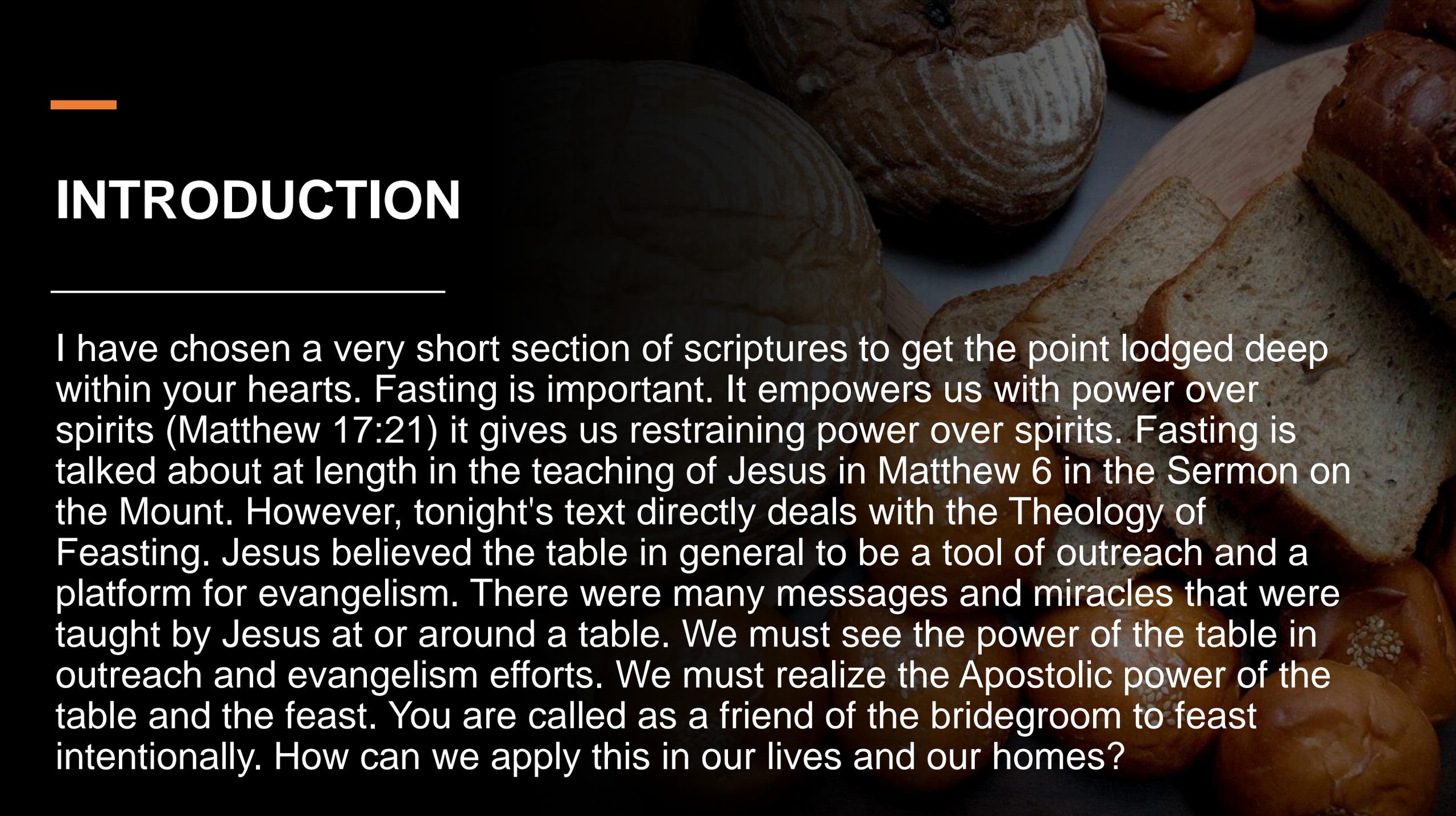




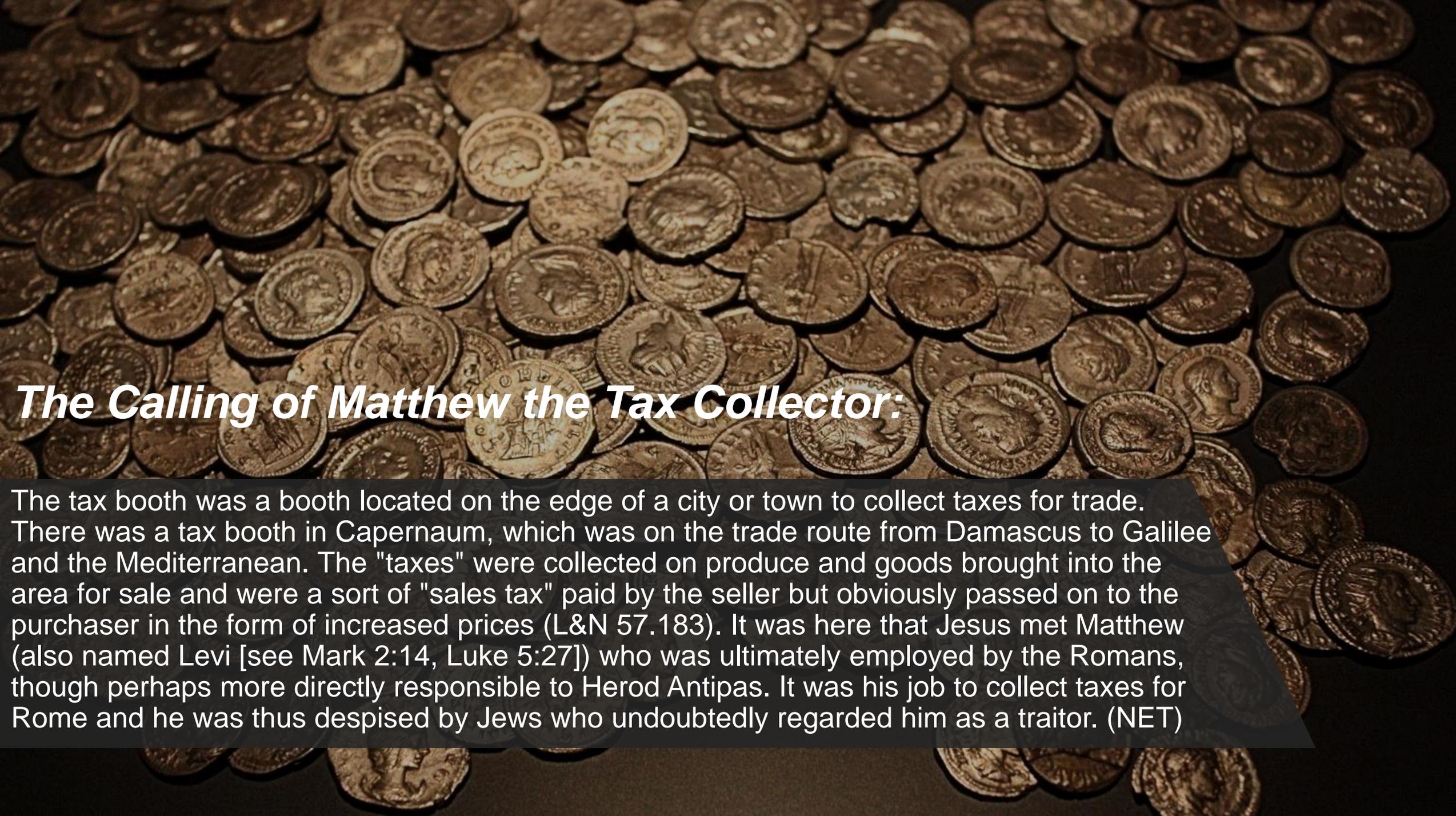
MATTHEW 9:9-17
MESSIAH ON A MISSION
(PART 16)

The Theology of Feasting



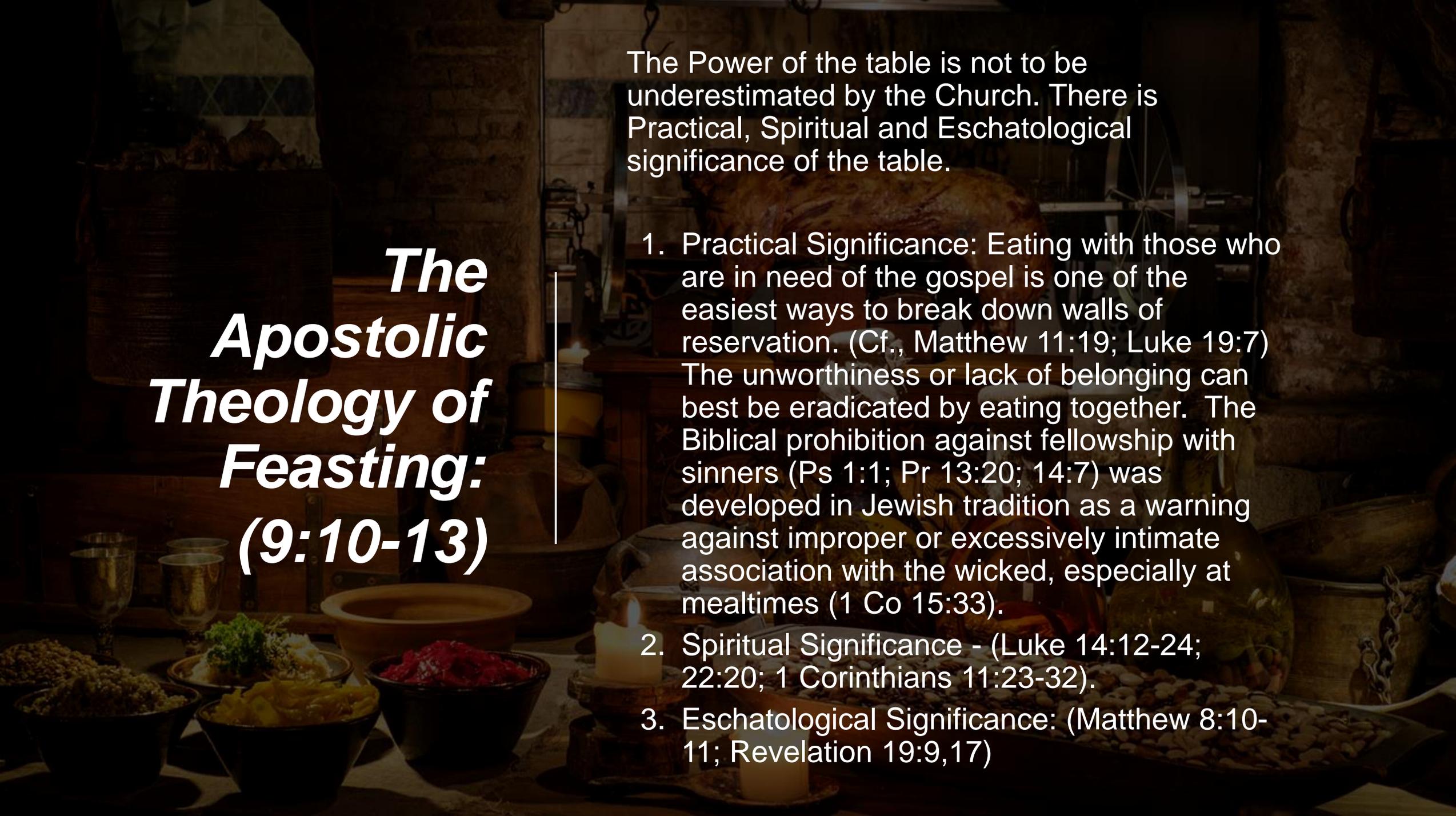
INTRODUCTION

I have chosen a very short section of scriptures to get the point lodged deep within your hearts. Fasting is important. It empowers us with power over spirits (Matthew 17:21) it gives us restraining power over spirits. Fasting is talked about at length in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6 in the Sermon on the Mount. However, tonight's text directly deals with the Theology of Feasting. Jesus believed the table in general to be a tool of outreach and a platform for evangelism. There were many messages and miracles that were taught by Jesus at or around a table. We must see the power of the table in outreach and evangelism efforts. We must realize the Apostolic power of the table and the feast. You are called as a friend of the bridegroom to feast intentionally. How can we apply this in our lives and our homes?



The Calling of Matthew the Tax Collector:

The tax booth was a booth located on the edge of a city or town to collect taxes for trade. There was a tax booth in Capernaum, which was on the trade route from Damascus to Galilee and the Mediterranean. The "taxes" were collected on produce and goods brought into the area for sale and were a sort of "sales tax" paid by the seller but obviously passed on to the purchaser in the form of increased prices (L&N 57.183). It was here that Jesus met Matthew (also named Levi [see Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27]) who was ultimately employed by the Romans, though perhaps more directly responsible to Herod Antipas. It was his job to collect taxes for Rome and he was thus despised by Jews who undoubtedly regarded him as a traitor. (NET)



The Apostolic Theology of Feasting: (9:10-13)

The Power of the table is not to be underestimated by the Church. There is Practical, Spiritual and Eschatological significance of the table.

1. Practical Significance: Eating with those who are in need of the gospel is one of the easiest ways to break down walls of reservation. (Cf., Matthew 11:19; Luke 19:7) The unworthiness or lack of belonging can best be eradicated by eating together. The Biblical prohibition against fellowship with sinners (Ps 1:1; Pr 13:20; 14:7) was developed in Jewish tradition as a warning against improper or excessively intimate association with the wicked, especially at mealtimes (1 Co 15:33).
2. Spiritual Significance - (Luke 14:12-24; 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).
3. Eschatological Significance: (Matthew 8:10-11; Revelation 19:9,17)

The Old Covenant Had Already Reached its Stretching Capacity (9:16-17)

The arrival of something “New” was upon them. Matthew is extremely reluctant to use the word “New” but here Jesus is explaining the New thing which was the Kingdom of God. The old Testament was stretched in its capacity and the hearers were warned do not try to place this new Kingdom inside of the old covenant.

The meaning of the saying new wine into new wineskins is that the presence and teaching of Jesus was something new and signaled the passing of the old. It could not be confined within the old religion of Judaism but involved the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom of God.



FOOTNOTES: PT.1

Taxes in Judea and Galilee

Jews faced a double tax obligation: to Rome and to the Jerusalem temple. Temple taxes were relatively light—a tithe on crops paid to the priests and the Levites, and the half-shekel temple tax paid to the temple directly by Jewish males over 20 years of age. The taxes owed Rome, on the other hand, could be excessive. When Herod the Great served as a client king of Rome, Rome set the amount of tribute and left it up to Herod to decide how it would be collected. Herod also instituted a sales tax and a tax in kind on crops, in part to satisfy Rome and in part to fund his own lavish lifestyle and building projects. When Rome took over direct rule of Judea and Samaria in AD 6, Caesar imposed the Roman tax system onto the residents of the land directly, and it is likely that Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee during the time of Jesus' ministry, followed suit in Galilee and Perea. These taxes included:

- The tributum soli, a “tax on the ground” of crops. This was the main tax, paid by the person who worked the land. It was the duty of the tax collector to make the proper assessments of yields.
- The tributum capitis, a “tax on the person.” A census was taken to assess the number of persons within a district who could be taxed.
- The portorium, a tax on the transportation of goods, including slaves and animals. This tax also covered fees to rent public market places or to cross certain roads and bridges, as well as customs duties at border crossings and seaports.
- The vicesima hereditatum, an inheritance tax.
- The centesima rerum venalium, a sales tax.
- The aurum negotiatorium, a business license fee.

Rome would also force people to provide unpaid labor for public works that benefited the empire (cf. Matt. 5:41).

FOOTNOTES: PT.2

Jewish Meals and Meal Customs: Archeological Study Bible

MATTHEW 9

The Origin of New Testament Dietary Practices. The references to dining and meals in the New Testament, and especially in the Gospels, combine features of Greco-Roman practice with Jewish religious tradition. From Greco-Roman customs we see the following:

- Communal meals, or banquets, provided an important social and religious venue for defining and experiencing fellowship (Mt 9:10; 11:19).
- The meal was followed by a period of music or extended conversation.
- The normal posture for eating was reclining on one's side (Lk 7:36; 22:14).
- The demands of the Levitical system of dietary purity greatly restricted the possibility of shared meals between Jews and Gentiles (Ac 10:28; Gal 2:12).

FOOTNOTES: PT.3

The New Thing Can Not Be Attached To A Worn-Out Garment

Leon Morris - Jesus brings out another point with a homely appeal to practices in poor households where patching old clothes was a necessary part of life. No one, he says, patches an old garment by using a patch of unshrunk cloth. No one indicates that the practice is unthinkable. There is a play on words inputs a patch that is difficult to reproduce in English,⁴⁴ but the meaning is not in doubt; Jesus is referring to the process of mending a worn garment.⁴⁵ It may signify any garment, but some translations make it specific, such as "coat" (NEB) or "cloak" (JB). The point is the wear the garment has had, its raggedness, rather than precisely which piece of clothing is in mind. The wrong patch, Jesus says, is one of unshrunk cloth;⁴⁶ such cloth was considerably stronger than cloth that had been treated and was used to make clothing. A patch of this kind would be most unsuitable for use on an old garment,⁴⁷ and Jesus proceeds to explain that such a patch⁴⁸ on such a garment would mean trouble. When there was any strain the patch would not tear, but the garment would, and the patch would take some of the garment (its overlap) with it. Since sooner or later there would be some strain on a garment being worn (the first time it got wet the unshrunk patch would shrink!), this means that inevitably there would be a bigger split. Instead of mending a bad situation, such patching only makes things worse. This homely piece of wisdom would be immediately grasped by Jesus' audience, and it brings out vividly the point that Jesus is not trying to patch up a worn-out Judaism.

(Leon Morris Page 225-226)

