

Middle/High School Sunday School Lessons by

rfour.org

Year 4: Session 6 – Jesus and Outsiders

Class 17: Luke 5:27-39 – Jesus Calls Levi To Be A Disciple

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Illustrate how we tend to “do what we know”
- Read and discuss scripture story of Jesus calling Levi, a tax collector
- Draw attention to how those who are not “insiders” tend to be more willing to listen to and try new things

Materials needed:

1. Movie clip (available on rfour.org) from *Babe*
2. Electronics that show the video clip
3. *For activity:* Use PowerPoint file on rfour.org associate with this lesson.
 - Then display powerpoint file on TV
–OR–
 - Print out the slides from the powerpoint file and hold them up as sheets up for the class to see

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- One of the things we do every class is ask and answer the opening question at the beginning of class – because it helps us 1. Learn more about each other and 2. Helps “warm us up” for some of the ideas in the upcoming lesson. So we’re going to do that now.
- So here’s the opening question for today’s class. I [the teacher] will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle and each of us will answer.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- *Here’s this week’s question:* What is something you would like to see NEVER change?

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- Last class, we started a new session about Jesus and outsiders
- The first story we read was of Jesus interacting with people who were outsiders to the Israelites due to where they lived and who they were born to.
- In short, they were outsiders because of things they couldn’t really control

- In today's scripture story, we see how Jesus interacts with people who, in some ways, choose to be outsiders within their own community.
- And, we'll see that there are other people, like the Pharisees, who are very much against Jesus interacting with these people
- To help us get started with thinking about why Jesus would want to reach out to these outsiders and why the Pharisees wouldn't want to, we're going to do the following activity
- It's a very simple activity – there will be 5 quotes from Bible stories that we've read previously this year and all we have to do is figure out who said the quote
- Oh – there's just one catch: The words are upside down
- And the hint (which is also the answer / person who said the quote), will be upside down and backwards
- We'll figure this out as a class.

DO Activity (using Powerpoint presentation – see end of lesson for actual answers)

ASK

- What made the activity more difficult than it should have been? (the words were upside down)
- Why did upside-down words make things more difficult? (because that's now how we tend to read)
- Instead of trying to actually read the words upside down, did any of us simply turn our heads to the side to try and read the words right-side up? (yes / no)
- Those of us who turned our heads, did it help?
- How about when reading the hints – did it help then to turn your heads? (not as much, no)

TELL / TRANSITION to SCRIPTURE

- The frustration we felt at trying to read upside-down and backwards words is normal
- We often feel frustrated when something we're used to is suddenly different.
- In that frustration, instead of learning something new (like how to read upside down and backwards), we instead try to keep doing what we already know (by turning our heads upside down)
- What we'll see in today's scripture story is that this is how the Pharisees deal with some of the Israelites – they get frustrated and don't want to learn to do something new.
- Let's see what happens

READ Luke 5:27-39 (recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse)

27After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." 28And he got up, left everything, and followed him. 29Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. 30The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are

sick; 32I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." 33Then they said to him, "John's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink. 34Jesus said to them, "You cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? 35The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." 36He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise

the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. 37And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.

38But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.
39And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, 'The old is good.'"

ASK

- v27 – Who does Jesus see in this verse? (Levi)
- v27 cont – And what is Levi's job? (he's a tax collector)
- v27 cont – What does Jesus tell Levi? (to follow him)
- v28 – What does Levi do? (leaves everything and follows Jesus)
- v29 – What ELSE does Levi do for Jesus? (throws a big party for him)
- v29 – Who is at the party? (other tax collectors)
- v30 – Who is not happy about the party? (the Pharisees)
- v31 and 32 – What is Jesus' response to the Pharisees? (I'm here for those who need and want help)
- v34 - Jesus points out that there are times for fasting and times for not fasting. According to Jesus' answer, is he saying it is currently a fasting time for his disciples (he's saying it is NOT a fasting time for his disciples – but in v35, he says that someday it will be)
- Verse 36 – 39 Here Jesus is talking about how, when we are faced with change, our first response is to do what we know – just like in our opening activity. That some people do not have much room or capability for change. Can you see how he might be saying that in these verses?

TELL

First, let's talk about those last few lines...

- Consider the new and old garment line: Here, Jesus is pointing out that new fabric will not look good as a patch on old fabric. That the color would not match very well. Plus the patch would look cleaner than the rest of the garment
- In verse 37, new wineskins had a lot of stretch to them, like a balloon. But as the new wine would ferment in the wineskin, then the bag would be slowly stretched out and lose its elasticity. Meaning, if you filled up an already used wineskin with new wine, it would rip / tear / burst
- Finally, in verse 39, Jesus is simply saying that the Pharisees like their ways of doing things – they like their old wine; so they would not like new things, like Jesus' new wine / ministry.

Next, let's talk about Levi...

- Levi is a tax collector. This means he takes his own people's money and then gives that money to Rome – thereby financially strengthening the country that occupies Israel and weakening his own people all at the same time
- So – what do you think: Do you think the Israelites like Israelite Tax Collectors? (nope!)
- The fact that Levi has a house and can throw a party tells us something else: Levi had a decent amount of money and the way tax collectors made money was by collecting *more* taxes than was required and keeping the extra for themselves.
- In other words, he overtaxed his own people so that he could live well
- All in all, then, Levi is a very disliked person, then, by his own people – and now we know why

Which brings us to our final thing to talk about, why Jesus would EVER call Levi to be his disciple...

- Today's story gives us two reasons why Jesus would call Levi to be his disciple:

- **Reason 1 for why Jesus calls Levi:** Levi / outsiders are hurting. *31 Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; 32 I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”*
- Levi isn’t happy with how things are going for him. And, since Levi actually left his job confirms this idea that he wanted something different / more / better.
- But, because people hated him, he probably didn’t really have a way to pursue something else until Jesus showed up and offered him a new opportunity
- **Reason 2 for why Jesus calls Levi:** Outsiders, like Levi, make for good students.
- Did you notice how negative the Pharisees – who are insiders - are towards Jesus in this story?
- The Pharisees are so negative because they think they know what Jesus *should* be doing and teaching.
- The Pharisees make for terrible students because they are insiders who like things exactly how they are. They don’t want to learn new things; they just want to keep doing what they know.
- They don’t want to learn how to read upside-down; they just want to tilt their heads
- Jesus, though, is looking for students who want to learn how to read upside down – who want to learn how to do new things.

TRANSITION to MOVIE CLIP

- So we’re going to watch a movie clip from the movie Babe
- In this clip, we will see how people react when a person and a pig (Babe) do something new
- That new thing is that a pig is entered into a sheep herding competition – which is only a dog-type activity
- The pig (who can talk) will talk to the sheep instead of barking at them
- Let’s see what happens next...

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK

- What did the crowd and announcers and people at home do when they first saw the farmer and pig go out on the field? (they laughed, they made jokes, they fainted)
- Did the pig act like a dog by chasing the sheep and barking at them and nipping at their heels? (no)
- So the pig did something different – and was this different approach successful? (yes)
- And was the success noticeable? (yes)
- How did the people respond, then? (first with stunned silence and then with roaring applause)
- Pretending that movie was real life, do you think people would still use the old approach with dogs in the next year’s competition even though a better way was just displayed? (yep, seems likely)
- And why do you think that might happen? (because people do what they know)

TELL

- Two lessons ago, in the Good Samaritan story, Jesus instructed the lawyer that there were no loopholes – that the neighbor in “love your neighbor like yourself” was everyone.
- Last lesson, we then saw Jesus live out that “no loopholes” message by talking and teaching to Samaritans
- And in today’s lesson, we see him being neighbors with tax collectors.
- So, we see Jesus living out this “greatest commandment” of loving his neighbors - no matter who they are
- But in today’s story, we also see that there are some benefits, too, not just for others, but for Jesus
- Jesus has a more receptive audience when he talks to the neighbors who are considered outsiders.

- And, when you have people who are willing to listen to you and try new and exciting things with you, well then, new and exciting things might just happen.
- Which is exactly what we then see happen throughout Jesus' ministry

CLOSING PRAYER

ACTIVITY DETAILS

The five quotes in powerpoint file:

1. "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"
2. "This brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."
3. "So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, take it off'; so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"
4. "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."
5. "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Answers:

1. Woman at well
2. Prodigal Son Father
3. Aaron (Moses' Brother)
4. Eve
5. Simon Peter