



# onechurch

## bigIdea



One hundred years ago, the *RMS Titanic* sank, taking with it 1,517 lives. And though they're weren't enough lifeboats for the 2,223 passengers, those 706 people who found their way into a life boat chose not to go back and rescue those freezing to death and drowning in the water.

That event begs the question about who we are as a church. *Who is the church for?* Is the church supposed to be more like an comfortable cruise ship, or should it be more like a life boat? What's the REAL purpose of the church? Should the church be for churched people—those who are spiritually well—or should the church be for unchurched people—those who are sick? In today's study, that's the question we're asking. And the answer may surprise you.

**BIG IDEA:** The Church is a lifeboat, not a comfortable cruise ship.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the wildest party you have ever gone to?
2. *Read Mark 2:13-17.* If Levi came from a good religious family (the priestly tribe of Levi), why do you think he went into the fraudulent business of tax collecting? Has there ever been a time when you strayed away from your upbringing?
3. Why do you think Jesus chose the 'cheat' as one of His disciples? What positive elements would Levi brought to Jesus' ministry? What negative elements would Levi have brought to Jesus' ministry?
4. Why do you think Levi threw a party for his old friends? Have you ever felt the pressure to leave your old friends in the dust along with your old lifestyle once you followed Jesus?
5. Do you think Jesus should have gone to the party/kegger? Do you think Jesus just made a token appearance, or do you think He really enjoyed Himself? (*read Luke 19:10*)
6. What's good about having saints and sinners in the same room?
7. What's good about not trying to figure out who belongs to which group?
8. Why did Levi's party make the religious right uptight?
9. What parallel situations do you see today? Do you generally respond to them like Christ or like the religious leaders? Why?
10. How have we become deaf to the whistles of those drowning all around us? What can you do personally to open our ears to those who need a relationship with Jesus?

### THINK ABOUT IT

You and I can wait so long, not to invite people into the lifeboat that we no longer hear the whistles. Our ears grow deaf to the people who need saving—all the while we're comfortable in our lifeboats, singing songs and holding hands, rowing our boats gently down the stream, merrily and happily—because our life is but a dream. But people outside the church walls? For 88% of people here in Clarksville who don't go to church—they're drowning. They're splashing. As the people who are inside the church—we look at they're splashing and yelling, and we mistake their actions on Friday and Saturday nights as having fun—but what they're really doing is trying to get our attention—they're drowning.

Read Stevie Smith's Poem, *Not Waving But Drowning*, and discuss how religious people confuse cries for help with partying and playing around.

*Nobody heard him, the dead man,  
But Still he lay moaning:  
I was much further out  
than you thought  
And not waving but drowning.*

*Poor chap, he always loved  
playing  
And now he's dead  
It must have been too cold for him  
his heart gave way, They said.*

*Oh, no no no, it was too cold always  
(Still the dead one lay moaning)  
I was much too far out all my life  
And not waving but drowning.*

Do you know any people like Katy Perry who have left the church because they just didn't seem to fit in?

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." Mark 2:16-17*

