

1. Introduction

Good morning! Last week we saw how Jesus called a group of Galilean fishermen to be His disciples. And, we also read about how Jesus healed a leper and sent him to testify at the temple in Jerusalem that the Messiah had come. By the word of Jesus, fishermen became great evangelists and a former leper gave testimony in the temple of Israel. Today, Jesus is still calling ordinary men and women to extraordinary work for the Kingdom of God. Perhaps Jesus is also calling you to a ministry you cannot yet imagine.

Today we will look at Luke 5:17-26, and I will also be sharing some details that appear only in the parallel passage in Mark, so please read Mark 2 also when you have time. For the events of today's Bible passage, we will return again to the town of Capernaum, where Jesus lived after He had left Nazareth.

The gospel writers do not say so directly, but it is likely that the we are also returning to Peter's home in this passage. As I mentioned two weeks ago, the site has been examined by archeologists, and they have confirmed that the house was later rebuilt as a church. This photo was taken at the time of the excavation.

But if you were to go to Capernaum today, you would see this large church, which has been built over the top of Peter's house. So, as we open our Bibles to **Luke 5:17-26**, we can imagine that we are there in Capernaum 2,000 years ago, listening to Jesus preach.



2. Scripture Luke 5:17-26

[17] One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. [18] Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. [19] When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. [20] When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." [21] The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" [22] Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? [23] Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" [24] But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." [25] Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. [26] Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

3. Teaching

This is the story of four friends who boldly, urgently, even rudely, brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Right here is one of the most important lessons of this passage. **Friends, bring friends to Jesus.** For many of us, this may be the most important lesson in this story. Don't miss it, and don't forget it. If you live these words, then you can look forward to be surrounded by grateful friends when you get to heaven. **Friends, bring friends to Jesus.**



Let's look a little deeper. This is the first place in Luke that mentions the Pharisees, a Jewish sect that was very strict about keeping the Law of Moses. Because of their strictness, the Pharisees were respected, but sometimes also feared. Like all of the Jews, they also were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. They had, no doubt, heard people saying that Jesus might be the Messiah, and so they had come to see Him and to judge for themselves. And that was their problem. They did not come to Jesus seeking salvation; they came intending to judge Jesus.



But if we come to Jesus to judge Him, then we are coming in pride, and we will not be able to receive anything from Him. In order to receive, we need to humble ourselves and admit our need. Sadly, the Pharisees, in their effort to be righteous by law, had fallen into the sin of pride, and their hearts had become cold and unloving. Later, some of the Pharisees would repent of their pride and believe in Jesus, but it appears that many remained trapped in their pride.

Jesus was in the house; probably Peter's home, surrounded by a crowd. So many people had come to see Jesus that the four men carrying the paralytic could not even get to the door. If they had been looking for an excuse to give up, they could easily have said, "*It is impossible today, let's try again on a different day.*" But these men were true friends, and they were not going to give up. No matter what it took, they were taking their friend to Jesus. So finally they climbed up on the roof and removed some roof tiles to make a hole. Then they lowered their friend down in front of Jesus.



Luke 5:20, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."" Jesus calls the man, "**friend,**" and Jesus is a friend to all who come to Him in humility. Jesus provides for the man's greatest need by granting him forgiveness of his sins. We are all sinners, and our greatest need is forgiveness. The condition of our heart is far more important than the condition of our body, because the person with a pure heart will enjoy heaven forever with Jesus. But the heart that is filled with sin cannot enter heaven. We need to have our sins forgiven. This is our greatest need, and only Jesus can meet this need. If we go to Jesus in humility, then He will forgive our sins and welcome us into His kingdom.



Luke 5:21, "The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"" Consider this example. Suppose you are careless in driving your car, and you run over a bicycle that belongs to your neighbor's son. You ask the boy to forgive you, and he says you are forgiven. Is everything OK? No. You also need to ask the child's parents for forgiveness, because the boy is the son of his parents. And God is the parent of us all, before God, we are all like little children. So when we do wrong, we need God's forgiveness. Some of the wrong things we do are crimes. But our laws are limited, so there are many things that are wrong that are not illegal. But all wrongdoing is sin. And only God can forgive sin. The Pharisees were right about that part.

However, the Pharisees were mistaken in thinking that Jesus was blaspheming. Jesus was not blaspheming, because Jesus is God Himself come in human form. Jesus is God, and therefore He has the authority to forgive sin. Jesus could have told the Pharisees that He is God, but they would not have believed Him. So Jesus shows them His authority instead. **Luke 5:24-25, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God."**

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus often calls Himself, "**the Son of Man.**" Jesus is God from all eternity, but when He came into this world, something new happened; Jesus became the Son of Man. Jesus, by His own choice, became one of us, that He might be our brother and friend, as well as our Lord and God. By calling Himself, "the Son of Man," Jesus is also identifying Himself with the prophecy of **Daniel 7:13-14. "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be**

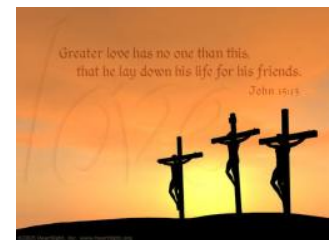
destroyed.”

This Jesus, who is worthy of our worship, met the need of the paralyzed man by forgiving his sins. And Jesus met the need of the Pharisees and teachers of the law by demonstrating His power and authority with a dramatic healing. **Luke 5:26, “Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.””**

4. Conclusion

That day, the people saw a remarkable and amazing thing. They saw Jesus forgive the sins of a man. That is a greater miracle than the healing, because it is a miracle that opens the gates of heaven. The man was miraculously healed, but his body would grow weak again when he was old and he would eventually die. But because his sins were forgiven, as soon as he died, he would enter into the presence of the Lord and be welcomed into heaven. It is the cross of Jesus that makes the miracle of forgiveness of sins possible. We have all done things that we knew were wrong. But on the cross, Jesus died for us, so that we might receive the free gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But Jesus did not stay in the grave, on the third day, He rose again and He is alive and here with us now, although we cannot see Him with our eyes.

When we go to Jesus in humility and ask for Him to forgive our sins, He does so willingly and joyfully, because He loves us, each and every one. **John 15:13** tells us, **“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”** This is what Jesus did for us. Let’s pray.



5. Closing Prayer