

Mercy Extended

JESUS SHOWS MERCY TO ALL WHO COME TO HIM IN FAITH.

Matthew 9:10-19,23-26

10 While he was reclining at the table in the house, many **tax collectors** **A** and **sinners** **B** came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. **11** When the **Pharisees** **C** saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **12** Now when he heard this, he said, “It is not **those who are well** **D** who need a doctor, but those who are sick. **13** Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy** **E** and not sacrifice. For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.” **14** Then **John’s disciples** **F** came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?” **15** Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the **groom will be taken away** **G** from them, and then they will fast. **16** No one patches an old garment with **unshrunk cloth**, **H** because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse. **17** And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” **18** As he was telling them these things, suddenly **one of the leaders** **I** came and knelt down before him, saying, “My daughter just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” **19** So Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him. [. . .] **23** When Jesus came to the leader’s house, he saw the **flute players** **J** and a crowd lamenting loudly. **24** “Leave,” he said, “because the girl is not dead but **asleep**.” **K** And they laughed at him. **25** After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and **the girl got up**. **L** **26** Then news of this spread throughout that whole area.

Exploring Key Words

- A** “Publicans” (KJV). Jews who collected taxes for Rome. They were despised by other Jews for helping the Romans and because of their reputation for dishonesty.
- B** General term for those viewed as morally or ceremonially unclean based on human interpretation of Jewish law.
- C** A religious sect of ancient Judaism. Known for strict adherence to the law and traditions, Pharisees often clashed with Jesus.
- D** “That be whole” (KJV); “the healthy” (NIV). Those who think they are fine won’t seek help. But those who see their helpless state turn to the Messiah for healing and restoration.
- E** See Hosea 6:6. To God, acts of compassion toward those in need are valued above rituals.
- F** Followers of John the Baptist.
- G** While Jesus was with His disciples, they needed to celebrate the coming of the kingdom. Later, they would have time for fasting.
- H** If a patch was not pre-shrunk, it would shrink when washed and pull at the fabric, causing a bigger tear. Likewise, new wine would expand through fermentation and ruin older wineskins (v. 17).
- I** A lay leader in the local synagogue. His name was Jairus (Mark 5:22), and he would have helped with synagogue services in Capernaum.
- J** Along with relatives and friends, professional mourners would be hired during times of grief.
- K** A common biblical image for death.
- L** Jesus raised the girl from the dead. The Gospels also state that Jesus raised a widow’s son (Luke 7:11-17) and Lazarus (John 11:1-44).



NOTES

Jesus's Mission (Matt. 9:10-13)

- While Jesus was eating a meal, tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Him and the disciples. The banquet was hosted by Matthew, a tax collector who had become a disciple of Jesus.
- The Pharisees saw this and questioned the disciples, wondering why Jesus would eat with such people. Hearing the question, Jesus taught those who are well do not need a doctor, but those who are sick. He came to call sinners to righteousness.

Jesus's Work (Matt. 9:14-17)

- John the Baptist's followers approached Jesus, asking why His disciples did not fast. Jesus used a metaphor of a wedding to explain. They could not be downcast while He was with them; but, one day, they would fast after He was taken from them.
- Then Jesus offered the imagery of a shrinking patch that tears the garment it was meant to repair and brittle wineskins being ruined when new wine is poured into them. What Jesus came to do was a new work, unlike anything in the traditional Jewish teaching.

Jesus's Compassion (Matt. 9:18-19)

- A leader in the synagogue knelt before Jesus and asked Him to come and lay His hand on his daughter so she would live. Jesus and His disciples got up and followed the man.

Jesus's Power (Matt. 9:23-26)

- When Jesus arrived at the home of the synagogue leader, He sent the crowd outside the home. He took the girl by the hand and she stood up, having been raised from the dead.
- Word of Jesus's miracles spread throughout the region.

Summary Statements

Jesus shows mercy to all who come to Him in faith.

- We can trust that Jesus came to offer salvation to sinners.
- We can rejoice in the truth that salvation is not based on religious works or rituals.
- We can know that Jesus cares and will respond to our needs.
- We can trust that Jesus has the power to transform lives.

Memory Verse

Matthew 9:12

Key Doctrine

Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:21-22.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

ENGAGE

Bonus: *What emotions do stories of suffering create inside you?*

- Suffering is everywhere. Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and wildfires are in the news frequently. Add to that cancer, heart disease, dementia, and broken relationships.
- Overlooking the suffering of others is easy when we face our own pain. Thankfully, Jesus never overlooks suffering. He shows compassion to all who come to Him.

In what ways can we show mercy in our everyday encounters? (PSG, p. 77)

EXPLORE

JESUS'S MISSION (MATT. 9:10-13)

How would you summarize what Jesus came to do? (PSG, p. 81)

- Matthew threw a party for Jesus. He invited other tax collectors and “sinners,” which offended the religious elite.
- The Pharisees confronted Jesus’s disciples, asking why He associated with unclean people. When Jesus heard their question, He responded with a well-known proverb about the sick needing a doctor rather than the healthy.
- Only those who truly recognize their need for the Messiah find restoration. Quoting Hosea 6:6, Jesus rebuked the leaders’ lack of compassion and spiritual arrogance.

What does it mean that Jesus was a “friend of sinners”? What does it look like for His followers to be friends of sinners? (PSG, p. 79)

JESUS'S WORK (MATT. 9:14-17)

What does Jesus offer that religion does not? (PSG, p. 83)

- Later, the disciples of John the Baptist questioned Jesus about fasting. Jesus’s response was simple: Since the Messiah was still present, it was time to celebrate, not mourn. Using the image of a wedding, He noted that once the “groom” had departed, His disciples would fast.
- Jesus used patches and wine to further explain the new paradigm initiated by God’s kingdom. Cloth for patches had to be shrunk ahead of time or it would make the tear in the clothing worse. Likewise, new wine would expand through fermentation, causing the skins that held it to burst.
- The new covenant required a new way of thinking. Old, legalistic traditions would not fit the gospel’s message of salvation by faith.

Bonus: *Jesus pointed to patches and wineskins. What contemporary images also could illustrate the new covenant?*

JESUS'S COMPASSION (MATT. 9:18-19)

Bonus: *When have you felt like you didn’t know where to turn? How did you respond?*

- As Jesus taught John’s followers, He was approached by a synagogue leader begging Him to heal his daughter. Mark and Luke identify this leader as Jairus.
- By putting his daughter in Jesus’s hands, Jairus was bucking his own religious establishment. But he had faith that Jesus could bring his little girl back to life.
- Jesus didn’t see this as an interruption, but as a divine appointment. He and His disciples went with Jairus.

What prompted the leader to approach Jesus? Why should we take our concerns to Jesus? (PSG, p. 83)

JESUS'S POWER (MATT. 9:23-26)

Bonus: *When have you seen Jesus’s power at work most clearly in your life?*

- At the house, Jesus found relatives, friends, and professional mourners (“flute players”) causing a commotion. They scoffed at Him when He said the girl was just asleep, but He demonstrated His authority by driving them out of the house.
- Taking the child by the hand, He raised her from the dead. Again, this miracle was immediate and complete, and news of it spread across the region.

How does it impact your faith when you read of Jesus’s miracles and power? (PSG, p. 85)

CHALLENGE

As a group, list different needs the people around you might be experiencing.

Discuss ways your group can work together to extend compassion to someone represented on that list. (PSG, p. 86)

Challenge individuals to examine their daily actions and to determine how they can apply today’s application points.

What are some steps you can take to develop greater mercy and compassion toward others? (PSG, p. 86)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 85)

Use a concordance and/or Bible dictionary to learn more about a feature of Israel's religious life.

Use a concordance to find references to fasting in the Bible. Read the article about fasting in a Bible dictionary. ***What are the different forms of fasting in the Bible? What biblical purposes of fasting did you discover?*** Consider how fasting can benefit you spiritually. ***How can you incorporate the discipline of fasting into your life?***

Prior to the session, enlist an individual to share about their fasting experience. During the session, allow the individual to share their fasting story and the impact it has made on their life. Provide time for questions.

Direct the group to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 85). After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they learned. Note that Jesus did not discount fasting in today's passage. Encourage adults to consider how God might be leading them to fast as a way to connect with Him.

OBJECT LESSON: HOME FURNISHINGS

Prior to the session, gather some poster board and glue sticks. Bring magazines and newspaper ads featuring home furnishings (sofas, tables, chairs, rugs, lamps, and so forth). Include some photos of broken or damaged furniture as well.

During the session, direct the group to design and decorate a living room using the photos. Note that they should cut out the pictures and glue them to the poster board to illustrate the layout of the room. Once the project is completed, note that the broken furniture wasn't used because the new furniture was better.

Point out that the transformation into new life through Christ is much the same. The former things just do not fit in with the new, including old habits or ways of doing things. Apply this truth to the metaphors Jesus used in Matthew 9:14-17.

NEW WINE, NEW LIFE

Jesus used the imagery of new and old wine to illustrate the transformative nature of His teachings and the incompatibility of the new covenant with traditional Judaism. In one of His illustrations, He noted that new wine will destroy old wineskins (Matt 9:17). New teaching needed a new covenant.

Water was scarce in the ancient Near East, and wine was a necessity rather than a luxury. The alcohol content in ancient wine varied, but it was generally lower than modern standards, typically ranging from 5 percent to 10 percent. It was often further diluted with water for drinking or left undiluted for ceremonial purposes. The attention to preparing and storing wine reflected its significance in ancient cultures.

Wine was made by crushing the grapes and fermenting the juice in containers made from animal skins. Fermentation occurred naturally as yeast converted sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. The gases would expand; and, if they skins were too old or

brittle, they could burst. As Jesus pointed out, when that happened, it was a double loss. The skins would be ruined and the wine would be spilled out.

In contrast, fresh wineskins were pliable and could expand as the wine fermented. They accommodated the pressure from the gases released in the fermentation process, preserving both the wine and the wineskins.

The new wine represents the newness of Jesus's gospel. The fresh wineskins represent His ethical teachings on the true intent of the law. At the same time, the old wineskins symbolize Judaism's traditions.

Jesus's metaphor highlights the incompatibility between the old and new covenants. His ministry brings new life and spiritual renewal that the legalistic practices of the past cannot. Jesus did not spurn Scripture but rejected constraining the gospel within the framework of Judaism. Believers should approach faith with humility and adaptability, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives as the new wine of God's kingdom.