

PRACTICE QUESTIONS | LUKE 5:27-39 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 7/20/2025

* I. A Question of Fellowship (27-32) | II. A Question of Fasting (33-39)

INTRO: In (Luke 5:17), Luke mentioned the **Scribes and Pharisees** for the first time in his gospel. – When Jesus **Proved His Power and Authority to Heal and Forgive Sins**, it left all present... **Amazed!** – In our text today we find additional **Scribes and Pharisees** following Him to Examine His Claims and Question His Actions. In particular, two **PRACTICE QUESTIONS** are posed by His interrogators... *

I. A QUESTION OF FELLOWSHIP (27-32) – READ: “Why do you eat with Tax Collectors and Sinners?” A Tax Collector: was despised in the eye of every good Jew, mainly because a Tax Collector worked for Rome. Thus, they were considered sinners and often accused of dishonest practices. But from this story, we learn **Jesus chose to fellowship with such people... sinners!**

A. A Call To Follow (27-28) – Many are called but few are chosen! (Matt 20:16b; 22:14).

1. Jesus Saw something in Levi (27a) – He knew **who** he was and **what** he did... Jesus also knew **what He created him for!** – Likewise, Jesus sees something in us! The funny thing is that, even though He sees us and knows everything about us, He still chooses to fellowship with us!

2. Jesus Calls LEVI to Follow Him (27b) – Throughout the Gospels, we see many instances where *Jesus called ordinary people to follow Him*, (Luke 9:59; John 12:26; 21:19, 22). – Jesus’ call is to an **Abundant Life** (John 10:10b), *“...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

a. Jesus' Call is RADICAL (Mark 8:34-37) – When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, *“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. He then speaks of its importance... 35 For whoever desires to save his life **will lose it**, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

b. Jesus Also Knew that Many Would Make Excuses (tt. Luke 9:55-62) gives us a few examples: *Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, **but you go and preach the kingdom of God.**” And another also said, Lord, I will follow You but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, **“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”** – (Likewise, the Spirit of Christ asks you this morning, are you a follower or an excuse maker?)*

3. Levi's Response to Jesus (28) – Without delay, we are told that He did three things: **He left all, then rose up to follow Jesus. This is the prescription for a true disciple of Jesus!**

a. He Left ALL! – The decision was first settled in his heart. – We cannot **Rise up to Follow Jesus**, if we fail to leave It ALL behind!

b. (Luke 14:33), “So likewise, whoever of you does not **forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” – Jesus makes it clear that we must put Him first! (Levi did this!)**

B. A Complaint At The Feast (29-30) – When a person commits their life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, it is something to be celebrated!

1. The Feast was to Honor Jesus (29) – Levi Rose Up and Invited his sphere of friends to come and meet Jesus and the disciples (cf. Matt 9:10b). – He wanted them to know that Jesus was his new direction and purpose in life! **He wanted them to experience the acceptance that he was called to!**

2. The Pharisees Harassed Jesus' disciples (30) – **Every party has a pooper!** – *Instead of celebrating with a Savior, the Pharisee's criticized Jesus' practices.* – In Judean culture, Eating and Drinking with others conveys friendship! – **Because they SAW Tax Collector as Traitors** (7:34; 15:2;19:7), they **COMPLAINED** that **Jesus was fellowshiping with Sinners!**

- **Rightly so!** – In his gospel, **Matthew** later recorded that *Jesus was a friend of sinners!* (Matt 11:19)
- **Rightly so!** – Jesus' practice demonstrates that **LOVE reaches across social boundaries!**

C. A Call To All Sinners (31-32) – In response to **Practice Question #1**, Jesus' answer aligns with His purpose of coming into the world (31a) – **Matthew** adds an additional phrase where Jesus exposes the hardness of the Pharisees' position, telling them to *"...go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"* (Matt 9:13). – Their practices became legalistic and cold, adhering only to religious rules.

1. **Jesus Revealed the Reality of the Needy (31b)** – He declares simply that *healthy people do not need a doctor; only those who are sick do.* – Jesus wasn't saying that the Pharisees and scribes had no need of spiritual healing. Instead, He makes clear that **only those who KNOW OF their spiritual need can be treated.** – **As self-righteous people, the Pharisees would not come for aid, and in their own eyes, they did not need a doctor!** (*Ophthalmologist, specializes in the diagnosis and diseases of the eyes*)

2. **Jesus' Reason for Fellowshiping with Sinners (32)** – **Simply to save them from their sickness... SIN!** – Paul told Timothy the same thing, *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."* (1 Tim 1:15)

- **Truthful Examination Required:** Are you in need of spiritual healing today? – Or are you overly pious, because you have been around the church so long and you think that you don't need to be healed of the parasites that are eating away at you soul? – *Know and believe that ...*
- **True Healing is Possible:** Whatever state you are in, **the great physician Jesus Christ, desires to heal you.** – Regarding this truth, **Warren Wiersbe** said, *"What a wonderful Physician Jesus is! He comes to us in love; He calls us; He saves us when we trust Him; and "He pays the bill."* – His diagnosis is always accurate, and His cure is perfect and complete.

Application: This story is a **Question of Fellowship... Jesus longs for us to invite Him in to Feast and Fellowship with us!** – In (Rev 3:20) Jesus says, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.* – **Jesus is a friend of Sinners!** – No wonder Levi was so happy and wanted to share the good news with his friends!

II. A QUESTION OF FASTING (33-39) – **READ (33-35):** Here we see **Practice Question #2**, *'Why don't your disciples openly fast as the norm?'* – The Pharisees interrogated Jesus on their custom, saying; 'after all, the disciples of John the Baptist had followed the ascetic life of their master... and the followers of the Pharisees observed various ceremonial fasts.' *i.e., Explain why you don't do it like us!*

A. A Comparison of Practice (33) – **It was the practice of the Pharisees to fast twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (18:12)**, as well as on the **Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29)**. They also fasted as an **Act of Penitence (Isa 58:1-9)**, and **to recall the destruction of Jerusalem, four times a year (Zech 7:3, 5; 8:19)**. – The goal of fasting was to dedicate oneself to prayer and to focus on God.

1. **Useless Fasting** (tt. Isa 58:3-4), – **God called Israel out regarding their Motives for Fasting...** WHY have we fasted, they say, and You have not seen? **WHY** have we afflicted our souls, and **You take no notice?** – **God Answers...** “In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers. 4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high.” – God knows when **fasting is just an outward show!**

2. **Useful Fasting** (Isa 58:6-9) – **God lays out** the type of fast that He delights in..., “To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free...” for then... your light shall break forth like the morning...” (Isa 58:6-9).

B. A Consideration Presented (34-35) – **Jesus responded to Practice Question #2** with an analogy, to illustrate that ‘It was **not the right time for fasting!**’

1. **A Present Bridegroom (34)** – He compared His presence to the joyous time of a wedding. – In that culture, a **WEDDING FEAST** was a vivid picture of a joyful celebration. – So, as the **Bridegroom in His analogy**, Jesus inferred that it was a time to be joyful, and His friends (*Disciples*) need not fast for Him... **because Jesus was There!** – P/A: When Jesus is in your midst, it is time for **Feasting and Fellowship!** – Celebrate Jesus for Who He is and What He brings, no matter the restraints of others! – (Col 2:16-17) says, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding festival ... but the substance is of Christ.”

2. **A Distant Bridegroom (35)** – Jesus did not refute the practice of fasting but made clear that **there would come a day** when fasting is appropriate for Jesus’ followers. – His statement hinted towards a **prophetic reality of His coming rejection**, when He would be taken away and nailed to a Roman Cross!

P/A – Jesus came to make life like a wedding feast... filled with joy! Not a funeral... weighing with sadness!

C. A Correct Perspective (36-39) – **READ:** Jesus knew that it was difficult for the **Scribes and Pharisees** to comprehend Him because He spoke of Kingdom Principles. So, He **presented a parable with two more illustrations** to help them understand that a **New Work** was taking place. – [Note: A parable is a brief story given to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson]. –

1. **The Garment Parable (36)** – Speaks of New Covenant Truths blending with Old Covenant Practices, ... it won’t work! – The new piece tears and ruins the old garment... and it doesn't match! – What Jesus is communicating is, ‘I haven’t come to patch up your old practices. I come with a whole new set of clothes.’

2. **The Wineskin Parable (37-39)** – **This illustrates the same concept**, but uses New Wine, Old Animal Skins and the Fermentation process to detail the difficulty of the change (37) – The Fermentation effect causes pressure to build, and an animal skin would stretch. – But when **an Old Wineskin** was filled with New Wine; it would normally Burst and Ruin the Old Wineskin because the pressure and stretching was too much to handle.

- Jesus is communicating that the New Life of the Spirit could not be forced into the Old Wineskins of JUDAISM – In fact, Jesus would soon form a new institution: **The Church**, which brought Jew and Gentile together into a completely new body.

- **For the Record...** A hidden message is found in the words *"New"* in (v. 38), they are two different Greek words: *Neos* and *Kainos*.

⇒ **NEOS** = Refers to something which is **Brand New**

⇒ **KAINOS** = Speaks of that which is **Renewed!** – If a person could not afford a new wineskin, they would take an old one and Soak it in WATER! – **This process would prepare it for flexibility to receive the new wine!** – And so, with us, if we have become too rigid and stuck in our old traditional ways, **we need to Soak Ourselves in the Living Water which is contained in the Word of God,** which will in turn **prepare our hearts for the new work that God wants to do!**

3. *The Old is Better* (39) – Jesus was fully aware of just how sick some were! Many were so stuck on Pharisaic Traditions, that they would never receive the New Wine of Jesus' teachings/practices.

CLOSING APPLICATIONS: The Scribes and Pharisees asked two **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**, but they didn't like the answers. **Nevertheless... Jesus' way is the new and right way!** – As a result...

- Jesus could not heal the scribes and Pharisees **because He fellowshipped with Sinners.**
- **They didn't believe in Him** so they couldn't rejoice with Him as a Bridegroom.
- **They would not admit** they were sick and in need of new clothes and that they were **Old Dried-Up Wineskins!**

As we grow older, the tenancy is to get set in your ways. May God keep us flexible to the moving of His Spirit in our Lives. – *"Blessed are the flexible, they shall not be broken."*