

INTRO

Can you think of a season in your life when you felt like you *didn't quite belong*—socially, culturally, or relationally? What was that like for you?

READ

In the Gospels, we see Jesus impacting people in many ways—He healed, taught, forgave, delivered, and challenged them. But today we are focusing on one deeply personal way Jesus changed lives: He became a friend.

- Luke 5:27–32 – The calling of Matthew (Levi)
- John 15:15 – “I no longer call you servants... Instead, I have called you friends.”
- 1 Peter 2:2–3 – “Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good...”

REFLECT

Jesus crossed social, moral, and cultural boundaries to form genuine relationships. Choose one or two of the questions below to discuss:

Qu: Why do you think Jesus intentionally chose someone like Matthew to follow Him?

Qu: What is the difference between being friendly and being a true friend?

Qu: Which subcultures or social “worlds” do you naturally feel comfortable with—and which feel harder for you to engage?

Observation: The more *different* someone is from us, the greater the potential impact friendship can have—because many people feel unseen by those unlike them.

RESPOND

Jesus didn't just invite Matthew to believe something—He invited him close. That kind of friendship created space for repentance, change, and mission.

Qu: Am I willing to let Jesus fully call me to the purpose He has for my life?

Qu: Am I willing to let Jesus draw me close—not just to follow Him, but to be formed by Him?

Qu: Are there people Jesus may be calling me to move beyond friendliness and into real friendship with?

Qu: Is there anything (comfort, preference, fear, “vibe checks”) that might be limiting who I allow into my life?

PRAY

- Thank Jesus for first calling us His friends and for welcoming us when we didn't belong.
- Pray for eyes to see people the way Jesus sees them—wanted, valued, and worth drawing close.
- Ask God for courage to step beyond surface-level friendliness into intentional, Christ-like friendship.
- Pray for those in your group (and city) who are experiencing loneliness, isolation, depression, or anxiety.
- Pray that our church would be more than a friendly place—that it would become a **community of friends** through whom Jesus meets real needs.
- Pray for any specific needs shared within the group.