

Reading Luke in Lent

Gospel of Luke 5:27-39



Jesus Calls Levi

- 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.'

A Question About Fasting

- 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?
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."

Reflection

This is the first of the meals or banquets in Luke's Gospel. Each meal is a foretaste of the Last Supper. In this passage this is apparent in the second half with the reference to bridegroom being taken away and then the new wine which echoes the new covenant Jesus will make (this is also the first parable in Luke's Gospel). Jesus is the bridegroom, who has come to redeem, and so now is the time for feasting. Jesus chooses to eat with sinners because his mission is an invitation to repentance. Levi (or Matthew) responds to that call by 'leaving everything'.

- Jesus is the 'new wine' who demands a fresh response.
 - What new insights have you had into your faith listening to *Reading Luke in Lent*?
 - What new opportunities have you discovered to follow Jesus?

Prayer

O God,
whose judgement shines like the light of day,
you invite sinners and outcasts
to the banquet of salvation.

Heal our pride and self-righteousness
as you send down upon us
the gentle rain of your mercy.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

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