



**“HEALING AND HOPE”**  
**SPEAKER: ALEX LESSLER**  
**DATE: MAY 14, 2023**

**Discussion Questions**

*These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.*

**BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:**

**Luke 5:27-32, 1 Thess 4:13, Hosea 2:14-15**

Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to Repentance.” He’s surrounded by scoundrels like Jewish tax collectors, who have become turncoats serving the interests of their Roman oppressors and growing rich in the process. In their company one often found other lowlifes. Yet, in this instance, the righteous Pharisees were there. So, who are the “sinners?”

Jesus doesn’t tell us directly, but Pastor Alex tackles this question head on in the latest installment of our series.

**LEAN IN:** *These are ice breakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What’s the best party you’ve ever been to?
2. Have you ever wanted to be somewhere so bad that you took off quickly and left something — or someone — behind? What was that like?
3. What did you think the first time you got a paycheck and saw how much money was deducted for taxes?
4. What’s one thing about this message that stood out to you and why?
5. Is there anything you put into practice from last week’s teaching, and if so what was your experience? If not, why not?

**LOOK DOWN:** *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Do you notice anything odd about the initial exchange between Jesus and Levi?
2. What did Levi do immediately after “leaving everything?” What does that tell you about the “everything” he left?
3. How does Luke describe the banquet and who was in attendance?
4. What were they guests doing together? How would you describe their time together? For example, would you say it was religious in nature or more “secular” and why?
5. How do religious leaders respond to the festivities, and to whom do they express themselves? Why might that be important?
6. What do you notice about how Jesus engages his critics?
7. Is Jesus being ironic in his answer? Why or why not?

**LOOK OUT:** *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How are tax collectors thought of in our culture? If they are outcasts, what is the cause and how does that relate to the biblical reasons for Levi’s marginalization?
2. Is sin and repentance even a thing in our culture? How do most people relate to those ideas if at all?

3. What about healing? Would more people relate to the idea of being healed — whether physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, or spiritually — and why?
4. What kinds of associations are people anxious for, and which ones do they wish to avoid, and why? Are they afraid that being connected with some people might be bad for them? Are they hopeful being connected with others might be good for them, and what does that do to their ability to have genuine, loving relationships?
5. What do you think is the greatest societal sickness that needs the touch of Jesus, the Great Physician?

**LOOK IN:** *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What kind of grieving might you need to experience simultaneously with hope?
2. Are there people in your life who you see everyday that you feel are “too far gone” as Pastor Alex characterized Levi? If so, what do you do about that?
3. What, if anything, is the “everything” you need to leave behind to follow Jesus?
4. How would you feel if you saw Jesus partying with a bunch of “sinners” that had bad reputations and weren’t the kind of people that hung out at church regularly? Now, imagine yourself with all of them at Levi’s party. How would you feel?
5. Think about the Hosea passage. What kind of wilderness might God need to take you into to make you his own?

**LIVE IT OUT:** *These action steps help apply this week’s message to day to day life. Choose one prompt and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Take some time in prayer to identify one thing that makes you grieve, something you’re particularly sad about. It can be something recent, or something from your past. Ask God to give you a specific hope attached to that grief. For example, maybe you broke up with someone recently, and God gives you hope for a new and fulfilling relationship. Or, maybe you have a broken friendship that’s been unreconciled for years and God gives you renewed hope that it’s still possible for that friendship to reignite. Give God thanks and make that new hope a focus of ongoing prayer
2. Pray for your church, for its mission and future hope.