

12 – The Setting

Luke 15: 1, 2

Step 1: Link (chapter 14)

Today we will start Luke chapter 15. At the end of chapter 14, who was with Jesus - ? (. . . v. 25 *great crowds*) Many, many people were following Jesus. They were listening to him teach. Were there any people who didn't like Jesus - ? (. . . *yes, the Pharisees*) The Pharisees were against Jesus.

Step 2: Background (description here)

Do you remember who the Pharisees were - ? (. . . *they were Bible teachers!*) The Pharisees were very respected teachers in Israel. They taught the Bible, and they obeyed the Bible. They were good people! But they were far from God.

This chapter is for the Pharisees. This chapter is an answer to a question they were asking. This is very important, and we will spend this whole Bible time on just the first two verses!

Step 3: Key Questions

- **Who came to listen to Jesus?** (*v.1 tax collectors and sinners*)
- **Who complained against Jesus?** (*v.2 the scribes and the Pharisees*)

Step 4: Read **Luke 15: 1, 2**

Step 5: Answer the questions

Step 6: Talk about it

The tax collectors and sinners came to Jesus. The scribes and the Pharisees complained against Jesus. What did the scribes and the Pharisees say - ? (. . . *this man welcomes sinners and eats with them*) The scribes and the Pharisees were complaining because the tax collectors and sinners came to Jesus!

Were they envious? Probably. Did they understand why the tax collectors and sinners came? Probably not.

But, the scribes and the Pharisees were trying to say something about Jesus. Remember that only very good friends would eat together in the time of Jesus. Eating together said that you had a very close relationship. If someone was eating with a sinner, if someone was close friends with a

sinner, it's natural to think – what - ? (. . .) It's natural to think that the person is also a sinner. That's what the Pharisees were trying to say about Jesus. They were trying to say that Jesus was the same as the people he ate with. That Jesus was the same as the people he had a close relationship with. That Jesus was just like the tax collectors and sinners.

Was He - ? (. . .) This is an important question for you to answer.

Tax collectors were hated because – do you remember - ? (. . .) Who did tax collectors work for - ? (. . . Rome) Were they usually fair - ? (. . . no!) Tax collectors usually took the taxes plus even more money. They lied about how much the taxes were. They cheated people. And they got rich. People hated them because they knew they were lying and cheating, but they couldn't stop them. It was *shi-gata-ga-nai*.

“Sinners” were other kinds of bad people. People who steal, people who are always drunk, ladies who sell themselves to men. Do any of you have friends like this - ? (. . .) Would any of you invite a thief, or a lady of the night to your house for dinner - ? (. . .) Probably not. Good people all over the world usually stay away from bad people. Good people all over the world also usually think they are *better* than bad people.

But what does the Bible say? Let's look at Romans 3:23. (. . . *s.o.*¹ reads) Who has sinned - ? (. . . all) Have the bad people sinned - ? (. . . yes, of course) Have the good people sinned - ? (. . . yes!)

The Bible teaches that there is *no difference!* That's what the Pharisees didn't like. They *wanted* to be different, to be *better*. They wanted to do it “my way.”² They did not want to do it “Jesus' way.”

In Japanese the news about Jesus is called *fuku-in*. What does “*fuku-in*” mean in English - ? (. . . blessing sound, fortune sound) When you read in the Bible that “all have sinned” – is this a *blessing sound*³ to you - ? (. . .) No, this has a bad sound to it. But, it *is* a blessing!! Because it means that we all, everyone on earth, need a Savior. And God sent a Savior! There is a savior! He is Jesus Christ!! And He could be your Savior, today!

Do you want Jesus as your Savior?
(OK to lead in prayer as the Spirit moves in you)

Do you have any questions or comments?

¹ someone

² refers to well-known (in Japan) Sinatra song

³ Use their word