



STORY FROM...
Matthew 9,12 Mark 2
Luke 5,11 John 5

Jesus and the Pharisees

◀ **REVIEW PREVIOUS STORIES** *(Guide the group as they give an overview of previous stories and retell the last story)*

▼ **TELL THE SCENE** *(Don't just read it—know it and bring it to life!)*

SCENE 1: Healing a Paralyzed Man

Crowds continued to surround Jesus everywhere he went. Once, when he was teaching in a house where he was staying, so many people came to hear him that the house was completely packed. There wasn't room for one more person—even outside of the door!

Four men brought their paralyzed friend who was lying on a mat to see Jesus, believing he would heal him. But the only way they could get him in the house was to climb up on the roof, dig a hole through the clay tiles and lower him down! Jesus was impressed with their effort and faith. He told the paralyzed man, *"Don't worry... your sins are forgiven!"*

Some religious leaders, called Pharisees, were watching and listening to Jesus. The Pharisees were a powerful group of Jewish teachers. In addition to the laws given to Moses, they created their own set of strict rules on how to follow God.

They said to each other, *"Who does this man think he is? No one can forgive sins but God!"*

But Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, *"Why are you offended? Would you rather I would've just said 'pick up your mat and walk'? I will prove to you that I have the authority on earth to forgive sins."*

Then Jesus told the paralyzed man, *"Now get up—take your mat and walk home—you are healed."*

The man was no longer paralyzed! He jumped up and pushed his way out the door and went home. Everyone there was amazed and thanked God saying, *"We've never seen anything like this before!"*

▲ **RETELL THE SCENE** *(This may seem redundant, but it is very effective in helping the listeners own the story)*

▼ **DIALOGUE** *(These questions are a good start for you to draw out the group's observations about the story)*

- How might you have responded if you were in that house?
- Why do you think Jesus said, *"Don't worry... your sins are forgiven"*?
- What was Jesus teaching them in this story?

(story continued on next page)



STORY FROM...
Matthew 9,12 Mark 2
Luke 5,11 John 5

Jesus and the Pharisees

SCENE 2: Eating with Sinners

Soon after that, Jesus was walking along the lakeshore when he saw a tax collector named Matthew sitting at his collection booth. *(In that day Tax collectors were wealthy men, hated for their reputation of being dishonest and corrupt.)*

Jesus said to him, *"Come, be my disciple!"*
So Matthew got up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

That night Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to be his dinner guests. He also invited some of his tax collector friends and many other people that were known to be sinners in the community. But when some of the Jewish religious leaders, called Pharisees, saw Jesus eating with them they said to his disciples, *"Why does he eat with those terrible people?"*

When Jesus heard this he told them, *"Healthy people don't need a doctor, sick people do. I have come to call sinners to a changed life—inside and out—not to spend my time with those who think they're already good enough."*

On another night Jesus met with some of the Jewish religious leaders for dinner. They were shocked and offended when Jesus did not wash up according to Jewish customs before the meal.

Then Jesus said to them, *"You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but the inside is still filthy. Your lives are just like this—so clean when people are watching—but inside you are full of hate, greed and pride. You're worse than your Hebrew ancestors; you have great knowledge about the things of God, but you don't enter God's kingdom, in fact, you keep people from entering it!"*

▲ **RETELL THE SCENE** *(This may seem redundant, but it is very effective in helping the listeners own the story)*

▼ **DIALOGUE** *(These questions are a good start for you to draw out the group's observations about the story)*

- **Jesus called Matthew to, "come, be my disciple!" What is a disciple?**
Do you think this was an easy decision for Matthew?
- **Why do think people just dropped everything to follow Jesus?**
- **Who did Jesus spend time with? Why did the religious leaders have a problem with this?**
*They understood God in terms of boundaries—laws... food... rituals...
and added their own interpretation and strictness to this.*
- **What do we learn about Jesus from this scene?**

(story continued on next page)



STORY FROM...
Matthew 9,12 Mark 2
Luke 5,11 John 5

Jesus and the Pharisees

SCENE 3: Healing on the Sabbath

Jesus continued to travel around teaching and healing, sometimes on the Sabbath (the day of rest). The Jewish leaders were upset about this and confronted Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. But Jesus replied, *“God—my Father—never stops doing good, so why should I?”*

This really angered them. Not only was he breaking their Sabbath rules, but he was calling God “his” Father instead of “our” father, making himself equal with God! The Jewish leaders continued to challenge Jesus with many hostile questions, trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him.

Jesus went on to explain to them, *“I don’t do any of this on my own. I only do what my Father tells me to do. He is the source of all life and has given me the power to heal, raise the dead and give life. Those who listen and believe in me will find new life with God that is never ending.”*

As Jesus finished speaking, the Pharisees and religious leaders were furious. From that time on the Jewish leaders began planning out how they could have Jesus killed.

▲ **RETELL THE SCENE** *(This may seem redundant, but it is very effective in helping the listeners own the story)*

▼ **DIALOGUE** *(These questions are a good start for you to draw out the group’s observations about the story)*

- What is the Sabbath?
- What was Jesus claiming about himself from this last scene?
- Where does Jesus’ authority and power come from?
- What do we learn about Jesus’ relationship with God from this story?
- Who else had a perfect relationship with God from the previous stories?
- What was that relationship like?

From all three of the scenes we just looked at...

- What do we know about the Pharisees?
- What are we learning about Jesus?
- What do you think was Jesus’ Mission?
- What do you think it would take for this Mission to be accomplished on earth?

◆ **APPLICATION** *(Optional questions that also work well in smaller groups)*

- What did you notice from the story for the first time?
- What questions do you have about the story? What do you wonder about?
- How did the story challenge or encourage you?
- What do you think is more important—forgiveness or healing?
- How are we just like the Pharisees? How can we become clean on the inside?