



Meals with Jesus


An Excess of Grace



Luke 5:27-39 NRSV

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

- Luke 5:27-39

³³ Then they said to him, “John’s disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink.” Jesus said to them, “You cannot make wedding attendants fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.” He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise, not only will one tear the new garment, but the piece from the new will not match the old garment. Similarly, no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and will spill out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine but says, ‘The old is good.’ ”

- Luke 5:27-39



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“It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of table fellowship for the cultures of the Mediterranean basin in the first century of our era. Mealtimes were far more than occasions for individuals to consume nourishment. Being welcomed at a table for the purpose of eating food with another person had become a ceremony richly symbolic of friendship, intimacy, and unity. Thus betrayal or unfaithfulness toward anyone with whom one had shared the table was viewed as particularly reprehensible. On the other hand, when persons were estranged, a meal invitation opened the way to reconciliation.”

- Scott Bartchy, New Testament scholar

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- Luke 5:29-30

Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

- Luke 5:31-32

Then they said to him, “John’s disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink.”

- Luke 5:33

He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise, not only will one tear the new garment, but the piece from the new will not match the old garment. Similarly, no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and will spill out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine but says, ‘The old is good.’ ”

- Luke 5:36-39