

Luke 5:1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,
Luke 5:2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.
Luke 5:3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Gennesaret = Another name for the Sea of Galilee

In this vignette from the ministry of Jesus a crowd had gathered around Him by the seashore. He spots a couple of boats and decides to make some space between Himself and the people and take advantage of nature's microphone—the water. One of the boats belonged to Simon Peter who was nearby washing his nets. Jesus got in the boat and asked Peter to take Him out a little way from the shore, then He sat down to teach the people from the ship.

Luke 5:4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

Luke 5:5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Luke 5:6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

Luke 5:7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Jesus had finished teaching, He tells Peter to take the boat out to the deep water and let down his nets to catch some fish. Peter obeys, albeit reluctantly because he had been out all night and caught nothing. Amazingly, the net became so heavy with fish that they had to call out to their partners (I am assuming James and John from v10) to come and help before the nets broke completely. Even with the help, the haul was so great that both ships began to sink.

Simon Peter was a fisherman by trade and all his experience would have told him that obeying Jesus was not logical. By this time Peter had already submitted to Jesus as his Master, but this event seemed to seal the deal. As is always the case, we should always follow the directions and leading of our Master, Jesus our Savior, even when it flies in the face of human logic. God will always reward obedience and faith! As is often true, Peter's obedience provided an experience that would grow his faith.

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Luke 5:9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

Luke 5:10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Luke 5:11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Peter immediately understood that his faith in Jesus had been lacking. He immediately fell before Jesus' knees declaring his sinful unworthiness as His disciple. In spite of all the miracles they had seen Jesus perform, he (and the others with him, including his partners James and John) were totally taken by surprise at this miracle. Jesus responded to such repentance with grace and hope; He assured Peter that he would become a fisher of men. At this point, they were all ready to forfeit their businesses and follow Jesus full time.

I can't help but feel great kinship with Peter. There are so many instances recorded in scripture giving evidence of him having "foot in mouth" disease. He so desires to do what is right, but is often tripped up by pride and/or rash responses. He is also, however, very quick to acknowledge his sin and humble himself in seeking forgiveness.

Luke 5:12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Luke 5:13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

Luke 5:14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Luke moves right on to another example of Jesus' great compassion. He is in a "certain city" and a man full of leprosy falls on his face before Jesus and declares, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Whether Jesus had been there before or not, we do not know; we do know that this man was bold in his faith and that he knew that Jesus could heal him if He so chose. This indicates that he had at least heard reports about other miracles of healing that Jesus had performed. David Guzik made a good observation: "This leper wants more than healing. He wants *cleansing*, not only from the leprosy, but from all its debilitating effects on his life and soul."

Jesus immediately responded to his faith by touching him and declaring him clean---and the leprosy departed from him immediately. I couldn't help but think of Jesus' words at another time when He said, "According to your faith be it unto you." These words have echoed in my mind so many times when beginning to doubt based on the circumstances.

Most interesting are the instructions Jesus gave the man after healing him; He tells him not to tell anyone how he had been healed. He is, however, to go to the priest and follow the instructions as commanded in the law of Moses to be pronounced clean. The problem I have is—How is it to be a testimony to them if

he cannot tell them how he was healed? The NIV Commentary offered this explanation: “It was understood in those days that the true Messiah would not proclaim himself such but would first do appropriate messianic works that would lead to public acknowledgment of his identity.”

Luke 5:15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. Luke 5:16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

The context implies that the man must not have been able to contain himself and shared the news anyway. Mark affirms this understanding in his account of the same event.

Mark 1:45 “But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.”

My heart tells me that Jesus understood and did not hold it against that man. He wanted to quietly go about His ministry until the people recognized Him as their Messiah, but I think humanly speaking He knew that was impossible. When you have such exciting good news, it is hard not to share it—and Jesus was definitely creating “good news” wherever He went!

The man Jesus needed some relief from the pressure created by His popularity; so He often went off to be alone and spend some time with His Father in prayer.

Communion with the Father in prayer is so important to maintaining one’s sanity in this sinful world. I find myself talking to God throughout the day, but I really struggle when it comes to extended times in prayer; that is when the enemy seems to attack me most. It is because of those attacks that I know how important that time is, and I am determined to persevere. That is another one of the reasons that I love to do these studies. It provides an outlet that allows me to examine my own heart as I make application of His words to my life and to continually hear His heart toward me and those I love. It provides an anchor for my soul and continually reminds me of the hope that is mine for the future. It keeps me ever mindful of the truth that without Him life is worth nothing.

Luke 5:17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Luke 5:18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

Luke 5:19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

Luke 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Luke moves to another vignette in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus is teaching and many of the spiritual leaders from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem were listening to Him. The KJV wording is confusing, but the point is made that Jesus was full of the power of the Spirit to work miracles of healing. This emphasizes again the fact that as the man Jesus, He was just as dependent upon the provision of the Holy Spirit as are we. Of course, the main difference is that He was always full of the Spirit and ready to be used; whereas, we often ignore the presence of the Spirit and the power we have through Him to overcome sin and serve the Lord in power and in love.

Context implies that Jesus is in a home setting and that so many were listening to Jesus teach that access to Him was blocked. There were some men who were determined to get Jesus to heal their friend who had palsy (paralyzed). Since they couldn't find a way through the crowd, they decided to let him down through the roof right in front of Jesus. Jesus immediately acknowledges the great faith of these men (including the sick man) and then pronounced the man forgiven of his sins.

Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

Luke 5:22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Luke 5:23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

Luke 5:24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

Luke 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Luke 5:26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Immediately, the scribes and Pharisees were up in arms. They began to think, but evidently not openly declare, that Jesus was speaking blasphemy since only God can forgive sins; and this man certainly could not be God. The Spirit revealed to the Lord what they were thinking, so He confronted them regarding their thoughts. He basically said, "Do you think it is easier to forgive sins or to heal? I am going to heal this man to prove that I also have the authority to forgive sins." He then told the sick man to pick up his pallet and go home, and the man did just that, glorifying God the whole way.

Verse 26 seems to indicate that everyone there was amazed and gave glory to God, but they were also filled with fear because of the power and authority Jesus displayed. Not only had He healed the man, He had read their minds in the process. They could not deny that they had witnessed something unexpected and extraordinary (from the Greek). I think that they feared because they knew that the evidence declared that Jesus was God, and they weren't ready to accept that truth.

Luke 5:27 ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Luke 5:28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

Luke 5:29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

Luke 5:30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Luke 5:31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke continues sharing vignettes from the ministry of Jesus and suddenly shifts at this point to the call of Matthew, Levi the tax collector, as a disciple. It would seem that Matthew's call was "after" the events already recorded. As is often the case in scripture, especially in the prophetic books, I'm not always sure why things are recorded in the order they are. So far we have been told that Peter, James and John had committed to following Jesus. I would think Andrew was also part of that group since he was the one who brought Peter to Jesus to begin with, but Luke does not affirm that.

I can't help but think that Jesus was already acquainted with Matthew; maybe he had often been present when Jesus was teaching and/or performing miracles. All that really matters is that when Jesus called for him to follow Him, he quit his job on the spot and followed Him.

Tax collectors were usually wealthy, so it was natural that Matthew would decide to throw a party at his house to provide a forum for his friends to hear from the Lord as well. Naturally, most of his friends were other tax collectors and "sinners" (from the perspective of the Pharisees). I thought it was interesting that the scribes and Pharisees confronted the disciples, not Jesus, regarding why they were associating with such people. Jesus, however, responds to these "spiritual" leaders. He basically says that only those who are sick need a physician. He came to call sinners to repentance, and only those willing to admit that they are sinners would respond to His message (implied—not people who think they are righteous like you).

Luke 5:33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

Luke 5:34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

Luke 5:35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

The scribes and Pharisees decide to try a different line of attack. They question Jesus as to why His disciples do not fast and pray in the same manner as those that are spiritual do—like those that follow John the Baptist and them. Research indicates that the Pharisees (and presumably their disciples) ritually fasted on the second and fifth day of each week. It would be assumed that those following

John would adhere to what would be considered as testifying to their commitment to God. I guess Matthew's feast was occurring on one of those days.

Jesus uses the example of a wedding feast to give His answer. He tells these "spiritual leaders" that the wedding guests don't fast while the bridegroom is present; when he is taken away from them, they would fast. Jesus is declaring that to follow Him is a reason to be happy and want to share that happiness with others. I think He was also alluding to the fact that His time with them would be limited and there would be sufficient need for fasting once He was gone. Obviously, the accusation was made in light of the feast; I think the reference to prayer was thrown in as just another prideful comment regarding the spirituality of the accusers.

Luke 5:36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

Luke 5:37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

Luke 5:38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

Luke 5:39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Luke now records a couple of parables Jesus presented on this occasion. He explains that no one would mend an old garment with new cloth because it would soon tear again when the new cloth shrinks. Same principle, different example—No one would put new wine into old bottles because the fermenting process would cause the new wine to expand and break the old bottles. New wine must be put in new bottles that will expand with them. It is also true that those used to old wine will not readily want to drink new wine because of the difference in taste and quality.

I think in these parables Jesus is referring to His teaching. What he is teaching is a fresh, new perspective of the law. The word of God had become so adulterated with the ideas of men through the development of the Talmud that the true meaning of the scriptures had become totally obscured. Jesus' "new" teaching would not agree with the old.

I think the Lord was comparing the scribes and Pharisees as well as all other sinners as needing to repent and become new men that would be able to enjoy the new wine of His teaching. Because they were so satisfied with the rituals and practices associated with the "old" teaching that had become so adulterated, they would not readily want to accept that the "new" teaching is better.

I think it is important to note that God's word is not what changed, it was man's interpretation of God's word to suit their own agendas that had resulted in such a wrong understanding of God's original intention. As Jesus taught, He was presenting the word of God according to its true meaning.

The same thing is happening today in the “Christian” world. As the Jews did with the Talmud, we are getting many new translations that are incorporating the ideas of men and presenting them as the word of God. With or without the new translations, men are interpreting the word of God based on their own idea of what God means according to their standards for His character rather than accepting His truth according to His character as stated in His word that doesn’t conform to their own logic or moral agenda.