

“Jesus Came to Save Repentant Sinners...”

Luke 5:27-39

Read **Luke 5:27-29**... Jesus says to **Levi** [“united” or “joined,” the original Levi was the son of Jacob and Leah, from whom came the Levites or Priesthood]; he is also called Levi in **Mark 2:14** [Levi son of Alphaeus].

Jesus says to him, “Follow me” and he leaves the tax collector’s booth and everything behind. We know Levi better as Matthew, the name the Lord gave him, perhaps to separate him from his old life [**Matthew 9:9**, “Matthew” means, gift of God]. Matthew was a tax collector, despised by the Jews as a traitor.

When Jesus called him, he obeyed; in fact, Matthew was so excited to follow Christ that he (cf. **Luke 5:29**) held a special dinner at his house and invited his friends to come and meet Jesus. Perhaps this was a farewell dinner, for Levi, now Matthew would be leaving his job in order to follow Jesus.

There were many tax collectors and “other people” at this dinner. In **Luke 5:30**, the Pharisees and scribes were grumbling at Jesus’ disciples, “Why does your teacher [Jesus] eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” So, we learn that the “other people” in **verse 29** are “sinners”.

The word “sinner” is used by the Pharisees of people who refuse to follow the Mosaic Law as it is interpreted by the Pharisees, and for Jesus to sit at a table (in the ancient world a sign of intimacy) with such “sinners” was too much for the Pharisees (the teachers of the law) to keep quiet about.

Jesus responds (**Luke 5:31-32**) to the very heart of why He has come, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.

In **Matthew 9:13**, concerning this same event, Matthew adds Jesus’ words, “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

The self-righteous Pharisees were unwilling to admit their need for forgiveness (**John 5:39-40**), “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life.” These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life.”

Jesus came to save all who genuinely acknowledge their need for the Savior, for everyone is alienated from life with God because of sin (cf. **Romans 3:23; 6:23**)!

What separates Christ’s teaching from the Judaism taught by the Pharisees is the alarming doctrine that God saves sinners as sinners, not after they attain some level of righteousness or acceptance by religiously keeping the law and/or traditions of men (cf. **Romans 5:8**).

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When Jesus said to Matthew, “follow me,” there wasn’t any hesitation; in fact, Matthew brought all his sinning friends together for a special dinner, so that they could be exposed to the Savior who had come not to the healthy, but to the sick; not to the righteous, but to sinners.

Is there anyone who is not a sinner? NO!

Romans 3:10-12, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.”

In other words, there is no one who is considered righteous by God, apart from the salvation that comes to those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

Is there anyone who, if they asked God to forgive them, He would turn away? NO! See **Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13** - quoted from **Joel 2:32**, c. 500 B.C.).

We are all sinners, but only those who come to God through Christ have their sins forgiven; all sins, past, present, and future.

Jesus (cf. **John 14:6**) is the only way to, the only truth from, and the only life with, God; when we repent of our sins, we receive forgiveness, being granted eternal life, as a child in the family of God!

If you know you are a sinner, and you want to be right with God, there is indeed hope for you, because Jesus came to save repentant sinners. However, the only way to be healed of sin’s penalty is to personally call upon Jesus Christ, by faith, repenting of your sins, believing in and trusting Him to save you.

Jesus came that we might be saved and called by His name [Christians = adherents of Christ; those who believe in and follow]. As Christians, our purpose is to bring other sinners, like yourself, to the Savior, where they might repent and believe in God’s Son for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus said to His followers, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Read **Luke 5:33-35**... The Pharisees fasted twice a week, with false humiliation and contrition, not that it impressed God’s Son, as His words express:

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Matthew 6:16-18, “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

The Pharisees were the greatest of hypocrites.

Jesus confronted them (**Matthew 23:25-28**), “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Luke 18:9-14, “And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’

“But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The OT Law, given through Moses, only required religious fasting one day of the year, on the Day of Atonement. The NT does not teach fasting for religious purposes as a doctrine to be followed or an act to be practiced.

Although Jesus doesn’t state any disapproval of the practice of fasting, neither does He say anything to commend its practice. The main point here being the true reason for fasting. The Pharisees fasted religiously, to be showy and bring attention to themselves, for all to see; However, John’s disciples (**Luke 5:33**) were fasting as they mourned John’s arrest, imprisonment, and subsequent execution.

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Fasting for the purpose of seeking God's will is definitely recorded in the Scriptures (**Acts 13:2-3**), “While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away,” (**Acts 14:23**), “When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” But fasting is never commended as an act of piety, ritual, or self-serving recognition, like the Pharisees practiced.

Jesus changes the subject (cf. **Luke 5:34**) but continues to rebuke the Pharisees likens Himself to a bridegroom and His followers to that of the attendants or guests of the bridegroom, at a wedding party. Why would the guests [His disciples] be mourning, when in fact it should be a time of celebration.

The Pharisees had let their religion get in the way of receiving God’s blessings through Christ. The Pharisees practiced ritual without reason; for them, everything was a matter of law keeping and rule following, they lived for the letter of the Law, unable to comprehend the Spirit of the Law, because they didn’t believe Jesus was God.

Read **Luke 5:36-38...** The old covenant (Law) and the new covenant (Grace) can’t be combined or merged: i.e., a patch of new cloth must be shrunk before use, so that it won’t shrink and tear away from the old garment; likewise, new wine can’t be placed in old wineskins, for it will ferment, expand, and cause the skins to burst.

Jesus is talking about much more than repairing garments and bursting wineskins. He is teaching about the difference between the gift of Grace He brought and the burden of the Law taught by the Pharisees.

New wine must be poured into new wineskins, i.e., Christ’s teachings on Grace must be placed in new hearts and minds in order to be accepted. Unsaved hearts and minds cannot contain the truth. Jesus uses the metaphor of a new patch being sewn on an old garment, and of new wine being poured into old wineskins, to illustrate how any attempt at a relationship with God apart from the Gospel [to repent, believe, and follow Christ] will leave your heart, mind, and soul torn and empty, instead of healed, and filled with life from God.

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Read **Luke 5:39**... The Pharisees’ hearts were hardened by their own ritualistic observance of manmade religious law (diet, dress, behavior, rituals of worship, etc.) that was expressed in every aspect of Jewish life.

Jesus came offering for anyone and everyone to become a child of God (**Mark 1:15, 17**) to repent of sin, believe in Him, and be saved; for salvation cannot be attained through ancestral heritage, works, law-keeping, rituals, sacrifices, or religion.

Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law, all the teachings of the Prophets; God’s plan, purpose, and provision was made complete in Him.

It is belief in Jesus Christ alone that brings salvation (**Ephesians 2:8-10**), “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” The proof of salvation is displayed through a new life in Christ (cf. **2Corinthians 5:17**).

The Pharisees were comfortable with Judaism’s religious adherence to the Law, so they rejected Christ’s authority and His offer of forgiveness by God’s grace through faith in God’s Son. Don’t be like them! We are all sinners, but only sinners who repent and believe in Jesus Christ to forgive their sins, will be saved.

1John 5:11-13, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Pastor Mike
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