



Smith Rock
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group study guide

LUKE

J E S U S F O R E V E R Y O N E

**For the week of
1st of March 2020**



One day Sally saw Bob's pickup parked outside a bar in town, as she drove past, and it was still there a few hours later when she returned home. The next Sunday Sally told everyone at church about how Bob's pickup was parked outside the bar all day with the inference he was inside.

Of course this tattle got back to Bob, and so the next week one evening he parked his pickup outside Sally's house and he left it there overnight.

We can be so quick to jump to conclusions when we see things like this, and spread rumours about suspicious associations. In this week's text the Pharisees don't just suspect Jesus is associating with the wrong people they see Him for themselves! Why was Jesus there? Because He was invited by one of them, and not just that Jesus invited this man beforehand to become one of His disciples!



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

29 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. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

33 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." 34 And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." 36 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. 37 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. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.' ”

Luke 5:27–39 (ESV)

Commentary

In the previous section Jesus had caused a stir amongst the Pharisees who had gathered from all over the country to see what He was up to, by telling a crippled man that his sins were forgiven. “Who can forgive sins but God” they had thought to themselves, and they were right, no one can except God. But Jesus shows that indeed He does have the power to forgive sins tells the crippled man to get up and pick up his bed and go home which he does.

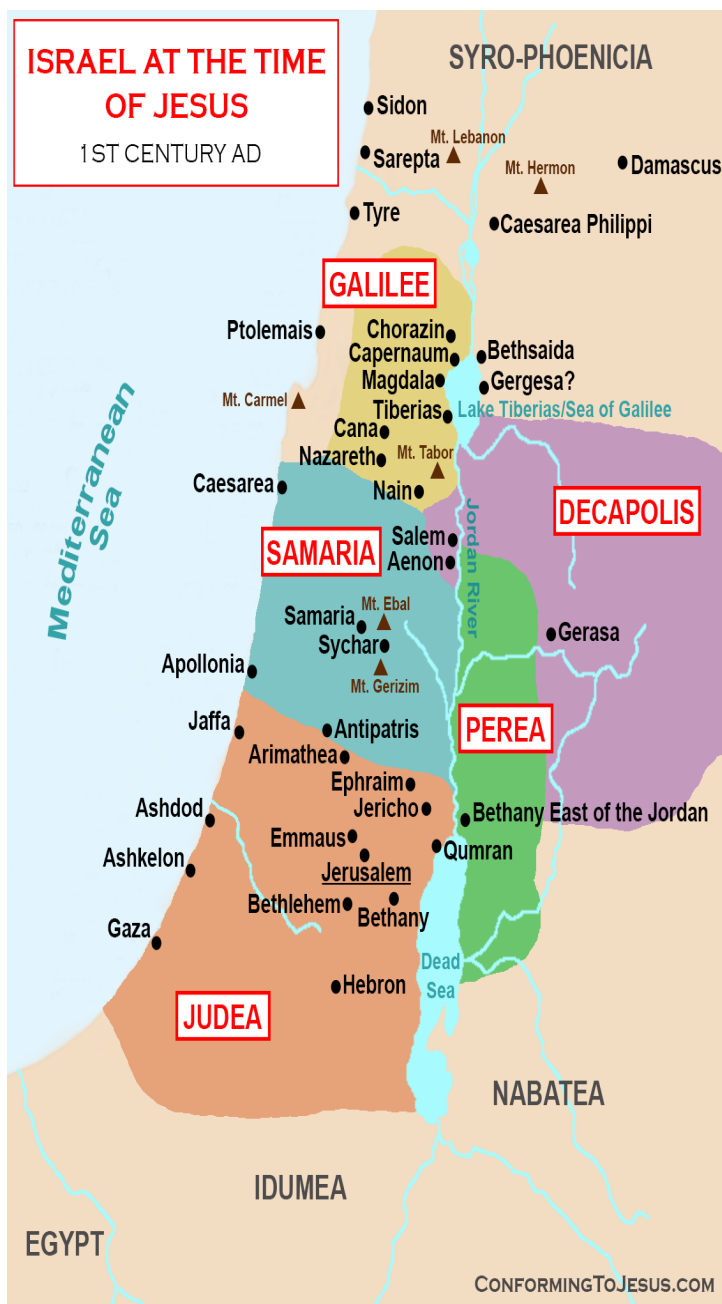
The section finishes with everyone being amazed and glorifying God, although whether that everyone included the Pharisees is uncertain.

Jesus move on and he calls a tax collector who is sitting in his tax booth, named Levi (Matthew) to follow him.

Tax collectors maybe disliked today, but in Judea and Galilee they were hated.

ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF JESUS

1ST CENTURY AD



The system of tax collection used was started in Greece where tax collection would be contracted out to the highest bidder who would then collect the taxes and make a profit for themselves as well. The Romans adopted this system of taxation and implemented it across their empire or they did stop much of the abuse and some taxes were collected by officials. As today there were a number of taxes; a head tax, a land tax, and quite a few other taxes on various goods and especially transportation of these goods. There were also of course religious taxes (the tithe and the temple tax). Many people struggled under the weight of the heavy tax burden to survive, and there was a lot of opposition. In addition the taxes were seen as a means of supporting the hated Roman occupation. Levi was likely worked for someone who had the contract to collect taxes in the area of Capernaum and was sitting in his booth taxing goods transported along the road when Jesus calls him. He leaves everything at Jesus' call and in celebration throws a party inviting Jesus and his disciples to it. The problem is (as far as the Pharisees are concerned) they were all tax collectors and similar "unclean people." They question Jesus' disciples about why they are eating and drinking with such people, but it is Jesus who answers. Healthy people don't need a doctor, sick people do, righteous people don't need Jesus, sinners do. Jesus is not implying there anyone is sinless enough not to need Him as their saviour, He was addressing the Pharisees who did not see their need for a saviour. What does Jesus call sinners to? Repentance, the same message John the Baptist had.

The next question for Jesus involves why His disciples don't fast while both the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast. Jesus points out His disciples don't need to fast because its purpose is to help you draw near to God, and Jesus is God in the flesh with them, but there will come a time - post crucifixion and post ascension when His disciples will need to fast.

Jesus then tells a parable about not tearing a piece from a new garment to patch an old one, nor putting new wine in old wine skins. Wine skins were made from leather, and during the fermentation process the leather needs to have elasticity to stretch to accommodate the expansion, but old wineskins which have already been stretched will burst as they no longer have the required elasticity. Jesus also makes the point that it is easy for people to get so comfortable drinking the "old wine," they are not willing to try new.



Group Study

Open the group with prayer and discuss how you have used your application from last week's study in your life, and what you have learned from it.

When you were at school, were there groups which would not associate with one another?

Were you in one of those groups? How did it make you feel?

Are you in an environment now such as work where there are groups who don't associate with each other?

Has your Christianity ever been questioned for associating with certain people or in a particular place?

Have you ever questioned someone else's Christianity because they associated with questionable people or hung out in a doubtful place?

Who would make you uncomfortable to have table fellowship with and you wouldn't want to be seen by other Christians fellowshiping with them?

Read the following parable:

15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

3 So he told them this parable: 4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:1–7 (ESV)

Why was Jesus so willing to eat with “these” people without caring about what anyone else thought?

How can we have the same attitude?

What do you think about fasting and its purpose?

Read Matthew 5:1-9, 16-17.

Discuss the right and wrong reasons for practicing these “spiritual disciplines.”

How can we avoid falling to the trap of doing them for the wrong reasons?

What spiritual discipline(s) do you practice and why?

Personal study time

What spiritual disciplines do you practice in your life? Spiritual disciplines are not something we do for the sake of doing, and they aren't a way for us to force God into our lives, but they are a way for us to draw close to Him

The following excerpts are taken from the study guide for Richard Foster's "*Celebration of discipline*." Choose a discipline and practice it and record your thoughts and what God is saying to you.

Prayer

The pattern of prayer / Matthew 6:5–15.

The prayer of worship / Psalm 103.

The prayer of repentance / Psalm 51.

The prayer of thanksgiving / Psalm 150.

The prayer of guidance / Matthew 26:36–46.

The prayer of faith / James 5:13–18.

The prayer of command / Mark 9:14–29.

How does Prayer increase your understanding and love of God?

Reflection

Fasting

The example of Christ / Luke 4:1–13.

God's chosen fast / Isaiah 58:1–7.

A partial fast / Daniel 10:1–14.

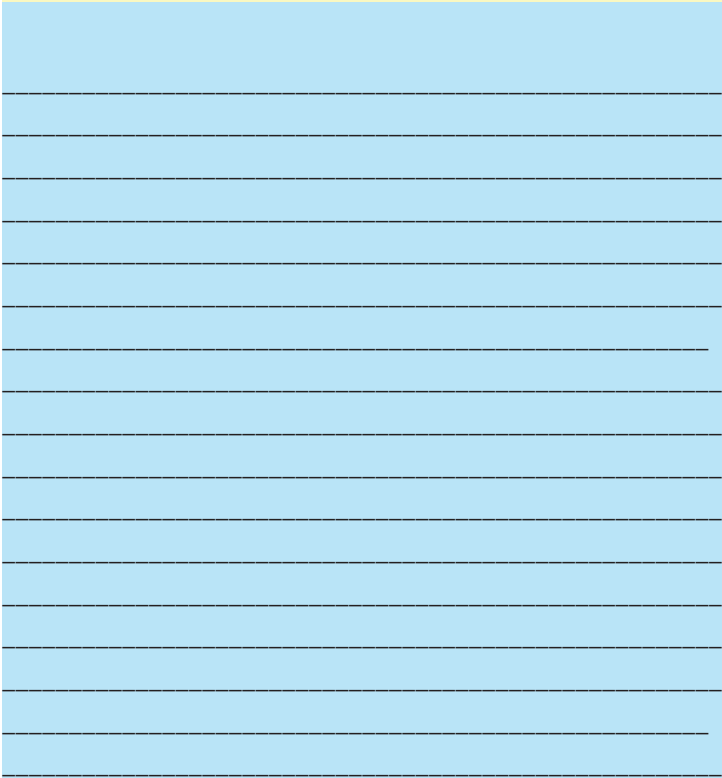
A normal fast / Nehemiah 1:4–11.

An absolute fast / Esther 4:12–17.

The inauguration of the gentile mission / Acts 13:1–3.

The appointment of elders in the churches / Acts 14:19–23.

How could fasting help you see God's fullness better?



Simplicity

Simplicity as singleness of heart / Matthew 6:19– 24.

Simplicity as trust / Matthew 6:25–34.

Simplicity as obedience / Genesis 15.

The generosity of simplicity / Leviticus 25:8–12.

Simplicity in speech / Matthew 5:33–37, James 5:12.

Simplicity and justice / Amos 5:11–15, 24, Luke 4:16–21.

The freedom from covetousness / Luke 12:13– 34.

What could you declutter in your life to allow God greater room?

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KIDS CORNER



God Is Bigger than We Think

1. What's the biggest thing you can think of?

When we start to think about how big things are, we don't have to get very far for our heads to start spinning. Sure, maybe the room you're in is pretty spacious, and the building it's in is even larger. But, do you know how many huge buildings could fit inside your one little town? Could you guess the number of towns in your state? How about in the country? What about in the entire world?! And just think! Our entire, gigantic, enormous world is like a speck of dust in the universe! It's crazy!

Do you know what else is crazy? God is even bigger than all of those things - even the universe. We could never even imagine how powerful, and complicated, and magnifi

cent the Lord is, just like we can't fully understand the size of our own planet. And that's okay! We don't have to understand how big God is; we just get to trust Him. We know that God is powerful enough to move mountains and mighty enough to work His goodness in our lives, even if it doesn't make sense to us. What a blessing it is to put our faith in Someone who is so big!

2. How does knowing how big God is change the way you think of Him?

