



Lesson 20 – Levi-Matthew

Based on Matthew 9:9-17; Mark 2:14-22; Luke 5:27-39.

Of the Roman officials in Palestine, none were more hated than the publicans. The fact that the taxes were imposed by a foreign power was a continual irritation to the Jews, being a reminder that their independence had departed.

The tax gatherers were not merely the instruments of Roman oppression; they were extortioners on their own account, enriching themselves at the expense of the people. A Jew who accepted this office at the hands of the Romans was looked upon as betraying the honor of his nation. He was despised as an apostate and was classed with the vilest of society.

1) How did Matthew meet Jesus?

Luke 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, _____ me.

The Pharisees had judged Matthew according to his employment, but Jesus saw in this man a heart open for the reception of truth. Matthew had listened to the Saviour's teaching. As the convicting Spirit of God revealed his sinfulness, he longed to seek help from Christ; but he was accustomed to the exclusiveness of the rabbis, and had no thought that this Great Teacher would notice him.

2) What did Matthew do?

Luke 5:28 And he left _____, rose up, and followed him.

There was no hesitation, no questioning, no thought of the lucrative business to be exchanged for poverty and hardship. It was enough for him that he was to be with Jesus, that he might listen to His words, and unite with Him in His work.

3) Later in the Disciple's ministry, Jesus asked "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?", How did they reply?

Luke 22:35 ...And they said, _____.

To Matthew in his wealth, and to Andrew and Peter in their poverty, the same test was brought; the same consecration was made by each. At the moment of success, when the nets were filled with fish, and the impulses of the old life were strongest, Jesus asked the disciples at the sea to leave all for the work of the gospel. So, every soul is tested as to whether the desire for temporal good or for fellowship with Christ is strongest.

4) What did Matthew do to introduce Jesus to his friends?

Luke 5:29 And Levi made him a great _____ in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

Among the publicans a widespread interest was created. Their hearts were drawn toward the divine Teacher. In the joy of his new discipleship, Matthew longed to bring his former associates to Jesus. Accordingly, he made a feast at his own house and called together his relatives and friends. Not only were publicans included, but many others who were of doubtful reputation.

5) Were the Scribes and Pharisees happy with the turn of events?

Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why _____ your Master with publicans and sinners?



It was their policy to accuse Christ to the disciples, and the disciples to Christ, aiming their arrows where they would be most likely to wound. This is the way in which Satan has worked ever since the disaffection in heaven; and all who try to cause discord and alienation are actuated by his spirit.

6) Did Jesus wait to see what His disciples would say?

Matthew 9:12-13 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a _____, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to _____.

The Pharisees thought so highly of themselves, they were really in a worse condition than the ones they despised. The publicans were less bigoted and self-sufficient and thus were more open to the influence of truth. Jesus showed that while they claimed to expound the word of God, they were wholly ignorant of its spirit.

7) Who was riled up to question the validity of Jesus' Work?

Matthew 9:14 Then came to him the disciples of _____, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

The Pharisees were silenced for the time but only became more determined in their enmity. They next sought out the disciples of John the Baptist and tried to set them against the Saviour.

8) How did Jesus react?

Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber _____, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Verse 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the _____ is made worse.

Verse 17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are _____.

The Pharisees would not consider that Jesus was eating with publicans and sinners in order to bring the light of heaven to those who sat in darkness. They would not see that every word dropped by the divine Teacher was a living seed that would germinate and bear fruit to the glory of God.

The disciples of John were at this time in great sorrow. It was before their visit to Jesus with John's message. Their beloved teacher was in prison, and they passed their days in mourning. And Jesus was making no effort to release John. If John had been sent by God, why did Jesus and His disciples pursue a course so widely different?

9) What had John the Baptist said previously that would alleviate their question?

John 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, _____ greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.



The disciples of John could not fail to recall these words of their teacher. John the Baptist had rejoiced to behold the Saviour. What occasion for rejoicing had the disciples who were privileged to walk and talk with the Majesty of heaven! This was not a time for them to mourn and fast. They must open their hearts to receive the light of His glory, that they might shed light upon those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

10) What Prophetic Words did Jesus reiterate later in the disciples training?

John 16:19-20 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little _____, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into _____.

Days of temptation and trial would come, when they would be brought into conflict with the rulers of this world, and the leaders of the kingdom of darkness; when Christ was not personally with them, and they failed to discern the Comforter, then it would be more fitting for them to fast.

11) How did Isaiah describe the religious person who knew not God?

Isaiah 58:4-5 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have _____? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an _____ day to the LORD?

12) What is a true fast?

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to _____ the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Verse 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the _____, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou _____ him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

13) What promise was given by God to Isaiah for all peoples?

Isaiah 58:9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall _____; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Here is set forth the very spirit and character of the work of Christ. His whole life was a sacrifice of Himself for the saving of the world. Whether fasting in the wilderness of temptation or eating with the publicans at Matthew's feast, He was giving His life for the redemption of the lost. Not in idle mourning, in mere bodily humiliation and multitudinous sacrifices, is the true spirit of devotion manifested, but it is shown in the surrender of self in willing service to God and man.

14) What did Jesus say that shook the Pharisees and the disciples of John?

Luke 5:36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an _____; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

The message of John the Baptist was not to be interwoven with tradition and superstition. An attempt to blend the pretense of the Pharisees with the devotion of John would only make more evident the breach between them.



15) What else did He say to shake those present?

Luke 5:37-38 And no man putteth new _____ into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are _____.

In this familiar illustration Jesus presented the condition of the Jewish leaders. Priests and scribes and rulers were fixed in a rut of ceremonies and traditions. Their hearts had become contracted, like the dried-up wine skins to which He had compared them. While they remained satisfied with a legal religion, it was impossible for them to become the depositaries of the living truth of heaven.

The teaching of Christ, though it was represented by the new wine, was not a new doctrine, but the revelation of that which had been taught from the beginning. But to the Pharisees the truth of God had lost its original significance and beauty. To them Christ's teaching was new in almost every respect, and it was unrecognized and unacknowledged.

16) How did Jesus finish His thought on the New Wine?

Luke 5:39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway _____ new: for he saith, The old is better.

All the truth that has been given to the world through patriarchs and prophets shone out in new beauty in the words of Christ. But the scribes and Pharisees had no desire for the precious new wine. Until emptied of the old traditions, customs, and practices, they had no place in mind or heart for the teachings of Christ. They clung to the dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God.

17) What is the message for our time?

Revelation 3:17-18 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of _____; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and _____ thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now

18) What sacrifice does God accept?

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a _____ heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Man must be emptied of self before he can be, in the fullest sense, a believer in Jesus. When self is renounced, then the Lord can make man a new creature. New bottles can contain the new wine. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. In him who looks unto the Author and Finisher of our faith the character of Christ will be manifest.

Can you see that Earthly matters are less important than eternal?

Isn't it a wonderful thing that God has left us a path to walk?

Should we wait to partake of His blessings?