

# A Doctor Comes to Heal the Sick

Luke 5:27-32

## PPT Title

### A Doctor Comes to Heal the Sick

**Main Point:** Jesus calls sinners to follow Him because He loves them.

**Key Verse:** *But here is how God has shown His love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* – Romans 5:8

**Props:** Two dolls, one with a red “cut” drawn on its head (or two pictures of children, one with a drawn-on “cut”). Two adhesive bandages.

### BACKGROUND



**Say:** Many of Jesus’ teachings were new ideas to the people who heard them. But they contained very, very important truths about the kingdom of God. So Jesus often used simple examples to help people understand what He was saying. Who remembers what these simple stories are called? *Parables*. That’s right. Jesus used parables to show people what the kingdom of God looks like and what it means to follow Him and be His disciple.

Jesus taught some of His parables to crowds of ordinary people who gathered to hear Him speak. The Parable of the Mustard Seed is a good example of this. Jesus told that story to help a large group of people see that the kingdom of God is becoming huge like a mustard plant—huge enough to hold every single person in the crowd! Other times, Jesus told parables that were meant to help the religious leaders of the time understand that the kingdom of God is for anyone who follows Jesus, not just for people who follow a bunch of religious rules. We’re going to look at one of those parables today. The Parable of the Doctor Who Comes to Heal the Sick is one He told to teach truth to the religious leaders. But like all of Jesus’ teachings, it is full of truth for us, too. That is the amazing thing about the Bible. Even though it is the record of things that happened thousands of years ago, it is still valuable and filled with truth today! Let’s read together in Luke 5:27-32.

**Teacher Note:** This is a beautiful passage of scripture. Not only does it illustrate the love Jesus has for sinners, but it provides a very clear picture of how believers are to live. Jesus called Levi, a man from a particularly hated class of people, to follow Him. As a tax collector for the Romans, Levi would have suffered the scorn of the Pharisees. “According to Rabbinism there was no hope for a man like Levi. He was excluded from all religious fellowship” (from *On Eating, Drinking and Being Merry*, by Bob Definbaugh, [Bible.org](http://Bible.org)).

It is not surprising, then, that Levi wanted all his friends and fellow sinners to meet the One who set him free from hopelessness. Jesus never hesitated. He and His disciples were pleased to eat and drink with the very ones the “church crowd” avoided. How else could they share the good news of the kingdom of God with those who needed good news the most? The Pharisees didn’t like this. And today, many Christians who are overly devoted to legalism and the appearance of righteousness probably wouldn’t like it either. Many who claim the name of Jesus would never consider

attending a banquet with the types of people Jesus shared a meal with that night. But what furthers the kingdom of God more? Fellowshiping exclusively with those who are just like us? Or meeting the lost and the broken where they live, sharing the hope of the gospel and the forgiveness of sins for all who believe? Jesus showed us how we are to live that night at Levi's banquet. We are to share the good news with those who need it most, in humility and gratitude that we have been set free. May we say, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10a, "It is by the grace of God I am what I am..."

## JESUS CALLS AN OUTCAST



**Say:** After this, Jesus left the house. He saw a tax collector sitting at the tax booth. The man's name was Levi. "Follow Me," Jesus said to him. Levi got up, left everything and followed Him. – Luke 5:27-28

**Teacher Note:** In Matthew 9:9, the tax collector called by Jesus is named Matthew. In Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27, he is named Levi. Many scholars believe Matthew and Levi are the same person. Matthew would be the Greek name, and Levi the Hebrew name. As a tax-collector, Matthew worked for Greek-speaking Romans, but gathered taxes from Hebrew-speaking Jews.

**Say:** Levi was a man who worked for the Roman government collecting taxes. A tax is money collected by a government from its citizens. For instance, when you buy a book at the bookstore, a certain amount of tax is added to the price of the book. The government then collects the tax money that you pay on the book. Most grown ups pay taxes on the money they earn at work, on the things they buy, on their homes, on their cars. You get the idea.



In Jesus' time, Israel was under the control of the Roman empire. People in Israel didn't like this at all. They were not a free nation. They had to obey Roman laws and submit to Roman authority. And because tax collectors worked for the Roman government, they were a constant reminder that Israel was once again under the authority of a foreign government. Every time a citizen had to pay money to a tax collector, they may have thought really bad thoughts about the person taking their money.

That was probably more than enough to make tax collectors unpopular, don't you think? But there was something else that made people hate the tax collectors. Many of the tax collectors were also very dishonest, and collected more money than they were supposed to. What do you suppose they did with the extra money they collected? That's right. They put it in their own pockets and kept it!



So for these reasons Levi was probably not a very popular person in his community. But as we just read in the Gospel of Luke, that didn't matter at all to Jesus. When Jesus saw Levi sitting in his tax booth, He felt compassion for Levi. Jesus wanted Levi to follow Him and be His disciple. He wanted Levi to give up the life of sin that he was living and enter the kingdom of God. Something about the way Jesus said "follow me" must have made a big impression on Levi, because he immediately left the tax booth—and all the money he had collected that day!—and followed Jesus.

**Application:** Before Jesus called him to follow, Levi was an outcast. Does anyone know what that means? *A person who is unwanted. An unpopular person. Someone no one wants to be around.* The world may not care about outcasts, but God does. The world may not see their loneliness, but God does. In fact, God feels very strongly about His children who are rejected by the world.

God gives  
lonely people a family.  
He sets prisoners free  
and they go out singing.

Psalms 68:6

Psalms 68:6 says, *God gives lonely people a family. He sets prisoners free, and they go out singing.* When Jesus called Levi to follow Him, He was offering the tax collector a place in His forever family. He was giving Levi freedom from a life of sin. Levi didn't have to be a prisoner of sin any more! And when we follow Jesus, we are free, too.

## THE PHARISEES DISAPPROVE

**Say:** Levi must have felt pretty happy when Jesus invited him to follow. Up to this point, people had avoided him all day long, every day. They said mean things to him and hated him for being a tax collector. They gossiped about his sinful life. They never thought that he might be a real person with real feelings. When they were paying their taxes they probably never talked to him about the weather or his family or whether he enjoyed his job or not.

But Jesus had shown him kindness. He even wanted Levi to be part of His extended family of followers. Jesus was the Man so many people wanted to be near, the one many were calling the Son of God, the Teacher who was surrounded by huge crowds everywhere He went. And He had noticed Levi! He had invited him to follow.

So what do you think Levi did after he got up and left his tax booth? Let's read Luke 5:29-30 to find out.



**Say:** *Then Levi gave a huge dinner for Jesus at his house. A large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and their teachers of the law complained to Jesus' disciples. They said, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" – Luke 5:29-30*

Levi had received a new life from Jesus. He had been invited to follow Jesus. He had entered the kingdom of God that very day. He was SO happy! So he decided to give a big party to celebrate his freedom and his new life. He wanted to honor Jesus and thank Him for what He had done. But Levi also wanted everyone he knew to meet the man who had seen him and been kind to him and asked him to be part of his family of followers.

Deep down inside Levi had always known that his sin was keeping him from a right relationship with God. But now, because of Jesus, he had a second chance.

But there were people at the party who didn't think Levi deserved a second chance. They didn't think that a second chance was even possible for a tax collector. Some of the people at the party were Pharisees and teachers of the law. They thought that the only way to be right with God was to follow a bunch of religious rules. Some of these rules were from the Bible, but most of them were made up by the Pharisees. They thought that anyone who didn't follow all their rules would never find favor with God.

Tax collectors like Levi were especially looked down upon by the Pharisees. To them, he was among the worst of sinners. Levi wouldn't even have been allowed to be part of the synagogue or to worship with others. But here Jesus was, eating dinner with a bunch of tax collectors and other sinners, acting like He was their friend. The Pharisees began to complain.

**Application:** The Pharisees didn't understand the joyful celebration at all. They didn't understand why Jesus would be there, feasting with sinners. They didn't like it that Jesus seemed to be turning their whole religious world upside down.

Most of all, though, the Pharisees didn't understand that Levi wasn't all that different from them. Because everyone at that party—except Jesus—was a sinner. The tax collectors were sinners. The Pharisees were sinners. Even the disciples were sinners.

Romans 3:23 says, *Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.* That includes Pharisees. And that includes you and me. We may not be tax collectors, we may not be thieves or murderers, but we are all sinners. And any sin, big or small, separates us from God.

*Everyone has sinned.  
No one measures  
up to God's glory.*

Romans 3:23

But when Jesus says to any sinner “follow Me,” and that sinner decides to follow Him, God forgives their sin and gives them a new life. They are part of the kingdom of God! If only the Pharisees had opened their eyes to that truth, they would have been partying instead of grumbling.

## JESUS CALLS SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

**Say:** When the Pharisees complained to Jesus’ disciples, Jesus overheard them. He knew it was the perfect time to teach some truth to the religious leaders who thought they were so much better than the other party guests.



Look with me at Luke 5:31-32. *Jesus answered them, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Sick people do. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to turn away from their sins.”*

Jesus knew the Pharisees would object to almost anything He said. If He quoted scripture to them to explain why he was eating and partying with a room full of sinners, they would argue with Him. So Jesus did what He did best...He used a parable to communicate deep truth to people who didn’t want to hear any truth at all.

Jesus compared sinners to sick people. When you are sick, really sick, you need to see a doctor to get well. The doctor knows the right medicine to cure your illness. Without the doctor’s care, you will remain sick, and maybe even get worse.



**Hold up the two dolls or two pictures of children. Say:** I have two dolls (or pictures) here. One is perfectly healthy. The other one, has a pretty nasty cut on her forehead. Let’s say I’m a doctor. But I’m kind of a strange doctor who doesn’t like sick people or injured people at all. I only want to be around people who don’t have anything wrong with them. But doctors are **supposed** to do things like put on bandages and prescribe medicine, right? So to feel like I’m doing my job, I’m going to take this bandage and stick it on the forehead of the perfectly healthy doll. **Apply the bandage to the doll without the cut.** I think we can agree that it’s pretty silly for a doctor to only treat healthy people, when there are sick and hurting people out there who really do need a doctor’s care.

**Say:** Jesus was using this simple example to show the Pharisees how wrong their thinking was. They thought He should only be hanging out with people who weren’t sinners. But Jesus said that it was the sinners who needed Him most. Just like healthy people don’t need a doctor, perfect people don’t need a Savior to forgive their sins.

Let me ask you this. Are there actually any perfect people who don’t sin? *No, we all sin. Jesus was the only one who didn’t sin.* You’re right we all sin and are wounded by our separation from God. We’re all more like this other doll (or picture). **Hold up the doll (picture) with the drawn on cut.** This doll is hurting. She has a really bad cut on her head. And she just can’t figure out how to heal the cut on her own. She needs a doctor to make her better. **Put the second bandage on the doll (picture) with the cut.** There. Our little doll here has been healed. She has a second chance at health thanks to the doctor.



**Application:** This is what Jesus said He came to do. He said, *I have come to get sinners to turn away from their sins.* When Jesus says “follow Me” to sinners like Levi and me and you, He’s like a kind, merciful, wonderful doctor. He sees our sin-wounds and our sin-sicknesses and He says, “I can make you better if you will only believe and follow Me.”

There is a word you hear in church sometimes. That word is **REPENTANCE**. It means to “change your mind,” or to “turn away from sin.” Jesus said He came to call sinners to repentance. He called Levi to repentance, didn’t He? When Levi decided to follow

Jesus, he left his tax collection booth behind. Following Jesus required him to repent of his sin and turn away from the life that was separating him from God. Repenting doesn't mean that you won't sin any more, but it does mean that you change your mind about what you want to do. Levi wanted to follow the Savior who saw him and loved him when no one else did. Continuing to sin so boldly when he had been given a second chance just seemed wrong. So he left that life behind. He repented.



It is so incredible that Jesus wants to bring imperfect sinners like Levi and like us into His kingdom! His love for sinners leads Him to say "follow Me" to even the worst offenders. And isn't it great that forgiveness comes from the simple decision to follow Jesus, rather than from obeying all the religious rules that the Pharisees made up?

Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for sin. Levi's sin. My sin. Your sin. We don't have to be good or sinless to receive God's forgiveness. All we have to do is believe and follow Him.

**Teacher Note:** Self righteousness is a huge obstacle to being a follower of Christ. The Pharisees were plagued by self-righteous attitudes, and their haughty spirits are the reason why they found it so hard to accept Jesus for who He is. It is inevitable that a person who is righteous in his or her own eyes will find no cause to follow Jesus. In contrast, a person who knows their sinful nature and sees how it keeps them from fellowship with God will readily follow Jesus into the kingdom. Their humble spirits allow repentance where once there was just bold and willful rebellion. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* — Matthew 5:3

**PPT Key Verse**

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**PPT Main Point**

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