

A sepia-toned illustration of a hilltop city with a winding road leading up to it, and three crosses on the right side of the hill.

A Scandalous Compassion

Luke 5:27-32

Luke 5:27-29

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:30-32

The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling
at His disciples, saying,

“Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?”

And Jesus answered and said to them,

“It is not those who are well who need a physician,
but those who are sick.

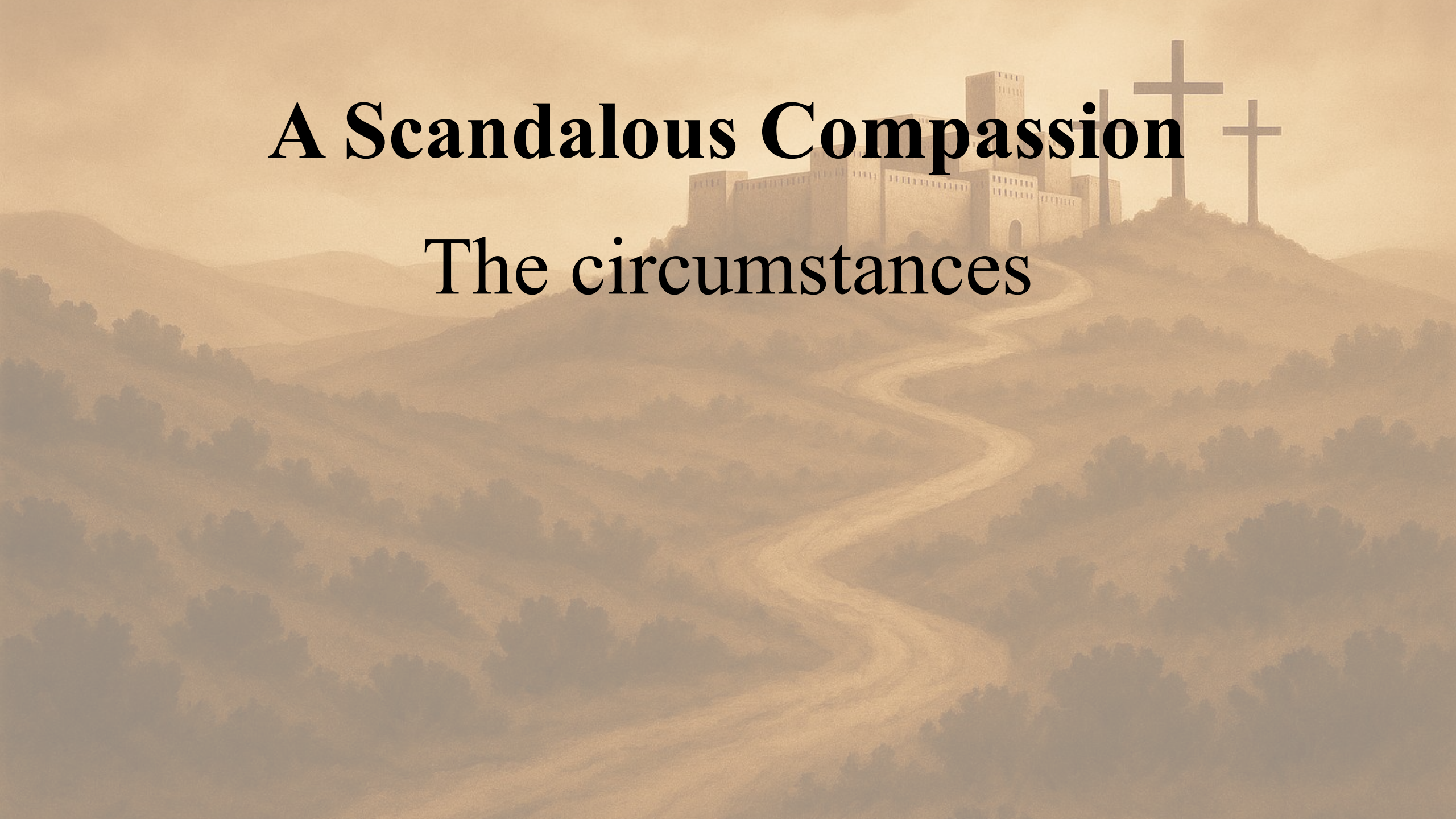
I have not come to call the righteous
but sinners to repentance.”

Main Point

Jesus demonstrated His compassion for sinners like us by calling a corrupt tax collector to Himself and then by dining with his scandalous friends to do the same.

A Scandalous Compassion

The circumstances



What were the circumstances?

A corrupt tax system



Luke 5:27

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth.

Luke 5:27

After that He went out and noticed **a tax collector**
named Levi **sitting in the tax booth.**

What was the tax booth?

Individual tax collectors could define any “good” as a taxable product.

Personal profits came from collecting more than what was required.

What were the circumstances?

A corrupt tax system

A corrupt tax collector



Luke 5:27

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth.

Luke 5:27

After that He went out and noticed **a tax collector**
named *Levi* sitting in the tax booth.

Luke 5:27

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector

named Levi **sitting in the tax booth.**

Luke 5:29

And Levi gave *a big reception* for Him *in his house*,
and there was a great crowd.

Levi's work as a tax collector for Rome had made him wealthy.

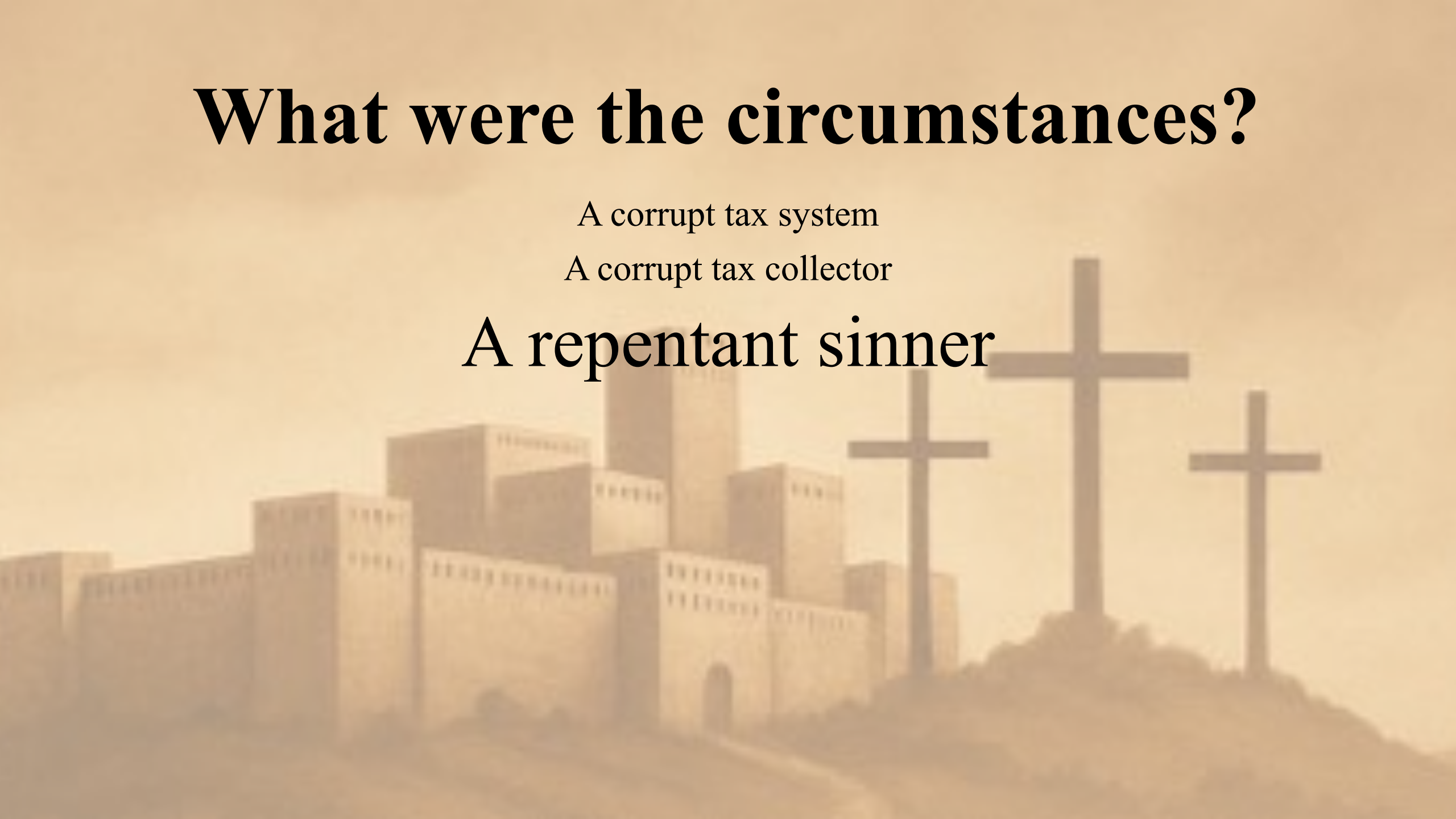
Consider that Levi would likely have been the one taxing the fish caught by Simon and his partners.

What were the circumstances?

A corrupt tax system

A corrupt tax collector

A repentant sinner



Luke 5:27-28

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

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Luke 5:27-28

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him,

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and got up and began to follow Him.

Luke 5:27-28

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." And he left everything behind,

and got up and **began to follow Him.**

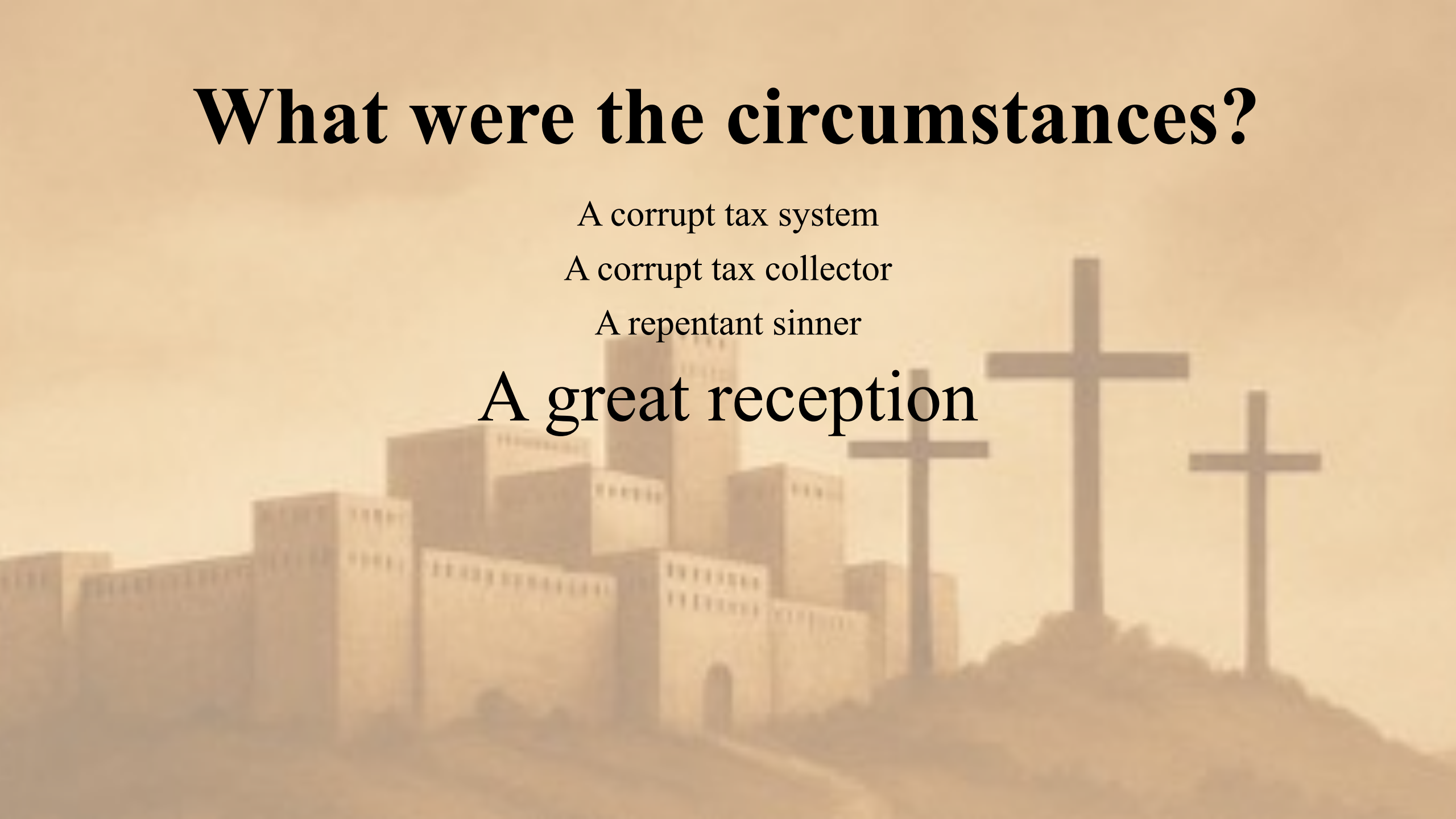
What were the circumstances?

A corrupt tax system

A corrupt tax collector

A repentant sinner

A great reception



Luke 5:29

And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house;
and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people
who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:29

And **Levi gave a big reception for Him** in his house;
and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people
who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:29

And **Levi** gave *a mega feast* for **Him** in his house;
and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people
who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:29

And Levi gave a mega feast for Him in his house;

and there was **a great crowd of *tax collectors***

and other people
who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:29

And Levi gave a mega feast for Him in his house;

and there was a great crowd of tax collectors **and other people**
who were reclining at the table with them.

Luke 5:29

And Levi gave a mega feast for Him in his house;
and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people

who were *reclining at the table* with them.

The reception Levi gave for Jesus would have been a high-ticket affair.

In the first century social and religious climate, Jesus' decision to recline at the table with this crowd would have been considered scandalous.

A Scandalous Compassion



The circumstances

The religious reaction

Who were the scribes and Pharisees?

Luke 5:30

The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling.

Matthew 23:2

The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves
in the chair of Moses.

Who were the scribes and Pharisees?

Luke 5:30

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Matthew 23:2

The scribes and the Pharisees *have seated themselves*
in the chair of Moses.

The Religious Reaction

Moral indignation



Luke 5:30

The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling
at His disciples, saying,
“Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors
and sinners?”

Luke 5:30

**The Pharisees and their scribes
began *grumbling***

at His disciples, saying,

“Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors
and sinners?”

Luke 5:30

The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling

at His disciples, **saying,**

**“Why do you eat and drink with
the tax collectors
and sinners?”**

The Pharisees were separatists,
holding themselves apart from the
unholy, unrighteous, and unclean.

Jesus' close association with *sinners*
was a moral outrage to them.

The Religious Reaction

Moral indignation

Self-righteous disapproval



Self-righteous?

Luke 5:31

Jesus answered and said to them,
“It is not those who are well who need a physician.”

Self-righteous?

Luke 5:31

Jesus answered and said to them,

“**It is not *those who are well*** who need a physician.”

They saw themselves as the healthy ones.

Jesus was not agreeing with their self-assessment but was rather pointing to their problem.

Disapproval?

Luke 5:30

“Why do you eat and drink with the
tax collectors and sinners?”

Disapproval?

Luke 5:30

“**Why do *you*** eat and drink with the
tax collectors and sinners?”

Their self-righteous moral code gave them
a set of standards whereby they could judge
others in comparison to themselves.

Their religious identity was based in
separation and fueled by comparison –

“I don’t *and you do*”

or

“I do *and you don’t.*”

Luke 18:11

The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself:

“God, I thank You that I am not like other people:
swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.”

Comparison

Luke 18:11

The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself:

“God, I thank You that ***I am not like other people:***

swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.”

“I don’t and they do.”

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Luke 18:11

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“God, I thank You that I am not like other people:
swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week; **I pay tithes** of all that I get.”

The Pharisees had developed their own code of conduct that became a measuring rod for gaining or granting approval.

They loved the approval of men!

In a culture in which there are radical differences in moral values, polarization can serve as a centrifuge, throwing opposing sides to the extremes.

A result can be increasing pressure to prove alignment with your group to gain their approval.

A Scandalous Compassion



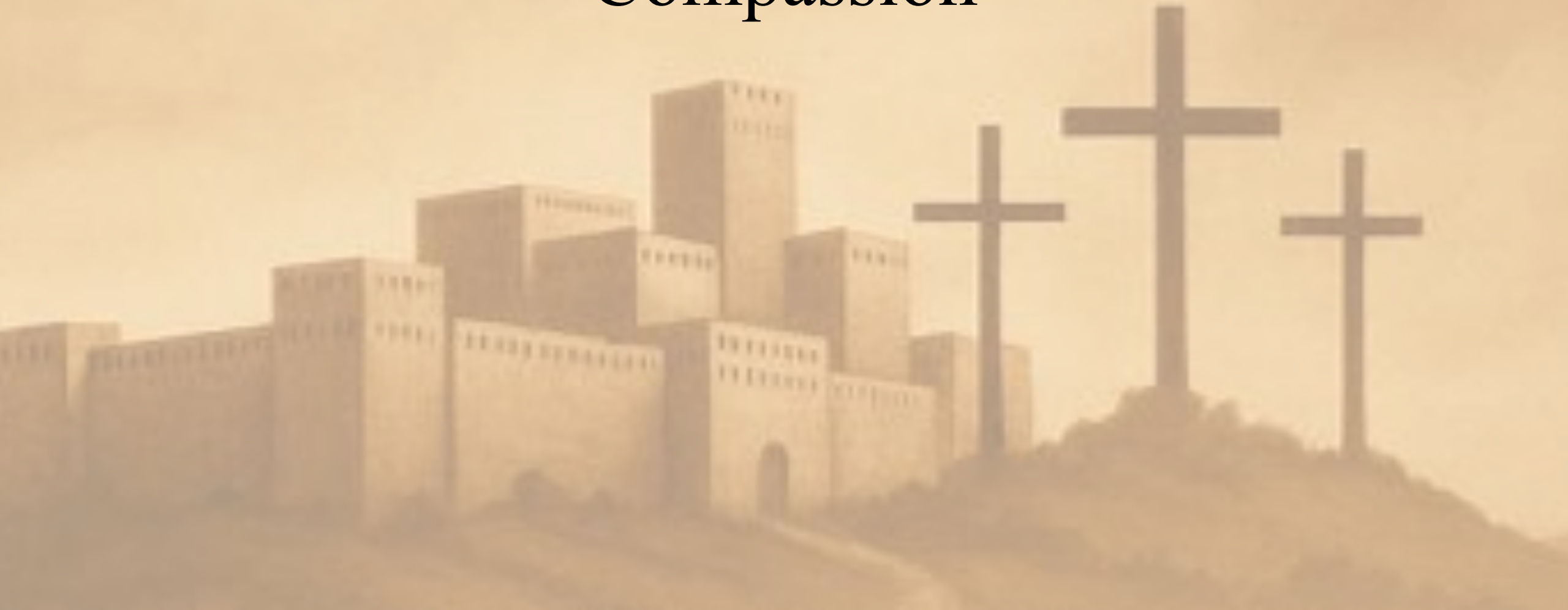
The circumstances

The religious reaction

Jesus' response

Jesus' Response?

Compassion



Luke 5:31

“It is not those who are well who need a physician,
but those who are sick.”

Luke 5:31

“It is not those who are well who need a physician,

but **those who are sick.**”

Luke 5:31-32

“It is not those who are well who **need a physician,**
but **those who are sick.**”

“I have come...to call sinners.”

Matthew 9:13

“But go and learn what this means:
‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,’
for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus came to build His Church by
compassionately gathering the outcasts.

Psalm 147:2

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
He gathers the outcasts of Israel.

Jesus' Response?

Compassion

Calling



Luke 5:27

After that [Jesus] went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.”

Luke 5:27

After that [**Jesus**] went out and *noticed*
a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth,
and He said to him, “Follow Me.”

Luke 5:27

After that [Jesus] went out and noticed
a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth,

and **He said to him, “Follow Me.”**

Luke 5:27

After that [Jesus] went out and noticed
a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth,

and **He said to him, “Follow Me.”**

Jesus did not call Levi to follow a religious system or even a law code; He called Levi to follow *Himself*.

John 5:39

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is *these* that *testify about Me*.”

Whom did He call?

Luke 5:31-32

And Jesus answered and said to them...

“I have not come to call the righteous
but sinners to repentance.”

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but **sinner**s to repentance.”

Whom did He call?

Luke 5:31-32

And Jesus answered and said to them...

“**I have** not **come to call** the righteous
but **sinner**s to repentance.”

Jesus calls sinners to change
their minds about what they value,
what they desire, what they love.

John 14:15

**“If you love *Me*,
you will keep My commandments.”**

For Reflection

In what ways are you using comparison to bolster your sense of spiritual well-being?

Are we calling people to follow a moral code of conduct or to follow Jesus, the Person?

Are we willing to associate with the moral outcasts of our day to introduce them to Jesus?