

Women's Bible Study, June 6-13, 2025
Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Luke chapter 5

1. Introduction to our study of Luke 5 (SG p.83)

a. Theme verse: *"But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- He said to the man who was paralyzed--"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."*

b. Objectives: "By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, we will...

1) "...Give thanks that no matter how great our needs, Jesus can help -- He is pleased to do so in answer to our prayers;

2) "...Affirm that our greatest need is forgiveness of sins, and that He who heals the soul will also save the body."

2. Luke 5:1-11, Miraculous Catch of Fish; Jesus Calls His First Disciples

a. vv. 1-3, At the Lake of Gennesaret

1) "Lake of Gennesaret" -- Also known as the Sea of Galilee. Luke is the only one who calls it a lake. It is a freshwater fishing lake, 13 miles by 8 miles, 682 feet below sea level. Gennesaret is the name of a small district on the shore of this lake, and very near to Capernaum. The other Gospel writers call it the Sea of Galilee, and twice John calls it the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; 21:1). (CSB Luke 5:1; TLSB Matthew 4:18; TPB p.54)

2) "He got into one of the boats..." -- Simon Peter let Jesus use his fishing boat as a pulpit to preach the Gospel. This allowed Jesus some freedom from the press of the crowd of people, which also made Him easier to see and to hear. (SG pp.16.82 [#28]; TLSB 5:3; CSB 5:3)

a) "The multitude of the listeners point to the popularity of Jesus as a teacher and the authority with which He spoke. The need for helpers in this ministry was becoming more evident all the time." (TPB p.54)

b) While the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:16-20) makes it seem as though Jesus was calling on these men to help Him (and follow Him) out of the blue, from the accounts of Luke and John we realize that Jesus and these fishermen were rather well acquainted before this event.

i) From last week's study in Luke 4 we read how Jesus had gone to the home of Simon and healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law. "When He now makes use of Simon's boat, it does not seem at all strange. Simon was simply returning a favor." (TPB pp.53-54)

ii) And from John 1:35-42, we learn that Simon Peter's brother Andrew was the first one to introduce him to Jesus. (Andrew had told Simon Peter, "We have found the Messiah," and then brought him to meet Jesus).

c) Peter let Jesus use his boat for His proclaiming the good news and teaching of the Kingdom of God. Throughout the Gospels we will read how other believers help Jesus in His ministry. Jesus uses us similarly, in whatever circumstance we happen to be in, or wherever we live, where He positions us to be useful in His Kingdom work. A few Biblical examples... **(SG pp.16,82 [#28])**

i) Luke 19:28-35 -- the owners who let Jesus ride into Jerusalem on their never-ridden-upon donkey colt (because "The Lord needs it").

ii) John 19:38-40 -- Joseph of Arimathea (along with Nicodemus, both secret disciples) who prepared Jesus' body for burial and gave Jesus use of his new tomb... temporarily (see also Matthew 27:57-61).

iii) Mark 14:13-15 -- The man who let Jesus' disciples use a room for the Last Supper.

iv) Matthew 2:1-12 -- The Magi whose gifts aided Jesus' family as they escaped to Egypt.

v) Mark 14:3-9 -- The woman who anointed Jesus' head with oil.

d) Like a simple fishing boat and simple fishermen, we also can be certain that what we have and what we do in faith in our Lord Jesus (including our daily labor) is useful and pleasing to God. As His dear children, as true believers, we know that He uses us.

i) As we assist Jesus in the proclamation of His Gospel through our daily lives, and through the use of our time, talents, and treasures, we can be assured that our work 'is not in vain' (1 Corinthians 15:58).

ii) This is true for us as simple individuals, and also for our various church ministries. We may feel our church ministries are small in the scheme of things. And sometimes we struggle as churches; we're just simple "fishermen" for the Lord. But He can and does do mighty things through His churches, through His people who follow Him. (**SG pp.17,82 [#29]**)

b. vv.4-9, A miraculous catch of fish

1) v.5, "*But at Your word, I will let down the nets.*" -- "Simon was yielding to the word of this person whom he knew to speak and act with a strange and mysterious authority." (TPB p.54) (Recall from Luke 4 that he had seen the fever of his mother-in-law leave at the word of Jesus.)

2) vv.6-7, "...*such a large number of fish...*" -- The catch was awesome! Breaking their nets, calling for help, a true "fisherman's delight." Simon had never seen anything like this in all his life. (TPB p.54)

3) vv.8-9, "*When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees...*" -- Here Luke now uses Simon's full name, the name "Peter" given him by Jesus. (John 2:42). The miracle that Simon Peter experienced overwhelmed him and made him aware that he was in the presence of the Holy One.

a) The nearer one comes to God, the more he recognizes and feels the depth of his own sin and unworthiness (as did Abraham [Genesis 18:27], Job [42:6], and Isaiah [6:5]). The power that Jesus demonstrated here terrified and broke Simon Peter, as he encountered holiness (similar to when Isaiah encountered the presence of the holy God.) (TPB p.54; 30-Minutes in the NT, 1517 podcast, Luke 4:38-5:16 [Episode 136])

b) Simon Peter, in fear and in his own unworthiness, pleaded that the Lord Jesus would depart from him. But Jesus does not go away... (TLSB John 2:42 and Matthew 4:18; TPB p.54; CSB 5:8)

4) vv.10-11, *Jesus replies to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."* Instead of Jesus departing from him, Jesus tells Simon Peter to follow Him (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17) and that a new occupation awaits him and his partners, they would be "fishers of men," gathering mortal people into everlasting life. (TPB p.54; TLSB 5:10)

a) Four of Jesus' key disciples were two pairs of brothers: Simon Peter and Andrew; and James and John (sons of Zebedee). Together, they may have run a

sizable fishing business, as fishing often brought an above-average income, so these disciples would be leaving considerable assets. "It was quite a sacrifice to turn one's back on equipment and a business that had furnished the living for several families. The powerful word of Jesus compelled these men to follow." (TLSB 5:7 and 5:11; TPB p.55)

b) As we noticed earlier, this was not the first time these men had been with Jesus. Their periodic and loose association now would become a closely knit fellowship as they followed Jesus, their teacher and Messiah. (CSB 5:11)

c) While this catch of fish was the most impressive one Peter had ever seen as a fisherman, it was just a preview of things to come. As we recall from our study of Acts, "on Pentecost Sunday, Peter preached a sermon that led to the conversion and baptism of three thousand persons. Here was a catch greater even than the one on the Lake of Gennessaret." (TPB p.55; also Acts 2)

3. Luke 5:12-16, Jesus, the Messiah, Heals a Man with Leprosy

a. v.12, "...full of leprosy" (ESV, EHV). ("...covered with leprosy" [NIV]); The prayer of a man with leprosy

1) The Greek word for "leprosy" in ancient times was actually used for various diseases affecting the skin (psoriasis, lupus, ringworm, etc), not necessarily leprosy as our English word refers to it medically (an affliction named "Hansen's disease" [named after an Norwegian physician who identified the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae* in 1873 as the causative agent of leprosy]). (TPB p.56; NIV text note 5:12; Wikipedia Leprosy 2025)

a) Note that leprosy today is highly treatable and curable, but it can lead to damage of the nerves, respiratory tract, skin, and eyes...

b) Because of the effects it has on the body (particularly damage to the nerves that can result in inability to feel pain, which can lead to the loss of limbs from infection and injuries), the physician Luke is the only Gospel writer to mention the extent of this man's disease: "full of leprosy" is the more accurate translation, ravaging his body. (WHO, World Health Organization International News [fact-sheets/detail/leprosy 2025]; Wikipedia Leprosy; CSB 5:12)

* Personal note: When I lived in Zambia, Africa in 1977, I visited one of the largest leprosariums in the world. Today, things have changed drastically: There is now a "Global Leprosy strategy 2021-2030 'Towards zero leprosy'" worldwide. Leprosy

is not highly contagious, and globally there were fewer than 200,000 cases in 2020, when in 1980 there had been over 5.2 million cases. (WHO Leprosy; Wikipedia Leprosy)

2) "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." -- The man came to Jesus and "begged" (prayed)

a) Those with leprosy were ostracized by law, having to live outside of the community, and announce that they were unclean so others would not come near.

b) "This outcast knows that Jesus is able to make him clean; He only questions the willingness of Jesus to do so. His prayer is a model for us Christians." This man does not doubt Jesus' ability to heal. Rather, he expresses his sense of humility and unworthiness, and bows to God's will. (TPB p.56; TPSB 5:12; 30-Minutes in the NT, a 1517 podcast, Luke 4:38-5:16 [Episode 136])

b. v.13, "Jesus...touched him, saying, 'I am willing...Be clean!'"

1) It is a noteworthy detail that Jesus touched him to heal him. "Jewish purity laws held that this contact would defile Jesus. Remarkably, the exchange runs in the other direction. Jesus does not become defiled, but the unclean man is made whole and pure." (TLSB 5:13)

2) "The reply of Jesus is music to the ears of this man... At once the man is cleansed from his leprosy." (TPB p.56)

a) Oh, the *"authority and power of God's Word,"* which we talked about last week in Luke 4.

b) "In the very same way, God's word of forgiveness cleanses us from all sin. Here is cause for rejoicing!" (TBP p.56). Likewise, the church is a little bit like a hospital: The Lord's hospital/leprosarium in which we are healed (cleansed) when the pastor announces the Lord's forgiveness upon us, touching us with the Grace of Christ through the authority and power of God's Word. Such healing medicine for our souls! (Chad Bird devotional FB June 1, 2025 [printed on last page of these notes])

3) Notice other examples of those with leprosy who were healed in Scripture (one which we discussed last week in our study of Luke 4). **(SG pp.18.83 [#30a]):**

a) 2 Kings 5:1-15 -- Naaman, commander of Syria's army, cleansed of leprosy by washing in the Jordan River seven times, per God's Word spoken through Elisha.

b) Luke 17:11-19 -- On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus healed ten lepers, of whom only one returned to offer thanks to Jesus.

4) "We refer to sin as spiritual leprosy because (a) it has entirely corrupted our nature and (b) it is incurable except by the divine touch of the Savior (means of grace). We have the assurance of a true spiritual cleansing through God's Word and Sacraments." (SG pp.18.83 [#30b])

c. v.14, "Don't tell anyone... go, show yourself to the priest... offer sacrifices... as a testimony to them."

What are meant by these instructions? (SG pp.18.83 [#31a])

1) "...tell no one,..." -- "Jesus sought to avoid others misunderstanding His identity and mission. The time for His exaltation had not yet come." (TLSB 5:14)

a) He did not want to be considered just a miracle worker,

b) He did not want people missing His primary mission, with too much publicity given to His healing miracles that His teaching ministry would be hindered;

c) He did not want His death to come prematurely, before He had finished His ministry. (points a, b, and c: CSB Mathew 8:4)

2) "...go, show yourself to the priest... offer sacrifices..."

a) Jesus wanted to show the religious authorities that He had not come to overthrow law and order. Sacrifices commanded by Moses were meant to protect public health, and Jesus heeds the law and fulfills the Law. (TPB p.56)

b) Jesus wanted the man to obtain the legal certificate of his cleansing, and the priests were the ones functioning as public health officials. (SG p.83 [#31])

3) "...as a testimony for them" (EHV). ("...for a proof to them" [ESV].)

a) "The sacrifices were to be evidence to the priests and the people that the cure was real and that Jesus respected the law. The healing was also a testimony to Jesus' divine power, since Jews believed that only God could cure leprosy." (CSB Mark 1:44)

b) Most importantly, Jesus referred the healed man to the priests to provide them with living testimony (living proof) that He was the promised Messiah. (SG p.83 [#31])

4) Just as Jesus cleansed and healed this man who had leprosy by touching him and speaking His healing Word, so also Jesus still touches lives today with His mercy according to

His good and gracious will. We can also bring our requests to Jesus and trust in His good purpose for us. Even now our Savior intercedes for us in Heaven. Our response, like the healed man who had leprosy, comes from truly grateful hearts, with thanksgiving and love for Him, and in which we would desire to share His goodness with others. (TLSB 5:12-16; **SG p.15 #31b**) with personal notes)

d. **vv.15-16**, "...and yet the news about Him spread even more... crowds gathered to listen and to be healed... But Jesus often withdrew to deserted places and prayed."

"In 4:37, Luke notes how the news about Jesus was spreading; now this information is repeated to emphasize the increasing popularity of Jesus. Just as in Capernaum when the crowds came to hear Him and be healed (4:40), so again lines of people stream to Jesus. But often Jesus needed time alone to pray, which provided spiritual refreshment and renewal from His strenuous life of service." (TPB p.57)

4. **Luke 5:17-26**, **Jesus Cares for Soul and Body: The Healing of a Paralyzed Man**

a. **vv.17-19**, Jesus is teaching in a home setting (see account in **Mark 2:1-6** and note the information in **verse 1** of Mark 2 concerning this home:

1) He had returned to Capernaum, ...and "*He was at home...*" (**Mark 2:1**) where many had gathered together to hear Jesus teach.

a) "Jesus' practice of preaching within a domestic setting, as described here, set a precedent for His followers. For the next 300 years, Christian worship services usually took place in house churches." (TLSB Mark 2:1-2)

b) The same enthusiasm that greeted Jesus earlier in Capernaum (Luke 4:42) was evident at His return to His home base again. (CSB Mark 2:2)

2) **vv.17**, -- There was a significant crowd (v.19), including some religious leaders "*who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem...*"

a) This is the first time Luke mentions the "*Pharisees and the teachers of the law*" and the first time Luke describes the growing conflict between Jesus and the religious leadership of His day. We'll see several more accounts to come.

b) They had come from far and wide to observe this Jesus that they had just begun to hear about. These "law observers" had come "to scrutinize the activities of the Galilean teacher and healer who was making such a sensation among the people." (TPB p.58)

i) The title "*Pharisees*" means "*separated ones*." "They were teachers in the synagogues, religious examples in the eyes of the people and self-appointed guardians of the law and its proper observance. They considered the interpretations and regulations handed down by tradition to be virtually as authoritative as Scripture." They separated themselves from the society of people whose observance of the law they considered too lax. (CSB 5:17; TPB p.58)

ii) The "teachers of the law" (also called "scribes" and "lawyers" in some Bible translations) may have been a specialty group among the Pharisees who studied, interpreted, and taught the law. (TPB p.58)

3) vv.18-19 -- And into this overcrowded home there came some men ("*four men*" [Mark 2:3]) "*carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher*." And due to the crowd size, they engineered a way to remove a portion of the roof (just consider the debris and dust and chaos that ensued!!) to get him near Jesus, so that their friend might be healed. (TLSB Mark 2:4)

b. vv.20, "*When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'*" (Note: Mark's account says "*Son, your sins are forgiven*," implying affection and familial compassion and concern. [TLSB Mark 2:5])

1) Though Christian teaching often emphasizes --and rightly so--that people need to have personal faith, this encounter ("*Jesus saw their faith*") illustrates how one person acting in faith can benefit another. Thus, the four friends see blessing for their paralyzed friend because they believed Jesus could heal him. (TLSB Mark 2:5)

2) That the Lord God forgives sins is taught throughout the OT. Jesus speaks directly and immediately with God's authority, forgiving this man's sins. Jesus declaring forgiveness, and that this paralyzed man is now free from sin simply on the basis of faith is more than the Pharisees and teachers of the law can take. (TLSB Matthew 9:2; TBP p.58)

c. vv.21-26, "*...so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...*" -- Giving proof and providing a lesson to His opponents who have no faith. And providing healing for the paralyzed man whose sins were forgiven.

1) vv.21-22, "*...Jesus knew what they were thinking...*"

a) "Jesus' knowledge of His opponents' inner thoughts reveals His supernatural perception and shows His divinity. Ironically, that is the very thing being called into question [v.21]." (TLSB Mark 2:8)

b) They were thinking "*blasphemy*" ...for only God can forgive sins. Jesus' forgiveness of sins was a claim to deity, to having divine authority, which they considered to be blasphemous. "This was the beginning of long-standing conflict between followers of Jesus and heirs of the Pharisees in rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic writers would describe Jesus as a sinful magician who would not listen to wisdom and sought to destroy the Law of Moses." (TLSB Matthew 9:3; CSB Mark 2:7)

2) vv.23-24a, "*...so you may know... the Son of Man... has authority to forgive sins.*" -- Jesus here is speaking to the unbelieving Pharisees and teachers of the law, addressing their darkened hearts.

a) "*so you may know...*" -- "Jesus' healing of this man's paralysis reveals not only His power over the physical but also His authority in the spiritual realm. Without this physical healing, Jesus' claim to forgive would be less persuasive." Jesus' power to heal was a visible affirmation of His power to forgive. (TLSB 5:24; CSB 5:24)

b) "*the Son of Man...*" -- "Jesus' most common title for Himself, used 81 times in the Gospels and never used by anyone but Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 the Son of Man is pictured as a heavenly figure who in the end times is entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power... Jesus used "Son of Man" as a Messianic title..." (CSB Mark 8:31)

* "A favorite self-designation of Jesus used over 80 times in the Gospels but almost never in the rest of the NT. Its meaning varies somewhat depending on the context. It indicates that, though Jesus is fully man, He is much more. As a Messianic title, it combines the ideas of a servant who will suffer and die for all people (Isaiah 53; Matthew 20:28) and the exalted Son of Man, whose reign is everlasting (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30)." (TLSB p.2098)

c) "*has authority to forgive sins...*" -- "It was contrary to Jewish opinion that human beings had the power with a word to declare the forgiveness of sins to someone who had made no kind of sacrificial offering. Jesus demonstrates that 'the Son of Man' has authority on earth to forgive sins." (TPB p.59)

i) Oh, the authority of His Word to declare forgiveness!! For we know that Jesus Himself becomes the sacrificial offering. No other sacrifice can atone for our sins except the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (Personal notes)

ii) When the title "Son of Man" is applied to Jesus, His human nature is being emphasized. Yes, as a human being Jesus has power to forgive sins, as the perfect sacrifice, and in being fully human and fully God's Son. "This power [to forgive sins] Jesus passed on to His disciples (John 20:23) and likewise to the entire church." (TPB p.59)

d) A lesson on the importance of the forgiveness of sins, more than anything else. Jesus continually assures us that our sins are forgiven. **(SG pp.19.83-83 [#32])**:

i) "The first and greatest need of every person is the forgiveness of sins. There is no peace without it, even with otherwise perfect health. The Pharisees and scribes felt no sinfulness, and they hated the word *forgiveness*. In sullen silence, they grumbled in their hearts and accused Jesus of blasphemy. They refused to accept the truth that Jesus is God. To forgive sin and to heal a sick person with a word are equally impossible to a mere man. Only God can do both." (SG pp. 83-84)

ii) "Jesus graciously assures us that our sins are forgiven through His means of grace." He gives us His Word, His rich Gospel proclaimed and read, His absolution, and the sacraments given to us of Baptism and Holy Communion. (SG p.84)

e) "It is evident from what follows that the Pharisees who questioned the authority of Jesus to forgive remain unconvinced; their opposition to Jesus will grow fiercer and finally lead Him to the cross." (TPB p.59)

3) vv.24b-26, "*He said to the man who was paralyzed, 'I tell you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.' And immediately he rose up...*"

a) Another example of the authority and power of Jesus' words. (TLSB Matthew 9:6)

b) "This man would have had to pass through many people in this crowded house as he left. His action provided undeniable confirmation that Jesus fully healed him. Jesus' miracles were live illustrations that He was the Messiah." (TLSB Mark 2:11-12)

c) "By this and other miracles, Jesus offered visible proof that He is God [and that He is the promised Messiah]. The healing also proved the power to forgive. The man was healed spiritually and physically. He and the people who were not prejudiced against Jesus glorified God for what they had experienced. Our response as we experience God's grace in Jesus Christ is also thanks and praise to God, and loving service to our neighbor." **(SG pp.19.84 [#33])**

d. Devotional moment for Luke 5:17-26:

Jesus asserts His authority to forgive sins by healing a paralyzed man. Though Jesus could easily say "Your sins are forgiven you," the price of that forgiveness cost Him His life. He bore the cross and our sins willingly, and He will also bear with us in all our infirmities. ~ Grant us firm faith, O Lord, that we may always walk in Your ways. Amen. (TLSB 5L17-26)

5. Luke 5:27-32, The Calling of Levi (Matthew)

a. vv.27-28, "...a tax collector named Levi... and Levi got up, left everything and followed Him."

1) The association of Jesus with sinners continues, and this one He calls to become His disciple.

2) *Levi* -- a good Jewish name! (It is also the name of the third son of Jacob in the OT; from the tribe of Levi came the Levites who served as priests and other religious officials. [Numbers 3:12; Deut. 18:5; 1 Chronicles 15:2]). And Matthew (which means "gift of the Lord") became his apostolic name. (CSB Mark 2:14)

3) *A tax collector* -- "Taxes were collected for the Roman government by Jewish agents, who were especially detested for helping the pagan conqueror and for frequently defrauding their own people." Tax collectors were looked down on by their own fellow Jews, as they had a reputation for dishonesty due to overcharging. (CSB Luke 3:12; TPB p.60)

a) The Latin translation uses the term "publicanus," a revenue agent, from which comes the familiar "publican" of the KJV. (It might be more accurate to designate Levi's occupation as that of "toll collector," one engaged in the collection of indirect taxes such as tolls, tariffs, and customs.) (TPB p.60)

b) The "*tax booth*" where Jesus found Levi was probably a toll booth on the major international road that went from Damascus through Capernaum to the Mediterranean coast and to Egypt (see "the way of the sea," Isaiah 9:11, Matthew 4:15-16). (CSB Mark 2:14)

4) "*Levi left everything... and followed Jesus*." --

a) Since Jesus had been ministering in Capernaum for some time, Levi probably had known Him previously. (Similar to when Jesus called Peter and the other fishermen brothers [5:10-11], in which their occasional association with the man Jesus now became a closely knit fellowship as they followed the Master.) (CSB 5:11,28)

b) To leave everything behind was a huge sacrifice for Levi, for he was walking away from a lucrative customs contract. Tax collector jobs were greatly sought after as a sure way to get rich quickly. His response to Jesus was especially costly; it was a costly job change, but a life change in which the benefits are eternal. (TLSB 5:28; EW 5:28; personal notes)

b. **vv. 29-30**, "...a great banquet for Jesus..., and... with [other] tax collectors and 'sinners'."

1) **v.29** -- "To celebrate his new life, Levi held a great banquet for Jesus, inviting a large crowd of his old friends in the toll collecting business." (TPB p.60)

a) When Levi began to follow Jesus, he did not do it secretly! He celebrated!! (CSB Luke 5:29)

b) Eating a meal with someone or with several others was a sign of friendship. (CSB Mark 2:15)

c) Levi gave up much to follow Jesus, but he wasn't sad. He was happy enough to give a party for Jesus. One reason Matthew gave the party was because he wanted his friends to meet Jesus. He couldn't help but to share the good news about Jesus, his Savior. (EW Luke 5:29)

2) **v.30** -- The Pharisees and teachers of the law were watching outside from a short distance, as if being nosy neighbors, and they just had to register their complaint to Jesus' disciples.

a) "*Why do you eat... with sinners?!*" -- "*Sinners*" were "notoriously evil people as well as those who either refused or lacked the time to follow the Mosaic law as interpreted by the teachers of the law. The term was commonly used of tax collectors, adulterers, robbers and the like." Eating with them suggested having a friendship with them. (CSB Mark 2:15)

b) The Pharisees strictly observed the law of Leviticus 10:10... "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean." Jesus was obviously not following this biblical precept. (TPB p.61)

c) Levi's banquet gives Jesus an opportunity to show His solidarity with sinners and emphasize that His mission was to call sinners to repentance. ("*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost*" Luke 19:10.)... (TLSB 5:29-31)

c. **vv.31-32** -- Who is in need of the doctor?... **v.32**, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*"

1) Jesus answers the Pharisees' charge of guilt by association (v.30) by comparing himself to a physician (v.31). A physician needs to associate with the sick, for they are the ones who need his care. Similarly, Jesus needs to be with sinners in order

to bring them to repentance. With their self-righteous attitude, the Pharisees did not understand this loving concern that Jesus had for sinners. (TPB p.60)

2) "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." -- This is not to imply that the Pharisees were *"the healthy,"* but that a person must recognize himself as a sinner before he can be spiritually healed. (CSB Luke 5:31)

3) Note: In the account of this encounter in the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew adds that Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6...

a) Matthew 9:13, "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

b) In Matthew's account Jesus told the Pharisees, who were proud of their knowledge of Scripture, to go back to school. They failed to see that mercy was the point of God's work... Hosea condemned Israel for supposing that God desired obedience to ritual laws (sacrifice) more than the practice of mercy. ...The Pharisees in this NT encounter were equally guilty of this sin as the OT Israelites were in Hosea's day. Those proud of their own righteousness will not respond positively when Jesus calls sinners. (They see no need for a physician.) (TLSB Matthew 9:13)

4) Jesus sits with sinners, not because they are worthy, but because He is merciful. And He wants these individuals to be included in His kingdom. (TLSB Matthew 9:9-13)

5) Jesus can truly be considered our "Great Physician." He is the perfect physician to heal our sin-sick souls: (EW Luke 5:31-32)

- a) He is always available.
- b) He makes a perfect diagnosis.
- c) He provides a complete cure.
- d) He even pays the doctor's fee!

6) Devotional moment:

a) "This passage invites the modern hearer to reflect: 'Am I more like the manifest sinners described here or like those who criticize Jesus' openness to be with the unworthy?' Either way, we each stand in need of forgiveness. Thankfully, Jesus brings healing and forgiveness to all, even manifest sinners and smug hypocrites. ~ Lord, preserve us from both our crass and hidden sins. Grant us a rich measure of Your

grace, that others may see Your mercy and be drawn to the healing and fellowship that only You can provide. Amen." (TLSB Mark 2:13-17)

b) "Jesus teaches the people that He came to save sinners by leading them to repentance. No matter what your past, whether you are a notorious sinner or smugly self-righteous, Jesus calls you to a life of daily repentance. As the great physician, He can forgive all manner of sins." (TLSB Luke 5:27-32)

6. **Luke 5:33-39**, **A Question about Fasting** (Levi's banquet may have prompted this question [TLSB Matthew 9:14])

a. **v.33**, *"...fast and pray...;" "...but yours go on eating and drinking."* --

1) The religious disciples fast, but Jesus' disciples feast. Here's yet another judgment hurled at Jesus. Here, His critics focus in on the banquet itself, the *"eating and drinking"* as the objectionable behavior, contrasting it to the religious practice of *"fasting."* Jesus uses their objection as another opportunity to teach. (Personal notes)

a) "Fasting means to abstain from food and at times even from drinking water. Religious people would choose to fast for various reasons: to concentrate on prayer and meditation,... Luke 7:33 suggests that John [the Baptist] was recognized as one who practiced fasting and who taught the same to his disciples. So did the Pharisees." (TPB p.61)

b) How different Jesus and His disciples were! Many times we are told that Jesus attended banquets; many of His parables compare the kingdom of God to a banquet. The question put to Jesus is a valid one." (TPB p.61)

2) Note: "In the Mosaic law only the fast of the Day of Atonement was required... After the Babylonian exile four other yearly fasts were observed by the Jews... In Jesus' time the Pharisees fasted twice a week (see Luke 18:12)." (CSB Mark 2:18)

3) But Jesus, on the other hand, went to banquets, and His disciples enjoyed a freedom not known by the Pharisees. (While Jesus rejected fasting legalistically for display, He himself fasted privately and permitted its voluntary use for spiritual benefit.) (CSB Luke 5:33)

4) Banquets are simply meals that people share together. Jesus frequently used meals and banquets as opportunities to teach. "Jesus began to redefine holiness and the boundaries of Israel during His ministry by challenging conventional ideas about

meals and holiness." (TLSB p.1718; the following is an excerpt from an article here, entitled "Be Our Guest")...

"Throughout the Gospels, Jesus used the occasion of feasts and friendship meals (Hebrew *chaburah*) to teach God's Word. This began with His own parents and the Passover feast in Jerusalem. It ended with Him preparing breakfast for His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. After that meal, Jesus taught Peter and the other disciples about their mission. He described their responsibility with the words "Feed My lambs" (John 21:15-17).

"Christians today need to rediscover the teaching opportunities the Lord provides through their meals, following the example of Jesus, and make mealtime more than an opportunity to nourish your body. Rededicate yourselves; pray with one another; discuss God's Word together. See the warmth and sharing of mealtime as an opportunity to grow close to Christ and to one another. Also welcome people who are not Christian at meals in your homes and at restaurants. Share with them the words of Jesus, the bread of life, as you share with them your daily bread. Through the Word and faith, the Holy Spirit will prepare them to receive the meal, the feast of Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of all their sins." (Taken from article "Be Our Guest" TLSB p.1718)

b. vv.34-35, Fasting at a wedding banquet? (A time for everything...)

1) "Jesus compared his disciples with the guests of a bridegroom. A Jewish wedding was a particularly joyous occasion and the celebration associated with it often lasted a week. It was unthinkable to fast during such festivities, because fasting was associated with sorrow." (CSB Mark 2:19)

2) "Fasting is a time for sorrow or penitence, whereas feasting is associated with joy. Jesus emphasized that feasting is proper because the Messiah (the Bridegroom) is now present among God's people. Jesus hastens to add that He will someday be taken away from them (after His death, resurrection, and ascension), and then God's people will have occasion to fast." (TLSB Mark 2:19-20)

Note: "Jesus neither forbids nor commands His disciples to fast but simply states that they will do it. There may be good reasons why believers today will fast. But they dare not look down on others who refuse to fast." (TBP p.62)

c. vv.36-39, "He told them this parable..." -- Actually two short parables contrasting the old with the new; Jesus' ministry is the New Covenant. This is the covenant of forgiveness. (TPB p.62)

1) v.36 -- Parable #1: Clothing patch. Picture taking a piece of cloth from a new garment and sewing it on an old garment. The new garment gets torn, and the new piece will not match the old garment.

2) **vv.37-38** -- Parable #2: Wineskins. Pouring new wine into old wineskins is a bad idea! The new wine will cause the old used skins to burst, and the wine will be lost and the old skins will be destroyed. Here's why: "In ancient times goat skins were used to hold wine. As the fresh grape juice fermented, the wine would expand, and the new wineskin would stretch. But a used skin, already stretched, would break. Jesus brings a newness that cannot be confined within the old forms." (CSB Matthew 9:17)

3) What does this mean?:

a) "The new life in the Spirit breaks loose from the old mentality, which thrives on fault finding and concentration on meritorious observance of the law. The new cannot be patched onto the old; the new cannot be poured into the old. Applying this parable to the specific question about fasting, Jesus seems to indicate that fasting is included among those old practices that can't very well be patched with the new life of faith in the Spirit." (TBP p.62)

b) "Jesus' twin pictures... emphasized the superiority of the new over the old, fulfillment over promise. Attempts at merging the Pharisees' traditional laws with Jesus' good news of the Kingdom would inevitably result in destruction. The new Kingdom was to be embraced wholly." (TLSB Luke 5:36-38)

4) **v.39**, "...no one wants new wine while drinking old wine, because he says, 'The old is fine.'" (EHV)

a) The Pharisees stubbornly loved their old traditions and could not savor the Gospel. And yet the new has come. His Gospel message tore away and burst the old traditions and practices (such as fasting).(TLSB 5:39; TLSB Matthew 9:16-17)

b) "The closing comment made by Jesus in verse 39 reflects a fact so often observed: people like to keep the old and familiar. The old wine is better than the new. The new that Jesus brings is fiercely opposed by those who cling to the old. It is a truth also observed in the lives of Christians: the old self fights against the new self. But make no mistake--Jesus is on the side of the new." (TPB p.62)

c) "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

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*EW = *Enduring Word Bible Commentary, Online, for Luke 5.
(*Minor supplemental resource only.)

WHO, World Health Organization International News [fact-sheets/detail/leprosy 2025]

Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version

Vulnerability and the Church

by Chad Bird, June 1, 2025

(regarding comment in notes, "The church is a little bit like a hospital/leprosarium.")

"A little bit of vulnerability among Christians would go a long way toward giving a witness to the world about what the church is really here for.

Jesus didn't found a gym where we can go and flex our biblical biceps in front of mirrors so everyone sees how hard we've worked at being holy. He didn't create a virtual spiritual reality where we can gather together with like-minded virtual reality users and talk about things of virtually little importance.

Christ founded a church, which is a little bit hospital, ...and a little bit weekly reunion of sinners who've made a mess of their lives. It's a place where self-proclaimed righteous people who have it all together will be bored because there's nothing for them there. Church is for real sinners, who really sin, with other real sinners, for here they find the Friend of Sinners, Jesus the Christ."