

Luke 5:27-6:11

Chapter 5

Verses 27-32:

--(27-28) *After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.*

--Mk. 2:13-14 gives us the sense that Matthew's tax booth was set up somewhere near the shore where Jesus called Peter and the others.

--Tax collectors had three strikes against them. First, they were traitors. Second, they were thieves. Third, their profession put them in constant contact with Gentiles and ceremonially unclean things, so they were considered religiously unclean—tax collectors and sinners being virtually synonymous terms (5:30).

--Luke tells us Jesus **saw a tax collector named Levi**. Focusing on the outward facts.

--Mark tells us Jesus saw **Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office**. Which seems a bit more personal, maybe Levi was known by Peter and the others?

--Finally, Matthew, autobiographically, says Jesus **saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office**. Jesus **saw a man!** He had come to catch men. Jesus saw what no others saw, including Matthew himself.

--Matthew calls himself Matthew. We don't know if Jesus changed his name like Simon Peter or if he just had another name he went by, like Thomas and Bartholomew, but we know he was always listed among the disciples as Matthew (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13).

--What is Matthew's testimony? It is quite brisk! *He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.*

--The work of God is so unique in every heart. Matthew didn't need much fanfare. He didn't need John the Baptist to point out Jesus, like Andrew. He didn't need a large catch of fish, like Peter. He didn't need a moment of personal revelation, like Nathaniel. He just needed Jesus to call. *Many of us have this testimony as well! Let us never be ashamed of it!*

--(29) *Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.*

--Matthew throws a retirement bash! This was a huge event. The Greek word for **feast** (*doche*) is only used one other time in the NT in Lk. 14:13. It describes a large banquet.

--First, this tells us that Matthew likely surrendered the most materially to follow Jesus. God still calls men out of their materially successful careers. *I think it is important to remember both John the Baptist (3:12-13) and Jesus (with Zacchaeus) never told tax collectors they had to quit their jobs because the career itself was sinful.*

--Second, this shows us that Matthew was overjoyed and unashamed of Jesus. He wanted his friends to find Jesus as well! *Should also be our natural desire!*

--(30-32) *And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"*

Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

--There is so much for us to learn in this one little scene! Eating with someone was a level of fellowship in that culture much different from what it is for us today. The Pharisees were shocked that Jesus would identify Himself with these types.

--They question His disciples, but Jesus answers for them. *Always best to let Jesus speak for Himself!*

--Jesus makes it clear that He was with these sinners because they had no goodness to defend. They needed Him! As the Great Physician, shouldn't He be with those who were sick? *His presence was a rebuke to the Pharisees' pride and lack of mercy.*

Matthew 9:13: But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

--It is also very important for us to see *why* Jesus eats with sinners. *To call them to repentance!* Jesus doesn't eat with sinners because He is so loving that their sin doesn't bother Him. He is eating with sinners because their sin does bother Him, and He wants to save them from it!

--Do we have the courage to sit at a table over a meal with a sinner we love and call them to repentance? Let alone a crowd in another man's home?!

--When is the right time not to eat with/fellowship sinners? When we are not there with the sincere intention of seeing them saved and come to repentance. *It is not that we are "too good" for them, as some may complain. The truth is that we are not actually good enough.*

Verses 33-39:

--(33) *Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"*

--The *they* speaking here are disciples of John the Baptist (**Mt. 9:14**). They ask an honest question about fasting.

--The law only demanded one fast per year on the day of atonement (**Lev. 16:29-34; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11; Acts 27:9**). Other fasts were not uncommon (**Mt. 6:16**: Jesus has to rebuke them for *how* they are fasting), and many of the Pharisees fasted twice a week (**Lk. 18:12**: and bragged about it), every Monday and Friday.

--Jesus didn't regularly fast so neither did His disciples. Jesus was slandered for His eating and drinking. John the Baptist for his fasting. The Pharisees didn't like either of them!

Luke 7:33-34: For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, "He has a demon." The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"

--You couldn't win with the Pharisees, but the disciples of John seem to be genuine in their question.

--(34-35) And He said to them, "Can you make friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

--Jesus makes a simple point. Who would tell the guests at a wedding feast to fast? No one! The fact of His presence with His disciples was a proper source of joy. *Wasn't that heaven's own announcement about His coming?! Joy to the world!*

--Wisely, by using the picture of a bridegroom, Jesus was reminding the disciples of John the Baptist about their teacher's teaching!

John 3:29-30: He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

--Joy is the fitting attitude of Christ's followers! ***Lk. 15:32; 24:52***

--Even so, Jesus acknowledges there was a time coming when His disciples would properly fast—when He would be **taken away from them**. The Greek word for **taken away** (*apairo*) gives the sense of being forcibly, or violently, lifted up and carried off.

--Fasting, as with the day of atonement, would be proper at that time.

--(36-38) Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

--The Pharisees, the disciples of John the Baptist, and even Jesus' disciples all needed to learn something about the Messiah. He was not present to "patch-up" the old system of Judaism, or to bring new wine to put into an old wineskin.

--That process, with patches or wineskins, would end up ruining both. The arrival of the Messiah, His arrival, was the inauguration of a new era. He was everything the Old Testament law and prophets were pointing to.

--He was not mixing the old with some new. Jesus was bringing new life, which also needed new "skins", or a New Covenant!

Romans 7:6: But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

--(39) And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, "The old is better."

--Jesus understands the difficulty of this reality for the Jews. At this point, it was impossible for them to understand the mystery of new birth, the New Covenant, and the Church as one Body of both Jew and Gentile.

--Even His own disciples struggled to grasp the reality of this new wine and new wineskin—**Acts 10+15**. *Also, think of Paul's struggles with the Judaizers.*

--The fact that Jesus was introducing a new revelation of God and a new system of worship is why the Pharisees hated Him most. He was changing their way of life.

John 11:47-48: *Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."*

--This will soon happen again! Are we open to the new and life and covenant of Jesus Christ? Are we ready for His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Chapter 6

Verses 1-5:

--(1-2) *Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"*

--Now, Luke illustrates Jesus' new wine in conflict with the old wine of the Pharisees—specifically regarding the Sabbath.

--No one knows what ***the second Sabbath*** means in relation to the ***first***. Scholars have many theories, with a handful being reasonable explanations. I have no firm conviction of my own between them.

--The disciples are doing something allowed by the law (**Deut. 23:25**). *Hands, yes. Sickles, no.*

--The true prohibition in the law specific to the Sabbath was that of ***work*** (**Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15**).

Exodus 34:21: *Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.*

--In their own Sabbatic Code, the Pharisees had defined "work" as 39 principle works, each subdivided into six minor categories. Jesus' disciples were not breaking the Sabbath by eating. They were breaking the Pharisaic Sabbatic traditions regarding God's actual law.

--Human traditions *are not the same* as the Word of God. We can have our traditions, but we can never demand that our traditions be recognized with equal authority to the Word. That is when insistence on tradition becomes sin.

--There are still many sections of Christendom that demand their traditions are recognized with equal authority to the Word of God, just like these Pharisees!

--Jesus sternly and consistently rebukes the Pharisaic insistence on tradition over the Word of God. (Mt. 15:3-6; 23:23-24; Mk. 7:1-13; 12:38-40; Lk. 11:37-52; 20:45-47; etc.)

--(3-5) ***But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."***

--***Have you not even read.*** . . . had to sting! Even so, most legalistic theology comes by emphasizing *part* of God's truth while ignoring the sections of God's Word that limit or mitigate their preferred emphasis. *That is why it is important to read the whole Bible!*

--Jesus reminds them about one of their heroes, David. David, fleeing from Saul, went to the tabernacle and took the bread from the holy place that only the priests were supposed to eat (Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5-9; 1 Sam. 21:1-6; 22:9-10).

--The ceremonial law was a means to an end, but they were holding the means as *the end*. To have rejected David and the starving men with him, would not have pleased God. Doing anything truly good and necessary for life did not break God's command to do no work.

--And if that wasn't enough, Jesus declared Himself the Lord of the Sabbath! *I don't know why they didn't try to stone Him after that bold statement!*

Verses 6-11:

--(6-8) ***Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood.***

--Another Sabbath conflict.

--The Pharisees are expecting Jesus to be drawn to the person with the most obvious need. Wonderfully, they were right.

--They were seeking something against Him, but He unveils their hidden controversy by asking the man to stand in the middle of the room.

--(9-10) ***Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.***

--Jesus asks very simple questions. His reasoning was clear. That is part of the reason the common people heard Him gladly.

--There was no Sabbath prohibition for doing good or saving a life. Jesus knows that the Pharisees would save one of their animals that fell into a pit on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:11-12).

--It was also wrong, Sabbath or not, to do evil or destroy life. For Jesus, the omission of good was the commission of evil. On their Sabbath, David and his companions would have starved, and this man would remain in his suffering. Not on Jesus' Sabbath.

--Praise God, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath!

--No one answers Jesus' question. Apparently, as He looked around, there was a profound and infuriating silence. Didn't anyone have the courage to speak the truth?!

****Mark 3:5: And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts. . . ****

--Jesus' command the man standing in their midst to stretch out his hand, and the command came with the power to obey. Where God guides, God provides.

--(11) But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

--They became unreasonable through rage. Can you imagine rage as your response to a miracle?! Human life is so real, and gritty, and the Scriptures capture the truth. All men were not swayed by, or even rejoiced in, Jesus' miracles.

--The Pharisees didn't want the truth. They wanted to be right. They wanted their own way. They wanted Jesus "under" them.

--Ignoring Jesus' words, they begin discussing how to do evil and destroy the Son of Man on the Sabbath.

****Mark 3:6: Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.****

--Wounded self-love makes people unreasonable, angry, and malicious.