

The Feast of the Father  
Luke 5:33-39

Read Luke 5:27-39

Pray

My name is Andrew Merker and it is my honor to serve as youth minister here at Redeemer. I want to take a moment and just brag on our Generational ministries, and invite you as families and parents and even just members to be involved, whether that is with me at Redeemer Youth or at Redeemer Kids. Miss Karen and Mr. Bill do such an incredible job teaching the gospel to our children, and I want to encourage anyone here at redeemer to be involved, whether that is having your kids come and learn the gospel on Sunday morning or Wednesday night or whether that means you volunteer and help teach our young kids because it's a big job, our church has been blessed with tons of young people and that is a wonderful blessing from the Lord and as a church we are called to steward and disciple these precious hearts. One way you can be involved is that this Wednesday we are having Redeemer Youth Family night, so parents and siblings can come and see how we teach, worship, and do community groups with their students. We will have hotdogs and hamburgers at 6:30, and a quick informational meeting about all the stuff we have going on this summer after our service so I would love to see your family there!

I am so excited to be teaching today as we continue through Luke. We just finished a 6 month series in Luke at Redeemer Youth, and it was really eye opening for me and for our students. It was almost as if we were getting to see Jesus with fresh eyes as we went through the stories together, and up to this point he has become quite famous and popular as an obviously gifted teacher, but now Jesus begins to become quite a controversial figure, a teacher who would walk into places other rabbis wouldn't dare go, and to have dinner with those who religious types wouldn't

In Jesus time, doing dinner, meant doing theology, who you ate with, what their job was and their nationality were important to the Pharisees who taught that eating with certain people could contaminate you and make you unclean. So this is not simply a big dinner party, but there is a lot we can see about Jesus' mission by observing who he ate with, and

how he ate, So as we unpack this text I want to point out 3 things about Jesus mission...

Jesus' mission is

1)For Sinners

2)Cause For Celebration

3)Truly New

1)Jesus Mission is for sinners.

Levi Matthew, this man whom Jesus approached, was a Tax Collector. We don't like tax collectors now(as David pointed out last week, the yelp reviews for the IRS aren't good), but in Jesus time they were especially hated. They were considered traitors because they worked for the roman government who occupied and oppressed God's people, and they were considered robbers because they took way more than they should have from their own people. We're talking a lot of money, the term filthy rich accurately describes a tax collector in Jesus' time.

Tax collectors were not only unpopular, many Rabbi's even considered them unclean, saying that if a tax collector were to enter your house everything and everyone inside the house would become impure. And this idea of being unclean is not just a reference to physical impurity but moral impurity, it meant that someone would have been unable to have relationship, communion, or fellowship with God.

David Gooding accurately describes tax collector like Levi as "sinfully rich and socially ostracized."

Most people as they walked by Levi sitting in his tax booth would have despised him, they would be disgusted by him, and they would have had nothing to do with him for fear of becoming unclean themselves, but not Jesus. Jesus walks right up to him and invites Levi to follow him. And notice, there is not indication in this story of Levi pursuing Jesus, or doing anything to catch Jesus eye, but it is Jesus that pursues him.

And if you are believer in this room that is your story, there you were sitting in your sin, alienated from God, ostracized, having no hope,

helping ourselves, and Jesus interrupts us and invites us to rise and follow him.

We were

*Luke 5:28-And Levi leaves everything and he rose and followed Jesus,  
Luke 5:29-And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them.*

As you can imagine a social and religious outcast like Levi, has to have a social circle right? And it makes sense that his social circle is made up of a bunch of other unclean social and religious outcasts. The whole Tax Collecting union is at Levi's party, with an assortment of various other uncouth and unsavory people. And it helps to understand that for the Jews, Jesus merely sharing a meal with these people was an expression of spiritual fellowship. In Jesus culture it was understood that Jesus wasn't merely doing dinner he was doing theology. And this is what it appears Jesus is saying:

The unclean, the members of despised trades, [the tax collectors, herdsmen, peddlers, tanners,] physically deformed, the uneducated people of the land, and Samaritans, who had been starving for a meaningful relationship with God; were now feasting with the Son of God. If doing dinner meant, doing theology then What does this say about God?

To the Pharisees it says something very difficult to swallow. Their self-salvation projects and perfect rule following puts them no closer to God than the sinners and the tax collectors.

**Ephesians 2:8**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God.**

We are brought into fellowship and friendship with God by grace alone By Jesus meeting us in our sin and inviting us to follow him not because of anything we bring to the table, not grace plus anything else. Not grace plus good deeds. Not grace plus perfect theology. Not grace plus the right denomination. By grace alone, and by nothing we contribute to the equation. It is a gift.

If the Tax collectors and sinners could be saved by God's unmerited favor no person on planet earth was too wicked or too far beyond the reach of God's grace to be saved.

And for sinners this is wonderful news because sinners are very aware we bring nothing to the table.

Jesus has come to eat and to share fellowship with the people who do not have it all together.

Jesus has come for you.

Maybe your marriage is falling apart, Jesus has come to be with you. Maybe your kids are rebelling and fighting you and you feel like a failure as a parent, Jesus has come for you. Maybe you are the black sheep of your family, the least favorite or the one who fell short of the standards, Jesus came for you. Maybe you feel like you are alone and if people knew the thoughts in your mind or the desires in your heart people would reject for you, Jesus came for you.

This is good news for some of us who have felt trapped in our sinful lifestyles and patterns...to know that Jesus has come into my sinful ways and said "Follow me...leave all of this behind."

Maybe you wanted to leave it all behind, but at some point our sin begins to feel like our destiny, it begins to feel like an inevitable fate. But Jesus' feast with the tax collectors and sinners shows that it doesn't have to be. He comes into your situation, no matter how messed up, and how shameful, and how dysfunctional, and how confusing it may seem and he points right at you and says "Leave all of this behind, Follow me."

Jesus invitation for Levi to "come and follow me" is more than an invitation, it is a promise that because of Jesus it is possible to leave our sin behind us and share fellowship and friendship with God, and if it is a promise that God can and will call lost and sinful people into his mission we ought to celebrate.

**2) Jesus Mission is cause for celebration**

First the Pharisees were mad because of who Jesus was partying with... now they are upset with the way that he is partying.

Luke 5:33-And they said to him “The disciples of John(the Baptist) fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”

To the Pharisees, who were on the outside looking in at this party what they saw was astounding and appalling. They saw joy, celebration, laughter, friendship and fellowship.

Nothing was more incompatible with the religion of the Pharisees, who followed every rule and then some. Who scrunched their faces in pain as they fasted, while the disciples of Jesus feasted. How can this be?

But Jesus responds in verse 34

5:34-“Can you make a wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?”

This image is clear to us but it would have especially been recognizable by the Pharisees. Weddings were massive weeklong events where friends came together and ate and drank and celebrated the couple. But one thing was for sure, no one ever fasts at a wedding, not even the Pharisees. Rabbinical writings decreed that “All in attendance with the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy”

And the same thing goes for the disciples of Christ, as long as they are with with Jesus, the bridegroom. “It was inappropriate for them to do anything that would lessen their joy.”

But what Jesus is really saying is that there is a divine match made, one worth celebrating. A match between his people and he himself the bridegroom. He is the lover of our souls, and we are destined to be united with him! This is a cause for celebration.

Philip Graham Ryken tells us

“Salvation had come, and it was a time for feasting not fasting”

Salvation has come, of all people we should be the most joyful and happy, because of Jesus call and promise on our lives. But not only are we a joy filled people, because of what Jesus has done for us,

**But we are also called to be a hopeful people, a people who look forward in anticipation for what our Lord will do.**

Luke 5:35-“The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days”

The word ‘Taken away” here refers to a violent withdrawal, showing us that Jesus is aware of his coming death, and as he tells the Pharisees this he also knows they are the ones who will conspire to kill him exactly because of this radical message of grace. He has come knowing that the price of sinful men being in the presence of a holy God will be his life. That this meal is merely a preview of a bigger celebration, when we will feast with Jesus for eternity and celebrate what he did on the Cross to allow us to feast with him. So we also look ahead to the eternal feast.

What about us?

Are we to feast or fast?

Jesus’ answer is both. Like his disciples we are with Jesus, not physically but he sent us his Spirit to dwell within us, and guide us and help us. So we feast or celebrate now over the body broken and the blood spilled on our behalf. But we are also fasting, looking ahead to an eternal feast that God has planned for us to celebrate with Jesus...but that day has not yet come and we still await our bridegroom and until he comes we fast and pray in hopeful anticipation.

People ought to look into the church and see that Jesus’ disciples are the most joyful people because of what he has done for us, calling us out of darkness to follow him, and we should be the most hopeful people looking ahead in anticipation for the return of our bridegroom where we can feast with him forever.

**3) Jesus mission is truly new**

What the Pharisees are seeing is so radical and so scandalous, their minds are without a doubt totally blown...

So Jesus tells us a parable, a small story that tells us a big truth. Actually he tells us 3 parables, lets start with the first one in verse 36:

Luke 5:36-39

*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.*

What Jesus is doing cannot be added to our old ways of doing things.

No one takes a piece of cloth off of a new piece of clothing to patch an old piece of clothing, if you did you would ruin the new.

Jesus knew that people would fail to understand his mission. He also knew that what he was doing was too scandalous for some people who would take little pieces of Jesus' new way and sew him into their old way of doing things.

The gospel, the good news is that Jesus has stepped into the darkness of the world and called lost sinners to come and follow and share friendship and fellowship with him, not because of anything we have done, it is his gift.

And he calls all sinners to repent or leave behind their sin and follow him, whether you are a self-righteous Pharisee, or the self-serving tax collector.

*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 the new wine must be put into fresh wineskins*

What Jesus is doing cannot be contained.

This new way of doing things should produce in us an explosive joy that cannot be contained, or as the bible sometimes calls it new wine. You

cannot put new wine into old wineskins because as the wine ferments and expands and releases gasses the old brittle crusty wineskin would burst and both the new wine and the old wineskin would be wasted. Once we have experienced the grace of God, we can no longer go back to our old ways of doing things, but those who have received grace give grace.

Does the gospel produce explosive joy in you that you want others to experience? Levi, doesn't keep what Jesus has done to himself, he brings all his friends in to hear the good news that salvation is here because it is truly good news.

*39- And no one after drinking the old wine desires new, for he says 'The old is good.'"*

Here Jesus leaves us with a warning. A warning that the free grace that he offers is new and fresh, some will prefer their old way of doing things, people like the Pharisees. Some people will try to enter into the feast based on their own deeds and their own merits and their own works and achievements because many of us like a religion we can control and that we contribute to, but Jesus gives us an opportunity to taste and see that He is good and that he offers us favor and acceptance not based on our own merit or works but on the merit and work of Christ alone. Amen.

Redeemer may we be a people who exhibit unwavering joy and hope, who celebrate the wonderful grace of God that he freely gives to us through his son Jesus and let us be a people who freely give grace to others because it was given so freely to us through Jesus death on the cross, Amen.

**Lets Pray.**