

Luke 5:1-26

Verses 1-11:

--(1-3) ***So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.***

--***So it was.*** . . is the Greek word *ginomai*, which is also used in **12+17** and translated as *and/now it happened*. These three stories are linked.

--Also, each story puts Jesus in relation to an “expert” in their particular field. Peter the fisherman. The temple priests as those who decide what is clean or unclean. The doctors of the law and Pharisees with blasphemy.

--Jesus is teaching outside by a lake. Wonderfully, Jesus didn't always wait for a convenient building and PA system to preach the Word of God. We find Him teaching in the synagogue, the temple, on mountains, in fields, in homes, in the wilderness, and even on the road post-resurrection!

--Though never determined by practicalities, Jesus does not ignore them either. He gets into Peter's boat and asks him to push out a bit, which would afford some relief from the pressing crowd, some better acoustics, and the perfect position to minister to Peter.

--(4-5) ***When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”***

But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word, I will let down the net.”

--Jesus finishes speaking the Word to the people and then gives Peter a personal command.

This wasn't supposed to be a new business technique or formula for catching fish. This was for him to relate to Jesus.

--First, what Jesus told Peter to do was inconvenient. They had been up all night. They were sweaty, hungry, tired, and no doubt, a bit grumpy. They had caught nothing.

--Second, what Jesus told Peter to do wasn't logical. All his personal life experience told him this was a bad idea.

--Even so, this is where the good part of Peter shines. Jesus really was Peter's Master. He wouldn't have done this for anyone else. He complains but obeys. ***Nevertheless at Your word, I will let down the net.***

--Wonderfully, Jesus mercifully rewards reluctant faith and obedience.

--(6-7) ***And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.***

--God loves to richly bless faith. *This is actually a true fish story!*

--Not only was this a sign for Peter and the others, but the large catch was also a provision for their families while they were following Jesus Christ.

--**(8-10a) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"**

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

--For some reason, the fish did something for Peter that Jesus' sermon had not. Instead of Master, he falls at Jesus' feet and calls Him **Lord!** *Isaiah, Daniel, John, etc.*

--Admitted sinners are good clay for the Master to form into a vessel fit for His good use.

Psalm 25:8: Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

--God's goodness is still displayed in His patient teaching of sinners.

--**(10b-11) And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.**

--The confessed sinner has nothing to fear at Jesus' feet!

--Jesus tells Peter that he is retiring from fishing, and now his job will be to literally *catch men alive*. The Greek word used for **catch** is only used one other time in the NT in **2 Timothy 2:26**, describing those ensnared and taken captive by the devil.

--Jesus came to save and mold men and women. Human souls are His aim.

--Luke takes notes that it is at this moment Peter, Andrew, James and John all begin to follow Him fully. They are not yet called apostles, but they are true followers.

--In **John 1:35-51**, they recognize Him as the Messiah.

--In **Mt. 4:18-20+Mk. 1:16-20**, they begin to follow Him as disciples. But it seems they still returned from time to time to work.

--Now, they leave everything—**forsook all**—and follow Him. *Work is no hindrance to following God or hearing His call. In fact, God never calls a single man or woman who is faithlessly doing nothing!*

Verses 12-16:

--**(12) And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**

--Luke introduces the next scene with **behold, a man who was full of leprosy**. . . The unlikely nearness of the man was irregular and frightening.

--The Old Testament law was very clear about how lepers were to behave and be treated.

Leviticus 13:45-46: Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

--As a doctor Luke lets us know his condition is far advanced. He is **full of leprosy**.

--The life of a leper is hard for us to imagine. One day you are fine, the next you go to see the priest, you sit in the temple for weeks, and then you are pronounced unclean, and life is never the same again. The Jewish leper led a hopeless, isolated existence. You may live in a cave with some other lepers, and family might drop off food for you and stand at a distance, but the distance was always there.

--Leprosy was incurable physically, but it was also associated with the direct judgment of God as with Miriam, Gehazi, or Uzziah.

--The advanced leper appears, falls before Jesus Christ, and **implored Him**. . . begged. Saying, **Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean.**

--The leper has no doubt about Jesus' power. For some reason though, maybe the cultural connotations of judgment, He has doubts about Jesus' willingness.

--I think we find ourselves in this situation more often than we would like to admit.

Mark 9:24: Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

--We would do well to follow this man's example and bring what little faith we can to our Lord. In the end, will my faith bring me to His feet, or will unbelief keep me away?

--The tension in the scene is obvious. What will Jesus do?

-(13) Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him.

--Mark tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion. There was a visible tone and touch of compassion mediated through The Image of God. Jesus didn't need to touch the man, to close the distance between Himself and the leper, but He did.

Lamentations 3:22: Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

--Matthew, Mark, and Luke all note that the man was **cleansed** and not just *healed*. He went from being an unclean thing to being clean again. Being "clean" was indicative of one's standing before God, and a picture, therefore, of the greater healing of sin. *Physical sicknesses are constantly used as pictures of sin: **Isa. 1:6** (sores); **Jn. 9:40-41** (blindness); **2 Tim. 2:17** (rot); **Heb. 12:12** (paralysis); etc.*

--So too, sin is our nature, our incurable state, until Jesus Christ makes us new creations through the power of His Holy Spirit in new birth.

Titus 3:4-5: But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

--We too, have been cleansed by the touch of Jesus Christ.

--(14) And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."

--Why would this be a testimony? Because the law could diagnose uncleanness, but not cleanse. The inability of the law to give life is repeated throughout the NT (**Acts 15:8-9; Rom. 7:7-8:11; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 9:9-14**).

--The priests (maybe the very ones who pronounced him unclean!) would take him back for a week-long process spelled out in **Leviticus 14**. It was a beautiful process for the priests and the cleansed leper.

1) The bird set free and sprinkled in blood.

2) Washing and shaving as cleansing.

3) Sin offering with blood and oil placed on the right ear, thumb, and toe of the cleansed.

Finally, his head will be anointed with oil.

4) Burnt offering of worship.

--The priests—as the experts on clean and unclean things—had likely never given these offerings. What a topic of discussion it would be among them! And of course, they would ask, *How were you made clean?*

--Wonderfully, this leper was just the first of many! They would keep coming!

--(15-16) However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

--I believe Jesus wanted to withhold the promotion of miraculous healings because then people would *only* come to Him for physical healing and not the Word of God. Here, the crowds come, and Jesus continues to teach and heal.

--Luke again informs us that Jesus **withdrew** from the crowds. Leaving the needy crowds, as the Son of Man, Jesus sought spiritual strength for service with His Father. There is direct correlation between this verse and the next, where we are told: **and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**

--Where can we acquire spiritual strength? Only by spiritual means. Only by a spiritual source.

There are also great dangers with ostensible success!

*Watson (Pure Gold): *“At the very time that thousands of people insisted on making Christ a King, and when his popularity was at the highest pitch, he withdrew himself that same day from everybody and spent the night alone in the mountain praying to his Father. Here we see infinite wisdom. For every wave of success, he sought a deeper self-abasement, and more complete solitude with the Father. Here is the pattern for all believers.”**

--Do you have a place to withdraw and pray?

Verses 17-26:

--**(17) Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**

--Luke puts this third account in front of us with **now it happened**. . . and introduces the Pharisees (who were the politicians and theologians of the day) and the **teachers of the law**, which was a specific Greek word (*nomodidaskalos*) only used three times in Scripture. Here, of Gamaliel (**Acts 5:34**), and of what Paul says false teachers want to be (**1 Tim. 1:7**). The term described the *doctors of the law*, the expert lawyers of the day.

--The experts are present, but sadly, they are unaware that the Lord's miraculous healing power is also present.

--**(18-19) Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.**

--These men, and their friend, are determined. They are going to get to Jesus one way or another. They also may not know Jesus' healing power is present, but they know Jesus is, and they want anything Jesus has to give! I love this stuff.

--We are told this is a house in Capernaum (**Mk. 2:2**), maybe Peter's, but also likely not. The gospel writers don't call it Simon's house which they do at other times, and we don't get the sense Peter was living on the monetary level to have a tiled roof, which was a bit irregular.

--Most homes had a flat roof, which would be accessed by a stairway on the side of the home. The friends get their pal to the right spot on the roof and begin to dig.

--Wonderfully, Jesus was interrupted, but never saw people as an interruption. What an example for us!

--**(20) When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”**

--It wasn't just the faith of the friends, but of the man as well! Jesus never forgives individual sins because of the faith of another. What did these men want? **(18): they sought to bring in and lay before Him.**

--They just wanted to get to Jesus and have all He had to offer! *What effort are we willing to make to get to Jesus? Our effort is indicative of our faith.*

--(21) And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

--Technically, they were right. They were asking the right question, but didn't wait for the answer as to Who this was. They heard blasphemy, based on the faulty assumption about the person of Christ.

--(22-24) But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

--Jesus always knows our actual thoughts. No matter how ugly or faithless they are (**Mt. 17:25; Jn. 1:45+48; 2:25; 21:17**). He will deal with us in relation to our actual thoughts. Where we have wrong thoughts of Him, He will work to correct them.

Hebrews 4:13: And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

--As the Son of Man, God's Ambassador on earth, He is going to *show them* the invisible authority of His Word through visible miraculous healing.

--(25-26) Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"

--In sending the man home, Jesus shows us His delight in men living healthy physically and spiritually. *Our ultimate end!*

--They could not deny God's hand and praised Him, but they also could not shake the weirdness of it all. Glory and fear! *It had to also be very strange and unsettling for them to see their "experts" confounded!*