your* kingdom, foolish and fatal love like yours belongs to me. In fact, it is Me; it's my righteousness; it's my new wine. (I don't know; I'm just wondering.)

Maybe she was a new wineskin.

[Peter pulls several wine bottles out of the suitcase and places them on the communion table.]

Communion

[Peter opens the suitcase, which he brought in at the beginning of the sermon. He begins to pull out several bottles of wine and put them on the communion table.]

So on the night that we betrayed Him. The beginning of that day, as the Jews count the days, Jesus took bread and He broke it saying, *“This is my body broken for you; do this in remembrance of me.”* And in the same way after supper He took the cup and said, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it ALL of you and do it in remembrance of Me.”*

If you're righteous, He's not calling you. If you're a sinner, He is!

By the way, Scripture says, *“No one is righteous. No, not one.”* Only God is righteous. No one is good but God alone. Let me say it again: If you're righteous, He's not calling you. If you're a sinner, He is.

Pray with me: “Lord God, I'm a sinner. And Lord Jesus, *You* are righteous! I surrender myself that you would fill me with your Self.”

Saint Paul wrote, *“Him who he calls he also justifies, and him who he justifies he also glorifies.”* You're in! In Jesus' name.

We invite you and Jesus calls you to come forward, tear off a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup. The dark cups are wine the light cups are grape juice. Take the wine and place it in your skin.

Benediction

May you hate sin. Why? Because it hurts you and it hurts people. It hurts God. But may you be thankful that you're a sinner. Why? Because unless you're a sinner, I don't think you can really meet the Righteous One. Unless you need saving, you don't really get to know the Savior. So you can thank God that you are a sinner.

So when you become aware of sin what should you do? You don't have to hide it. You don't have to beat yourself up for it, but you can surrender it.

Do you know what the Bible calls this? [Peter points to the cross and communion table] "The winepress of the fury of the wrath of God." Because you see, your sin is like a grape. Throw your sin into the winepress, and God crushed it and turns it into new wine that flows back into you as God's Grace. You surrender sin and receive Grace and it changes you.

You know there's another name for Levi, the guy Jesus chased. That's Matthew. The Levites—the priests who served in the temple—descended from Levi. They had become corrupt and self-righteous over time. But Matthew wrote the Gospel. The Winepress of the fury of the wrath of God: That's how you turn a Levi into a Matthew; That's how Pharisee Saul is turned into the Apostle Paul—the Apostle of Grace.

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