

Luke 5



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A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 5

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Introduction to Luke 5

Luke 5 picks up on themes introduced in chapter 4 and shows them in their bright, astonishing, amazing, newness. And out of that glorious newness, Jesus calls to us, “Follow Me” (v. 27). To be in Christ is to be a new person. Old things have passed away; all things are becoming new (2 Cor. 5.17).

Luke 5 focuses our minds forward to the newness that Jesus is, does, and proclaims as He brings the Kingdom of God near to the world.

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We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 “...as you are going...”

Pray Psalm 25.4, 5.

Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

Sing Psalm 25.4, 5.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O Lord!
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Read and meditate on Luke 5.1-3.

Preparation

1. What was Jesus doing beside the lake?
2. What did He ask Peter to do?

Meditation

Here we see themes continued which were “overtured” in chapter 4: Preaching and teaching, eager people, and a disciple in tow. We must never lose sight of the fact that, as dark as times may appear to be, there will always be people whose hearts God has prepared to hear His Word (v. 1). Indeed, they will “press” us to tell them about Jesus as they see Him and the hope He engenders in us (1 Pet. 3.15). We must be faithful like Jesus to go to them, ready to talk about Him and the Good News of His Kingdom.

The people were so many that Jesus needed some space. He could have just signaled for them all to sit down, as He would later when He fed them bread and loaves. Why get into a boat to continue the teaching?

The larger purpose of this involves Peter (as we will see in verses 5-8). Notice the disciple-making principle Jesus demonstrated here. He has commanded us to make disciples “as you are going”, that is, in all your daily situations and with the people in your Personal Mission Field (Matt. 28.18-20). Did Jesus not know how to “put out a little from the land” (v. 3) in a fishing boat? We can be sure He did. But the disciple-making principle is clear: When you are serving the Lord, never serve alone if you can draw someone else into the work. By getting Peter to handle the boat, Jesus engaged three disciple-making disciplines: He made sure Peter was close enough to hear His teaching; He led Peter to be publicly identified with Him; and He gave Peter a meaningful assignment to help in His work.

Disciple-making is not a class. It’s a way of life, and Jesus is the Master to Whom we look to learn this lifestyle for ourselves.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Since we are to be followers of Jesus, I like learning practical things from Him. “As the multitude pressed about Him...He got into one of the boats” (Lk. 5.1). Jesus maybe didn’t like the press of people as much as I don’t. I don’t like crowds that make me feel claustrophobic and are loud. In this passage, for whatever reason, Jesus felt comfortable to step back from something, and step into something else.

In my generation, we were led to believe that the more uncomfortable and miserable a situation might appear, the more likely you would be called to serve the Lord in it. In other words, miserable translated into spiritual. No, we are not promised health and wealth, but we are also not doomed to circumstances that always make

us feel uneasy. There might be other options. Like putting out a bit from the shore.

I find great comfort in the fact that Jesus didn't stay pressed in by the crowds but had the freedom to step back a bit. Yes, He continued to minister to the people but in a way that He found more pleasing, and probably the acoustics were better.

We are most assuredly called to follow and serve Jesus, and minister works of goodness, mercy, and grace to those in our Personal Mission Field, but we can do it circumspectly and maybe change up a few details that make us queasy. Again, it is a matter between you and the Holy Spirit, and He will lead you into all righteousness. "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth..." (Jn. 16.13). And that "truth" may very well be to stay "pressed" in. But perhaps another option is available.

And if we are called to be "pressed about" we have God's promise of "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12.9).

We also have Gabriel's words of comfort from God, that with Him "nothing will be impossible" (Lk. 1.37).

In the same way that Jesus didn't permanently stay in Capernaum to heal the sick and demon possessed (Lk. 4.42, 43), He also didn't find it necessary to be "pressed about" by the multitudes (Lk. 5.1). We are to watch Him, and learn from Him, and find rest for our souls. He said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11.28, 29).

"...as you are going..."

For reflection

1. How does the phrase "as you are going" describe your Personal Mission Field?
2. We don't need to be miserable to be doing the Lord's will. How can we do the Lord's will with enthusiasm and joy?
3. In these verses, Jesus was working His Personal Mission Field at two levels. Explain.

Luke says, that Christ entered into a ship which belonged to Peter, and withdrew to a moderate distance from the land, that he might more conveniently address from it the multitudes, who flocked from various places to hear him; and that, after discharging the office of teaching, he exhibited a proof of his divine power by a miracle. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Luke 5.1-3

Pray Psalm 25.16-22.

Roll your burdens onto the Lord as you come to Him in prayer. Spread out your day before Him and commit yourself to serving Him with integrity and uprightness. What opportunities for disciple-making will you have today? Wait in silence as He ministers mercy and grace to you for all your times of need.

Sing Psalm 25.16-22.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Be gracious, Lord, to me; my heart is weighed with woe.
My troubles and affliction see; let my transgressions go.

Consider all my foes, who hate me all the day;
and rescue my poor soul lest I should stumble in the way.

Preserve me in Your way, redeem Your people, Lord!

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We wait for You and refuge seek in Your own faithful Word.

2 Men-Catchers

Pray Psalm 107.1-3.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*
For His mercy *endures* forever.
Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
And gathered out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

Sing Psalm 107.1-3.

(Faithfulness: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*)

Lord, You are good, we give thanks and we praise You!
Your steadfast love will forever endure.
Let the redeemed, who from trouble You rescue,
gather and say that Your mercy is sure!

Refrain vv. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
we give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!
We who from east and west, north and south gather,
boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

Read Luke 5.1-11; meditate on verses 4-11.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus tell Peter to do?
2. What did Jesus promise Peter?

Meditation

Peter appears to have been a little slow on the uptake. This was the third time Jesus called him to leave all and follow Him (cf. Jn. 1.40-42; Matt. 4.18, 19). But Peter had not yet arrived at that point of full commitment that Jesus was seeking. It was time for a little show-and-tell.

Notice that Jesus' word to Peter was both command and promise: "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets [command] for a catch [promise]" (v. 4). Peter, however, was trapped in his own experience and reluctant to obey: "We tried that, Lord, and it didn't work" (v. 5). Then, perhaps seeing the firmness of Jesus' face, he acquiesced: "nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

When Peter obeyed Jesus' command, he realized Jesus' promise: fish more than their little boat could hold! Peter knew what to do: call for help (vv. 6, 7). The lesson struck deep into Peter's soul, and he fell on his knees before Jesus, ashamed of his little faith (v. 8).

Jesus had made His point, and James and John got it as well (vv. 9, 10). Then Jesus gave the application: "Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men'" (v. 10). From fish-catchers to men-catchers, Peter's life and that of his friends were changed forever. When we obey the command of Christ, the promises of the Lord will overflow to us. We will be men-catchers and Kingdom ambassadors as we embrace and obey the Word of the Lord.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Peter, although slow on the uptake, did learn something already from Jesus. As we saw in yesterday's lesson, Jesus could've handled the boat Himself as He "put out a little from the land" (Lk. 5.3), but He asked Peter to do it for Him. To bring him along to watch how to minister to others. Now, when Peter needed help with the "great number of fish" (Lk. 5.6), he "signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them" (Lk. 5.7). He watched Jesus and learned something about working together! That was a success.

In the quote today from Matthew Henry he said, "We must not abruptly quit our callings because we have not the success in them we desire." What did he mean by success? What do we mean by success? What constitutes a good day? A good witness? A winning day in our Personal Mission Field? The answer is: faithfulness. Were we faithful to what God has called us to do? Are we living within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless us? (Jude 21) Did we follow God's Law to the best of our abilities in the power of the Holy Spirit? Success is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. Realizing success depends entirely on what our aim and purpose are. Did we reach what we were aiming for?

God told Joshua the way to success and how to aim for the right goal: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Josh. 1.8). Guaranteed.

We are commanded to do what we have been called to do. In so doing, we may never experience great numbers of people turning to God for new life or see large numbers of changed lives due to our faithful work. But what we will see is God's delight in our obedience. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves him who follows righteousness" (Prov. 15.8, 9). "LORD, I hope for Your salvation, and I do Your commandments" (Ps. 119.166). Praying and following Jesus in righteousness, and doing His commands is success (Ex. 20.1-17). The results of what we do are always in the hands of the Holy Spirit. As Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3.6, 7).

As Peter and the others "forsook all and followed Him" (Lk. 5.11), and Paul and his cohort were "God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3.9), so we are called to the very same work. With the very same Holy Spirit power, and the same Law to guide us. If that is our aim, success will be the outcome. Regardless of appearances.

For reflection

1. What will success look like in your Personal Mission Field today?
2. What believers can you encourage today in working their Personal Mission Field?
3. What do you need to do now to prepare for a successful day in your Personal Mission Field?

Though they had taken nothing, yet Christ told them to let down their nets again. We must not abruptly quit our callings because we have not the success in them we desire. We are likely to speed well, when we follow the guidance of Christ's word. The draught of fishes was by a miracle. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 5.1-11

Pray Psalm 107.33-38.

Pray for all believers today, that they may embrace their calling as disciple-making witnesses for Jesus. And pray for those who will hear the Good News today, that the Lord will open their hearts to believe. Pray for yourself, that you may have many opportunities today to sow the good seed of the Kingdom in the hearts of the people of your Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 107.33-38.

*(Faithfulness: **Great Is Thy Faithfulness**)*

You make the desert a river o'erflowing;
You make a wasted life fruitful and strong!
You bless the hungry with fields for the sowing;
bless and increase us who to You belong!

Refrain vv. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
we give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!
We who from east and west, north and south gather,
boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

3 Whatever He Wills

Pray Psalm 40.1-3.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

Sing Psalm 40.1-3.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Read Luke 5.1-16; meditate on verses 12-16.

Preparation

1. What did the leper want to see happen?
2. What did Jesus tell him to do?

Meditation

The leper had obviously heard of Jesus. But that didn't mean he would presume on Him in any way. "Lord, if you are willing..." The leper wanted what God wants, and what we're taught to pray, that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. The leper knew Jesus had the power (v. 12: "You can..."). But he did not know whether it was His will to heal him, though he (1) earnestly hoped so and (2) sought the Lord boldly.

Happily, it was Jesus' will, as He testified before He touched and healed the man (v. 13). Then notice what Jesus did. Having cleansed (and symbolically, saved) the man, Jesus commanded Him to keep the Law (v. 14). Didn't Jesus understand what so many pastors today are telling the people they serve, that keeping the Law no longer matters now that we are saved? Or is it that Jesus knew better than these pastors, who are misleading their people into a false understanding of what it means to follow Jesus? We'll see Jesus do the same thing in the case of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19.1-10). We are healed and saved so that, keeping the Law of God we might find full and abundant life in Jesus (Lev. 18.1-5; Jn. 10.10).

Jesus would often retire alone for prayer, leaving His work to wait before the Father alone for an extended season. If His prayer in the garden, as enlarged in John 17, is any guide, He communed with the Father about the priorities they shared and the work set before Him during His earthly sojourn. How often did He do this? It isn't clear, and there does not seem to be anything like a pattern or regular schedule. But it was a practice that characterized Him, and that those who knew Him expected of Him from time to time, as is indicated by the verbal construction ("*often* withdrew").

This, too, must be part of His will for us.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus, the beloved, tender Savior, brought Lazarus back to life with only words, “Lazarus, come forth!” (Jn. 11.43).

Jesus, the powerful Redeemer, stopped a raging storm with only words, “Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was great calm” (Mk. 4.39).

So many times Jesus used only words to accomplish miracles. “Fill the waterpots with water. Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast” (Jn. 2.7, 8), and with those words He, without a touch, changed the chemical components of water into the best wine anyone had ever tasted.

But in this case, a man “full of leprosy” (Lk. 5.12), no doubt covered in disfiguring skin lesions, received the gentle touch of the loving, healing Good Shepherd. “Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately the leprosy left him” (Lk. 5.13).

Lazarus, and the storm, and the water didn’t need to be touched. But this untouchable man needed physical contact with the Great Physician (Matt. 9.12, 13). Jesus’ touch of unflinching compassion demonstrated His love and healing and forgiveness to a man that desperately needed to experience it.

The prophet Isaiah pointed out to all humanity that we, each one, are similarly afflicted. “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Is. 64.6). We also were in desperate need of the Savior’s love. And then, He touched us (Rom. 5.8).

*Shackled by a heavy burden, 'neath a load of guilt and shame
Then the hand of Jesus touched me, and now I am no longer the same.*

*Since I met this blessed Savior, since He cleansed and made me whole,
I will never cease to praise Him, I'll shout it while eternity rolls.*

*He touched me, oh He touched me, and oh the joy that floods my soul!
Something happened and now I know He touched me and made me whole.
(William Gaither)*

For reflection

1. What do we learn about doing the will of God from this passage?
2. How does reading and meditating on Scripture help us in knowing the will of God?
3. If we are consistent in doing the will of God, what should we expect from Jesus?

*“If you will,” it says, “you can make me clean.” He conceded the power to the Lord’s will. But he doubted concerning the Lord’s will, not as if unbelieving in piety, but as if aware of his own impurity, he did not presume. The Lord replies to him with a certain holiness. “I will: be clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.” For there is nothing between God’s command and his work, because the work is in the command. Ambrose of Milan (333-397), *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 5.2-3*

Pray Psalm 40.4-10.

It is the will of Jesus that we be His witnesses (Acts 1.8). Pray that the Lord will help you do His will by words and deeds throughout your Personal Mission Field today.

Sing Psalm 40.4-10.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord!
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,
nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

4 Faith Visible

Pray Psalm 85.1-3.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.
You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin.

Selab

You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

Sing Psalm 85.1-3.

(Lyons: *O Worship the King*)

O Lord, You Your favor showed to Your land;
Your people You saved by Your mighty hand.
Their sins You forgave, all Your wrath You withdrew;
You turned back the anger which to them was due.

Read Luke 5.1-26; meditate on verses 17-26.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus see that prompted Him to act?
2. How did He respond to those who grumbled?

Meditation

The operative phrase of this vignette is “When He saw their faith” (v. 20). An entire theology of belief is packed into that one subordinate clause! Let’s unpack it.

First, Jesus *saw* their faith. That is, faith gives *evidence* of its being active in a person’s soul (cf. Heb. 11.1). So active, in fact, that a believing mind and a believing heart and a believing conscience mesh together with holy spiritual power to move the body to actions others can *see*. Faith is visible or it’s not true faith. Jesus *saw* their faith.

And notice, *their* faith, not just one man’s faith. Jesus saw the paralytic’s faith, but He also saw the faith of his friends. Their faith together got that man in front of Jesus. They were literally “through the roof” with faith. Faith fomented in communities of like-minded believers whose united belief moves the Spirit of God to great things and mysteries we’ve never known before (cf. Jer. 33.3; Acts 4.23-31). Note also how *persistent* their faith was. They could not get to the Lord one way, so they invented another and pursued it *in faith*.

Finally, we see that the salvation Jesus accomplishes is both bodily and spiritual. Salvation brings forgiveness of sins and the renewal of our inner life. But it also brings transforming grace to our bodies, so that we are healed from the sins and unbelief that kept us back from serving the Lord, and “born again” into a new life, under a new regime, where, increasingly, the members of our bodies are made to serve King Jesus, and ultimately will be made entirely new and sinless (cf. Rom. 6.5-13; 1 Cor. 15.35-44).

Jesus saw their faith, and the people saw the power of their faith at work as Jesus responded to them (v. 26). The grumblers, status-quo-preservers, and Who-does-He-think-He-is? crowd might fail to see the miracle of grace working through faith. But not all of them. Not all the time (v. 26).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Who were the people in this neighborhood? The people who were so crowded around Jesus that no one else

could get in? Those “Tick Tock the game is locked and nobody else can play” people?

Well, they were the Pharisees and teachers of the law and scribes. All the religious.

And please note that all those religious folks could not find a way to move aside so that the friends of the paralytic could get into the place where Jesus was teaching. And that is a tragic loss of manners, civility, and kindness.

How often do you think people experience this phenomenon at church? So many friendly people being friendly to their friends and not taking the time to notice another that might be left out? Or any type of gathering of believers that is focused on the message, or the music, or the lighting, or the happiness level of themselves and missing all those who feel misplaced, out of place, or poorly placed.

The program is never more important than the people. It certainly never was for Jesus. He was always looking out for the disenfranchised. In fact, right in the middle of this service He stopped His sermon (Lk. 5.17, 20) to forgive and heal this man of faith, dropped in by his friends of faith. Can you imagine how many well-positioned elders would swoop in to remove this disruption today?

Forgiveness is always available to anyone who seeks it and asks for it. If we are guilty of this in any way, we too can turn from our misguided love, to love like Jesus exuded. When He was teaching the religious, the text says that “the power of the Lord was present to heal them” (Lk. 5.17). That is, the religious. That very busy and inattentive crowd of super holy people (Lk. 5.19). But after the miracle of forgiveness and healing, even this crowd “were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, ‘We have seen strange things today!’” (Lk. 5.26)

Right up there in the realms of the miraculous, right beside the paralytic’s healing, is the change of heart experienced by the Pharisees, teachers, and scribes. “All” of them (v. 26). No one is without hope. No one is too religious to be changed by the power of God’s love and forgiveness. “Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3.22, 23).

Indeed, it is true, “that the salvation Jesus accomplishes is both bodily and spiritual. Salvation brings forgiveness of sins and the renewal of our inner life.” Though we be physically or spiritually paralyzed.

For reflection

1. In what sense does the salvation of the Lord bring healing and renewal to our soul?
2. In what sense does the salvation of the Lord bring healing and renewal to our body?
3. What evidence of true, lively, saving faith do you expect people to see in you today?

*As God, [Jesus] saw their faith as he saw the thoughts of the scribes, and as a man, he saw their faith by their works. He saw the faith of the porters in bringing and of the paralyzed man in allowing himself to be brought in such a manner; and therefore Christ, the “consolation of Israel,” affords him comfort instantly both in word and in deed. John Boys (1571-1625), *The Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity*.³*

Pray Psalm 85.4-13.

Pray for revival for the Church of God over all the earth. That we may rise from our listlessness and fear, be filled with His Spirit, and live as His witnesses each day.

Sing Psalm 85.413.

(Lyons: *O Worship the King*)

Restore us, O God, renew us in peace,
and cause all Your wrath against us to cease.
Will You evermore all Your wrath to us show?
Revive us that we may Your joy again know.

Lord, show us Your love; restore us, we pray!
And help us to hear the words that You say.
Speak peace to Your people; in truth let us stand.
We fear You; let glory and grace fill our land.

In Jesus God's grace and truth are combined;
both goodness and peace in Him do we find.
Truth springs from the earth as He walks in our midst,
and righteousness flows from the heav'ns as a gift.

The Lord by His grace will give what is good;
our land will produce abundance of food.
And righteousness will go before the Lord's face,
and make of His footsteps a way in this place.

5 All the Wrong People

Pray Psalm 146.8-10.

The LORD opens *the eyes* of the blind;
The LORD raises those who are bowed down;
The LORD loves the righteous.
The LORD watches over the strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.
The LORD shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Sing Psalm 146.7-10.

(Hallelujah! What a Savior!: *Man of Sorrows*)
Jesus sets the pris'ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,
lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand'ers in His grace are blessed;
needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessèd Name,
them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

Read Luke 5.1-31; meditate on verses 27-31.

Preparation

1. Who was Levi? What did Jesus call him to do?
2. How did the “religious” people respond to Jesus going to Levi’s home?

Meditation

See, the problem with Jesus, as any of the truly religious people of His day could tell you, was that He was always hanging out with the wrong people. All those poor, sick, delirious people – as if that weren’t bad enough, now here He is enlisting a tax collector – a tax collector, for crying out loud! – as part of His discipleship band. And look at Him, eating and drinking and laughing it up with “a great number of tax collectors and others”!

In Jesus’ day, tax collectors, who worked for the Romans (Puh!) and often robbed their neighbors, were just the wrongest of the wrong sort of folks. But Jesus loved them and launched Himself out into the deep water of their lives to catch some men for His new regime.

Jesus sought out and appealed to all the wrong people. At least as the religious leaders of His day saw it. They had their own views about this rabble, this cursed crowd who did not know the Law of Moses. At least, not as well as they did. But Jesus knew those whom He was calling to His Kingdom, those who were in need of salvation and knew it. Whether they needed deliverance from illness, demonic oppression, a lifetime of bad choices, inveterate poverty, or spiritual decrepitude, they knew they needed help, and they saw in Jesus a gentle and lowly physician – of soul and body – Who could help them get well.

And aren’t we glad that Jesus comes to all the wrong people. For we were just such people – His enemies (Rom. 5.10) – when He came to us with healing and saving grace. Wrong people made right in Him Who is all righteousness and grace.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

I don't claim to be an expert in geographical placement, but proximations of space are a little easier to determine. Levi gave a great feast for Jesus in his house. In the house. There were lots of tax collectors there in the house. And others. Who were those others? Well, they appear to be the same crowd that bunched together so tightly that the friends of the paralytic couldn't get to Jesus. Yes. The scribes and Pharisees. The giveaway to their proximity is that they complained to the disciples about Jesus being there, and Jesus was close enough to them, in the house, to answer their complaint directly. Hmmm. |

If it wasn't OK for Jesus to be there: Why were they there?

Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7.15, 16). Or maybe their hypocrisy?

"Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory" (Is. 56.11). "For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the LORD; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered" (Jer. 10.21).

In another setting, Jesus said to some Pharisees, when He perceived their wickedness, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?" (Matt. 22.18).

But on this occasion, when confronted with their judgmental hypocrisy, He answered equally as truthfully, but more gently, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Lk. 5.31).

Oh, to be more like Jesus! He delivered the love that individuals needed at every point in their lives. Some needed a strong word, others a gentle touch. Paul said that "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2.16), and that we are the temple of God and the "Spirit of God dwells in" us (1 Cor. 3.16). These are hopeful promises that will become realities the more we immerse ourselves in God's holy Word. But I cry out, "How long?" (Ps. 13.1, 2). As long as it takes.

No one wants to be a Pharisaical hypocrite. So, we must be always on guard against this tendency in our own souls; fervently seeking to be more like Jesus every moment of every day. Forever, to the very end (Ps. 119.112). "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40.8).

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for reaching us when we were the wrong people and help us to love the wrong people rightly "without hypocrisy" (Rom. 12.9).

For reflection

1. Why was Jesus always mingling with the "outcasts" of society?
2. How should His example shape the way we work our Personal Mission Field?
3. How can we keep from becoming hypocritical in our walk with and work for the Lord?

It was a wonder of Christ's grace, that he would call a publican to be his disciple and follower. It was a wonder of his grace, that the call was made so effectual. It was a wonder of his grace, that he came to call sinners to repentance, and to assure them of pardon. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 5.27-39

Pray Psalm 146.1-7.

Give praise to Jesus for His grace in saving you, in sending His Spirit to dwell in you, giving you His Word, and keeping His promise to be with you always.

Sing Psalm 146.1-7, 10.

(Hallelujah! What a Savior!: *Man of Sorrows*)

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I'll raise
and exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation's in their hand;
death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.
By Him heav'n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,
feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

6 Old and New

Pray Psalm 119.81-83.

My soul faints for Your salvation,
But I hope in Your word.
My eyes fail *from searching* Your word,
Saying, “When will You comfort me?”
For I have become like a wineskin in smoke,
Yet I do not forget Your statutes.

Sing Psalm 119.81-83.

(Ripley: *Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah, O My Soul*)

My soul faints for Your salvation – but my hope is in Your Word!
I have searched Your Word with patience seeking comfort from You, Lord.
Like a wineskin, Lord, You test me; I am withered with despair!
Let Your statutes my sweet rest be as I call on You in prayer.

Read Luke 5.1-39; meditate on verses 32-39.

Preparation

1. What “old” and “new” things did Jesus mention?
2. When did He say His followers would fast?

Meditation

What stands out in this passage is the old/new contrast Jesus employs. It can be a little confusing.

Jesus is asked about the practice of fasting. The Pharisees (old) practiced it with prayers, as did John the Baptist (new). Why didn’t Jesus? His answer, albeit a little enigmatic, was on the order of “Soon enough” (vv. 33-35). That old, reliable discipline is perfectly suited to the new regime, but only after Jesus has been “taken away” from the earth.

To set His answer in a new regime context, Jesus “spoke a parable to them” – two parables, actually – about patches and wineskins. The new regime of Jesus – His Kingdom – is truly new and living, powerful and expansive. It requires new garments of righteousness (v. 36) and new hearts (vv. 37, 38). Not the outward righteousness of the Pharisees, but righteousness that comes from within, as the Spirit of God works to transform all who believe into the image of Jesus Himself (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

And the old ways of the Old Testament, which always pointed forward to Jesus (Jn. 5.39), must be changed to accommodate the new rule of Christ in the world. We need new hearts (Ezek. 36.26, 27), new minds (1 Cor. 2.16), and a renewed conscience (Rom. 2.14, 15) if the new regime of Jesus is to realize its full potential for making all things new in the world. You can’t encase the Gospel in the old traditions of the scribes and Pharisees (vv. 36-38; cf. Acts 15). We need the Lord to make us new creations (2 Cor. 5.17) – new garments and new wineskins – for the new wine of the Gospel to realize its full potency.

And once we begin to taste the new regime way of life – really come to know it in increasing righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18) – we’ll never want to go back to our old ways again (v. 39; cf. Eph. 4.17-24).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus was telling them in the nicest way possible that they were comparing apples to oranges. Again, His grace

was so evident in this exchange. He could have blasted them out of the water with heavy and awesome apologetics, but instead, He told them some parables. Kindly, mercifully, and instructionally. “For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!” (Ps. 117.2).

Our job as “God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3.9) is to imitate Jesus (1 Cor. 11.1). We are to watch Him so closely that we learn from Him (Matt. 11.29) and receive instruction from Him on how to behave in every situation. Our friend Pat Hunter used to say, “If you have the wit to say it, have the grace not to.” That is exactly how Jesus comported Himself.

We have been given many Scriptures to guide us into kind speaking and living. Here are a few:

“Love suffers long and is kind” (1 Cor. 13.4).

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love...” (Rom. 12.10).

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4.32).

“Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Col. 4.6).

When we fully understand the kindness and grace that has been shown to us, we are more likely to show this same kindness and grace to others. As Paul wrote, “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1.14, 15). We can all vie for that spot.

But as Jesus so clearly stated, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Lk. 5.32). And how very grateful I am that He did!

For reflection

1. What would be the opposite of speech that is kind, patient, and gracious?
2. Why are people more likely to hear us when our speech is like the speech of Jesus?
3. Why do we need a “new heart” to receive the old, old, story about Jesus and His love?

Christ was going to travel throughout Judea in a short amount of time, that the minds of the people in many places might be awakened to the hearing of the gospel as if by the sound of a trumpet. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on a Harmony of the Gospels 11

Pray Psalm 119.84-88.

Call on the Lord for revival and renewal, that He might fill you with His Spirit and lead you ever more fully into His great salvation. Commit your day and its work and challenges to the Lord, and resolve before Him to keep His testimony at every opportunity.

Sing Psalm 119.84-88.

(Ripley: *Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah, O My Soul*)

Lord, how long, what shall my days be? When will You Your judgment toll?

Let my enemies disgraced be, those who persecute my soul.

All the proud dig pits to slay me, and they persecute me strong!

Let Your Word my strength and stay be: Help me, Lord, receive my song!

For my foes would make an end to my existence on the earth.

Yet Your precepts I befriend to know the greatness of their worth.

In Your kindness, Lord revive me! In Your love, restore my soul!

Luke 5

Let Your Word in me alive be; I will keep it well and whole.

7 Think: New

Pray Psalm 40.1-3.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see it and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

Sing Psalm 40.1-3.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Read Luke 5.1-39; meditate on verses 36-39.

Preparation

1. What contrast does Jesus hold up in these verses?
2. To what does Jesus compare Himself?

Meditation

The words “astonished” or “amazed” frequently occur in connection with Jesus and His ministry (cf. 4.32, 36; 5.9, 26). And when the words themselves aren’t used, their presence is indicated by the reactions of the people – talking about Jesus to everyone (4.37; 5.15); seeking Him wherever He went (4.40, 42; 5.15, 17ff.); leaving their old lives behind to follow Him (5.11, 28); and glorifying God (5.25, 26). How shall we explain this?

Jesus was new. He Himself hinted as much in the two parables He spoke at the end of Luke 5. Jesus wasn’t just a new patch on an old garment; He’s a new garment, the garment of salvation and righteousness. And He wasn’t just a new wineskin; He’s the new wine, aged from of old, which we drink down with joy (Ps. 116.12, 13). Jesus came to the world to fulfill the promised new covenant of God (Jer. 31.31-34), to lead those who believe in Him to the knowledge of God and new life. He gives us a new heart so that we can see His Law in a totally new light and embrace and obey it gladly (Ezek. 36.26, 27).

Jesus is all about new. New life. New callings. New health. New friends. New priorities. A new world regime. New news – Good News.

He has brought His newness to us – astonishment! And He has entrusted His new message to us – amazement! Luke 5 picks up on themes introduced in chapter 4 and shows them in their bright, astonishing, amazing, newness. And out of that glorious newness, Jesus calls to us, “Follow Me” (v. 27). To be in Christ is to be a new person. Old things have passed away; all things are becoming new (2 Cor. 5.17). How will the newness of Jesus astonish, amaze, and transform you today?

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The beautiful newness of Jesus is, as He consistently reminded us, rooted the old and holy Law of God. Yes, we His people are saved in a completely new way. Keeping the Law perfectly was impossible, so Jesus was sent to earth to keep it for us perfectly, and to overcome over our inability to do so. He Himself said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10.10).

In Luke 5.14 Jesus told the man full of leprosy, whom He healed, 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.”

In other words He was saying that this new life, this complete healing, was something to shout from the rooftops; but do not neglect to keep the Law of Moses. Some things have changed, of course (cf. Heb. 7-9), but not everything. In Luke 5.39 He said speaking of the wine, “The old is better”, and He was again referring to the Law. There is the blessed new, but there is also the faithful and wise old. We must enjoy and keep both to live obediently and abundantly. The new of Jesus brings the old of God’s covenant and Law to full ferment and power.

Jesus never came to abolish the old ways, as He taught His disciples, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14.15; cf. Matt. 5.17-19), and “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 15.14).

The new is solidified by its rooting in the old. Without the old there is no reason for the new. As Paul stated, “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Rom. 3.31). And “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6.4).

The life and words we bring into our Personal Mission Field will be much more palatable when we do it the way God has commanded, living in the forgiveness of the new while being always guided by the old, because “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them” (Prov. 28.4). Rejoice in the new, live guided by the old. “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 Jn. 2.3).

For reflection

1. Augustine explained that the Old is by the New revealed, while the New is in the Old concealed. What did he mean by that?
2. We need both the Old Testament and the New Testament to realize full and abundant life in Jesus. Why?
3. How do you experience the newness which is in Jesus?

We ought to live for him because we have been made into something different. We now have a new life. John Chrysostom (344-407), *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 11.4*

Pray Psalm 40.9-17.

Believers and unbelievers alike need to hear the Good News of Jesus. Today, with whom will you share the new life we have in Him? Use your time of prayer to seek the Lord’s help for the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 40.9-17.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered ‘round.
Nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

Luke 5

Keep Your mercy not from me; let Your love and truth prevail.
Evil and iniquity make my trembling heart to fail.
Lord, be pleased to rescue me! Let my shelter with You be.

Bring to shame my ev'ry foe, all who would my life destroy;
bring them down to scorn and woe who at my hurt sing for joy.
Let them come to grief and shame who heap scorn upon my name.

Let them shout for joy and sing who in saving grace delight!
Let them praise to Jesus bring, though affliction be their plight.
Christ, our help, our Savior He! Of us ever mindful be!

Luke 5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What kinds of responses to Jesus do we see in this chapter? How should this counsel us about working our Personal Mission Field?
2. Jesus considered it important to get away alone to be with the Father. Should that be important for us? Explain.
3. In what ways does Jesus bring newness to the world? How have you experienced that newness?
4. What does it mean for you to “launch out” into the deep so that you can “catch men”?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from our study of Luke 5?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.