



## The Gospel According to Luke

### Wk. 24 "Lessons from Eating, Drinking, and being Merry"

By Pastor Jody May

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#### Jesus Calls Levi

<sup>27</sup> After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." <sup>28</sup> And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

<sup>29</sup> And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. <sup>30</sup> And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>31</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

#### A Question About Fasting

<sup>33</sup> And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." <sup>34</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." <sup>36</sup> He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup> But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. <sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"

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**HEART or CONFLICT & CONVICTION**

**HEAD or CONFIDENCE:**

**HANDS or CONDUCT:**

#### 1. The World that Levi leaves behind – Levi's exit.

<sup>27</sup> After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth.

So far in Luke's account Jesus has grabbed some disciples and He trusted in God (HS) and **called some dudes** that if you and I were in charge of influencing the whole world with the Kingdom of God to the point that every people group should hear the gospel (Mat. 24:14) **I don't know if you and I would call the same people** He did. He called some untrained, sinful, blue collared people and He said follow me, they gave up their businesses and they followed Him AND



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you are going to see the same thing today. Levi is an accountant that is not the most honest of men, but he becomes instrumental in history as you might know him by his other name, Matthew. So, the first lesson we learn from this account:

**1<sup>st</sup> - God calls people not by their appearances, but He calls them because their future success is based on Him and what He will do.**

The second thing we need to be aware of this story today is that He has already ticked off some guys that run the religious cool scene among the Jews; the Pharisees (and scribes). These guys have already gotten a belly full of Jesus as His miracles have shown that He indeed is working for God. I think this is messing with their mind now because here they are the rule followers, the ones that won't even dare eat with common folks because they are seen as unclean, and they can't heal jack. Yet, Jesus is getting the adoration of the common man and along with that He is making these strong claims about being God, calling Himself the 'Son of Man' and actually forgiving sins!? The recipe for human wrath that we are learning is that you can tick off a lot of religious folks by not doing the things the way they want you to. So, here's something you saw last week, you will see this week and you will see throughout Luke:

**2<sup>nd</sup> - God is not concerned with man-made traditions because they don't heal man-made sin.**

With all that in mind Jesus is doing His traveling preacher thing and comes across Levi, a tax collector. Not just any tax collector, no this guy has got a BOOTH! He's official, he's what you would call in that day a 'Publican' that is he is a government employee. Oh man, this is not the job you want! He's a Jew that basically takes money from travelers, coming into town whether from the highway or by ship and He claims a tax based on what you are hauling or whatever your business is. Now the way this guy gets paid is that he charges you, wait for it, a FEE! And what's worse he is probably one of the richest guys in town and he hangs with people that like to flaunt money! Oh, the Pharisees and the common man at least had this in common, they hated this type of tax collector, the living embodiment of FEES!

Not only that, here's a little psychological background. He is a constant reminder that they could not live out the Mosaic Covenant to be protected FROM foreign powers. Every time they look at him, they are reminded at how they messed up. Then on top of that, no matter how hard the Pharisees tried to live rightly or teach others to do so, no one could bring back that promise, but you still lived in fear that God would remove any blessing if you didn't try; NOTHING THEY



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COULD DO COULD MAKE THIS SITUATION ANY BETTER! How would you like to be that guy that when people look at you that's what they see, you're the reminder of their screw ups!?

So, Jesus is coming into town, Levi, gives him the "state your business" line and then...

**And he said to him, "Follow me." <sup>28</sup> And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.**

Jesus gives Him that look, I want to know what that is like, I want to see it, what does it sound and look like when Jesus says, "Follow me" (Jedi mind trick). It has got to be something magical to see, it made Peter, James, and John leave everything, it makes Levi give up his lucrative money-making scheme, and it is what makes many Christians give up things in this life to follow Jesus.

**3<sup>rd</sup> - Proof of our Faith is in obedience to a "Call" not obedience to a "Code" of morality.**

Let's stop looking at each other to see what we are or aren't doing and let's start looking to see **who's Sacrificing things for the sake of the gospel**. And I say this not so we can become a bunch of accusers of works on sacrificing, that never got the Pharisees anywhere, but let's become people who **join others that are busy doing the Kingdom work of Gospel proclamation**. Want to know the best way to handle the temptation of/to sin in your life, **make yourself busy making much of Jesus and He will never stop giving you things to talk about with others!** Proof of Faith is in your call and willingness to proclaim the Gospel...

Now that was 3 things already just from the background information and the first verse, let's keep diving in and see what else this occasion has for us.

### **2. The Last Party - Levi's Exit.**

Ok so you're thinking it is time for Levi to clean up his act, he's about to follow Jesus, no more wine, women and song. **Nope, they go to his house and they PARTY!**

**<sup>29</sup> And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. <sup>30</sup> And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"**



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It is a celebration, he's celebrating a new career, he's going to hang with one of the most influential people in all of Judea now, Jesus of Nazareth! This is the guy that hacks off the same people he did, he gets Levi! This is a call for celebration!

Now this is where Pharisees start taking offense again at Jesus, but at first glance it may not be at the same thing that offends you.

First, the Pharisees don't care whether Jesus is drinking or not, I need to clear that up for a few in here today. They were hacked at Him for eating and drinking with the tax collectors and people that rolled like he did. **Drinking in the religious middle east unlike the religious south east of America was ok.** BTW Jesus did drink wine because in **Luke 7:33-34** Jesus made a statement to talk about the Pharisees from this encounter:

**<sup>33</sup> For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>34</sup> The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' <sup>35</sup> Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."**

The comparison He gave was between Him and JB. JB couldn't drink wine so Him mentioning He did drink would mean wine, and this wine is fermented because wine in the middle east was aged in wine skins which Jesus even talked about in this passage today. I just need to let everyone know that **just because man abuses a creation of God does not mean it is not a good thing.**

The thing that the Pharisees didn't like was that Jesus relaxed and enjoyed the company of the unclean, the people they would not hang with. Notice the Pharisees call the people "sinners" (v.30) while Luke calls them "others" (v.29). This is there in the text so we know that there should be a difference in how the people that follow Jesus should view others as compared to the Pharisees.

Then we have this famous reply by our Lord that actually spells out how it is that the world is to be viewed by those of His kingdom.

**<sup>31</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."**



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Couple of more lessons here for us:

**4<sup>th</sup> - God is Merciful, therefore we are Merciful, and Merciful people are compassionate to those far from God.**

Don't think for a moment you came to Christ as a healthy person, that's the mistake the Pharisees kept making. Because they made up this code of good behavior, they had **fooled themselves into thinking** they were **spiritually healthy**. And a good way to get stuck in that belief system, just like a Pharisee, is if you live in such a way that you **despise being around** the sick, sinners. People need the compassion of others but often time **the ones that are ready** to hear the gospel are the ones that **look least like you**, because they are still in their sin. Please remember we all were in the same boat at one time or another and it took the Mercy of God to give someone the Grace of God needed to reach us. **Merciful people like God are compassionate to those far from Him...**

**5<sup>th</sup> -To seek the Lost for Jesus you have got to be around them.**

I know it would be a lot safer mentally if you didn't have to be around those that didn't think like you do, but you see **this is the perfect time in America** to get around those that are far from God. When what seems like half our country wants the morality police of the Evangelical America to shut up and go away, we now have the perfect opportunity to start being a **good neighbor**.

We don't have to apologize for our overzealous and scared brothers and sisters that condemn everything wrong in the world through social media but you need to **befriend** those that are being judged by them so you too can share time, **tell them of your savior and how He forgives sin while not being afraid to let your hair down around them**. We must have contact with them in such a way that they are comfortable with us and we with them while not joining in their sin. Trust the HS more than that, He did not fail Jesus and if you are living for His name, He won't fail you either.

**3. Why don't Jesus' Disciple's Fast?**



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**<sup>33</sup> And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink."**

The Pharisees, which btw are at the party probably invited by Jesus because Levi would have known better, they get mad at the slight by Jesus. They decide to come back door at Jesus and instead of critiquing Him they critique His boys.

Jesus paints the Pharisees the picture of another type of party, a wedding party, and at that party there is a bridegroom.

**<sup>34</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."**

It is inappropriate not to celebrate with the bridegroom when He is celebrating, that is our que to make merry! Jesus is saying that while I am here celebrating with them it is their job to rest in my presence, enjoy the time, for I won't always be around.

JB's boys, well he's in prison, he left the party so they are praying for his deliverance.

Pharisees, what's your excuse? The proof of your ignorance and disbelief is that you don't celebrate with me. If the Pharisees only knew who He was they above all else would have partied harder than anyone else **because it means they could stop worrying about being so morally superior to everyone else!**

**6<sup>th</sup> - Ignoring Jesus and His presence will add to your spiritual worry.**

It never fails when I start missing my time with God in the mornings, I am more prone to wander, I am more likely to be downcast, I agitate so quickly, I am likely to be less involved with the body, **because I am increasing the distance between my heart and His.** It's not about how well you understand the Bible sometimes, don't let that keep you from reading it, but God will use anything you read to bring you into a greater revelation of who He is. Learning more about Jesus, His work in life, through His death, and through His resurrection is what changes our affections for Him. **Repentance means engaging with Jesus for this will increase your Spiritual Joy!**



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Lastly, what are these last two parables about? You can't use new material for a patch on an old garment and you can't put new wine in old wine skins. First let's talk about the science of that.

Using new material with old will rip because it too will shrink and over time will pull on the old making an even bigger hole. Likewise, new wine still has to ferment. So, if you put new wine in a skin that has already been stretched out it will burst the skins from fermenting. Here's the last lesson from all the Eating, Drinking, and being Merry.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> - The Gospel cannot be poured into vessels that hold onto man-made religions.**

What do I mean? Well, just like the Pharisees, Christians have spiritual proclivities to hold on to teachings that aren't necessarily Biblical. Look at the Jesus summation of the parables.

**<sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.' "**

Conservatism for example, is not the savior of traditional evangelicalism. Conservatism tends to say the 'Old' is better because it is 'Old' therefore everything 'New' is suspect. Of course Liberalism tends to say 'New' is better because it is 'Improved' therefore everything Old is wrong. **Both are old man-mad ways of thinking.**

**The Bible is a HOLY book**, meaning Other Worldly, meaning the message, the Gospel is Holy. Therefore, when poured into us if we hold onto our man-made traditions for religion it will not have the effect in our lives as it should. **Instead of the good news changing us we change the news to make it fit our systems of belief.** I hate to say this, but I loved my church and pastor growing up but like many churches in the 70s and 80s they viewed the sin and the sinner as something to be judged and belittle producing in it an atmosphere of religious piety. When as a young man when I had many sins to confess, I felt judged before ever opening my mouth.

**We must be aware that when reading and learning about Jesus He is all about replacing what's inside of us not adding to a religious code we think we know...**



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#### **Conclusion:**

God's Word always comes at the right time. I want you to remember this tonight at your Super Bowl gatherings, which I hope you invited some neighbors as well, that may be far from God. It is appropriate to eat drink and be Merry with God's people for you have more to celebrate than anyone in the world, and how good you celebrate life together shows the world how good a Savior in Jesus we have! - AMEN

#### **PRAYER**

#### **COMMUNION**

#### **BENEDICTION**

Go in the name of the Father that sent us the bridegroom to celebrate with and for.

Go in the name of the Son that modeled for us how to eat drink and be merry.

Go in the name of the HS that will helps us repent from our Pharisaic ways and helps us connect with those far from God.