

Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

Lessons in Luke -- Lesson 3 – “Jesus – The Great Physician”

Introduction:

In these lessons we are looking at the ministry of Jesus found in the Gospel of Luke. Simeon prophesied over baby Jesus that He would raise up many weak persons and bring down many proud persons. We see our first example of this in Luke 5:27-32.

Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

²⁷ 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." ²⁸ So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

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

³¹ Jesus answered and said to 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."

(Luk 5:27-32 NKJ)

“**Tax collector**” (vs. 27) -- They were Jews who helped the Romans collect taxes from their fellow Jewish countrymen. They were dishonest, cheaters profiting for personal gain from their fellowship Jewish countrymen. They were hated as traitors by their fellow Jewish countrymen. What are some of the things that Jesus calling Levi (also called Matthew in the bible) tell us about the salvation Jesus brings?

Tax-collectors were considered the worst of sinners. Not only were they known for taking advantage of all the people and cheating, stealing, and over-charging their fellow Jewish brothers, but they worked for and with the Roman Empire that had conquered them. Tax collectors were not allowed to go to worship in the temple or the synagogue. They would have been cut off from all the family (if that family was not in the tax-collecting business). Their only company would was the other outcasts and unclean of society: criminals, prostitutes, pagans, and those removed from the community. Jesus came to this man, this sinner, this outcast, and brought him salvation. He even entered into his home, with the other outcasts and ministered his gospel to them as well.

What we learn first is that Jesus can save anyone! If Jesus can save a sinner like Levi (Matthew) then he can save you no matter how much you have sinned! No one is too sinful for Jesus to save and forgive. This fills our heart with hope when we are tempted to doubt Jesus' salvation of us. No, he can and will save all who come to him in repentance and faith. But also, those in our lives that seem the furthest from God, Jesus can bring near! No one is so sinful that Jesus cannot reach and save. This encourages us to pray for and minister to those who are not in Christ, and especially those who seem the furthest away from Christ.

Another thing that Levi's salvation tells us is that Jesus calls us to reconciliation with one another in the family of God. It is in the church where the divisions in our society can find true reconciliation. Consider all the Apostles that Jesus called. Peter, Andrew, John, and James made their living as fishermen, and were probably people that Levi would have terrorized. Now they are in the same family in Christ. Moreover, Simon the Zealot was also an Apostle. Zealots were

an order of super nationalistic Jews who always had a dagger on them and swore an oath to kill men like Levi as soon as they got a chance. Now Simon the Zealot and Levi are in the same family in Christ.

The salvation Jesus brings is not only to save individuals, but also shows His desire to save all creation. All things are summed up in the work of Christ. Ephesians 1:7-10 tells us:

“⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him.”

The reconciliation we have in the gospel with one another is what the world needs. The love we have with each other in the church is a picture to the world that the gospel is the only hope this world has and pictures the beauty of the kingdom Jesus is bringing to this creation.

“scribes and Pharisees “ (vs. 30) The scribes were experts in interpreting the Law of Moses. The Pharisees were known for their careful observance of the Law of Moses. What do these very religious people think of Jesus’ attending the feast at Levi’s house? What word do they use to describe tax collectors (vs. 30)?

The Pharisees were a group of religious leaders that arose after the return from exile. They rightly saw that Israel’s unfaithfulness to their covenant with God caused Israel to lose their nation and sent them into exile. They never wanted that to happen again. So, they came up with something called the traditions of the elders. The traditions of the elders were, they believed, a tradition of unwritten laws that came from God to Moses and were passed orally through faithful rabbis. The tradition of the elders was what they called a “fence” around the law. So, if the law said not to go 5 steps, then they would say the law says you cannot go 3. That way they would protect the actual law from being broken. To see this tradition of the elders in action read Mark 7 and Matthew 5.

The problem with man-made laws is that men make laws they think they can keep. Because they keep the man-made laws, they think they are keeping the law of God. They thought of themselves as keeping the law, and so they were very self-righteous. That self-righteousness filled them with sinful pride. Their pride looked down on others as less righteous than they. So, they did not see themselves as sinners. The law, in their religion, did not show them their sin. They did not see themselves needing salvation from God, because they had earned salvation. Yes, certainly, grace was necessary and appreciated, but salvation was still based on their obedience and their work.

So, by saying that Jesus was eating with sinners implied that the Pharisees were not eating and associating with sinners. When Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus, in their eyes, just as bad a sinner as the tax collectors and sinners with whom He was eating.

What does Jesus mean by “those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick”? Who is the physician? Who appear to be well? Who appear to be sick?

When one goes to the doctor, they go because they are sick. People who are well have no need for a doctor. Moreover, a doctor cannot treat us unless we know we are sick. If a doctor comes to you and tells you, “Here let me inject this harsh chemical into you that will make your hair fall out, make you unable to eat without becoming nauseous, make you weak and vulnerable to other sicknesses, and take a long time to recover from its effects.” You would say, “No way!” But if that same doctor came to you and said, “Look, I have the reports of the test we took, and I’m afraid you have cancer, and it’s aggressive. But we can treat it and bring it into remission. There are some harsh side effects of the chemicals I will be giving you, but I will be with you the whole time and we will beat this together.” You would thank that doctor and do whatever he asked of you.

Likewise, we have all taken a test according to the Ten Commandments. We are all guilty of sin, and that sin is killing us. But Jesus has the cure to that sickness, and His cure will not lead to death (eternally). But, we will only come to Him if we know we are sick. If we want to try to treat the cancer of our sin by our own home remedies (good works, self-righteousness, our own wisdom) then we will die in our sins.

The Pharisees appear to be well. They appear to have true health and have everything all together, but all they are doing is denying their sickness. The cancer of their sins is killing them. But the sinners and tax-collectors, who have no pretense of their own righteousness or goodness in themselves, know they are sick and are coming to Jesus for Jesus to cure them. They are the ones who will be healed by Jesus, the great physician.

What kind of healing is Jesus talking about?

Jesus is talking about the spiritual healing of our sin. He is not talking about physical healing. Jesus does not promise us that he will heal all of our physical sicknesses in this life. In his providence he may decree that we walk through times of sickness. But he promises to heal us from every illness of sin in our hearts. This forgiveness is absolute and complete and gives us eternal life. When we come by repentance to Him alone, by faith alone, looking to His grace alone, God accounts to us the perfect righteousness of Jesus.

What must sinners do for the great physician to heal them? Has the Great Physician healed you? If not, what questions do you have that would keep you from coming to Him?

In order to have Jesus heal you of your sin, you must come to Jesus in repentance and faith. Repentance is helpfully defined in the Westminster Shorter Catechism 87

Q: What is repentance unto life?

A: Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

True repentance is not perfect repentance meaning that we never, ever sin again. But it is knowing, confessing, turning from sin to Jesus every day as we walk with Him.

Faith is resting in the perfect life that Jesus lived and His work on the cross. We do not look at our own works but we look outside ourselves at His perfect works on our behalf. We then receive His work for us. We let go of all the things we look to that make us think we are right with God, and we trust in the work of Christ alone.

Consider these words from Jesus in John 6:37-40

³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

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