

Luke 5

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Introduction:

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Jesus had success in Capernaum, creating favorable reports and healing a large number. He then asked for transportation help from His fishermen-disciples as He continued teaching large crowds.

JESUS USED A BOAT FOR A PLATFORM

(1.) One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on Him to listen to the word of God. (2) He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.

1. By now **Jesus** was drawing large crowds (vs. 1). They recognized the teaching of Jesus as being **the word of God.**

- **J. W. McGarvey** says,

“This lake is a pear-shaped body of water, about 12.5 miles long and about seven miles across at its widest place. It is 682 ft. below sea level; its waters are fresh, clear, and abounding in fish, and it is surrounded by hills and mountains, which rise from 600-1,000 ft. above it. Its greatest depth is about 165 feet.”

- These men were through work and were putting their tools away in good condition to be used the next time. A good example.

- **McGarvey:**

“... the *amphiblestron* was a draw**net**, a circular bell-shaped affair, which was thrown upon the water, so that it spread out and caught, by sinking, whatever was below it.”

(3.) Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So He sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

- When **water** is calm, a voice carries remarkably well across its surface. Jesus used this feature.

THE CARPENTER FISHED

(4.) When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish." (5) "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if You say so, I'll let the nets down again." (6) And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! (7) A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

● **Evidence for the miracle:**

- They normally fished at night. This event happened in the daytime (vs. 5).
- The men had fished *that* night and took nothing (vs. 5).
- Experienced fishermen doubted the value of putting in the nets (vs. 5).
- Fishing was normally near the shore, not in the deep water (vs. 4).
- The catch was far above any normal catch. Nets were breaking; the boats were overloaded. They weren't equipped for this kind of success (vs. 6-7).
- Experienced fishermen were convinced that this was a miracle. So much so, they left their trade. (vs 11). Peter, Andrew, James, and John were amazed (vs. 9). Andrew is mentioned in the parallel accounts.
- Professional fishermen were excelled by a carpenter from the hills of Nazareth.

THE FISHERMAN ARE HOOKED

(8.) When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm too much of a sinner to be around You." (9) For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. (10) His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" (11) And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

- **McGarvey** aptly observes, “This miracle came home to the soul of Peter because it was wrought in his own boat, with his own nets, and concerned his own business.”
- Note that the mother of **James and John** became one of the financiers of Jesus’ ministry. Luke 8:1-3

Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took His twelve disciples with Him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and His disciples.

Matthew 27:55,56 establishes that the mother of James and John were among the women who traveled with Jesus.

JESUS HEALS A LEPER

(12.) In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. "Lord," he said, "if You are willing, You can heal me and make me clean." (13) Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," He said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. (14) Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed." (15) But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of His power spread even faster,

and vast crowds came to hear Him preach and to be healed of their diseases.

- Jesus **touched** the man for **healing**. This violated the Law of Moses for a few seconds. Such a **touch** gave the leper insight into divine compassion.
- **Evidence for the miracle:**
 - He was covered with leprosy so this was not a minor case (vs. 12).
 - Jesus sent him to the local judge of **leprosy** to be determined clean. This was also Jesus' way of reaching into the circle of **priests** (vs. 14) as a testimony to them.
 - The man was convinced that he was **cleansed**. He did not fear investigation (vs. 15).
 - The **crowds** were convinced (vs. 15).
 - **Leprosy** still cannot be healed except by lengthy medical treatment.

The ministry of Jesus is about to enter a new phase. He has been very popular in Galilee. The people loved His teaching and knew that it was the Word of God. They had reveled in His healings and rejoiced in the cleansing of a leper from symbolic death. But the word was getting around the country that Jesus was teaching and verifying His teaching with healings. He was an unknown and the religious leaders would have none of it. The way to destroy His work was to show that His healings were not valid. So this they set out to accomplish.

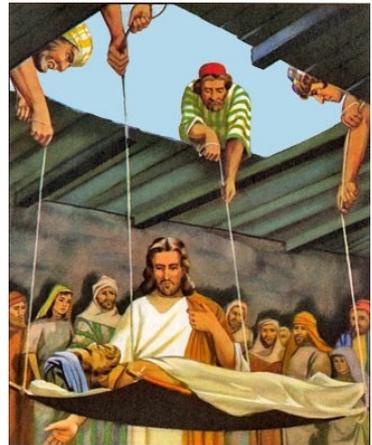
JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

(16.) But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. (17) One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus. (18) Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, (19) but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd.

- Critics were coming from everywhere (vs. 17).
- Mark 2:1 shows this event happened at Capernaum. The place was the home of Peter, where Jesus headquartered.
- The **teachers** were allowed to sit showing respect for their rank (vs. 17). It was crowded. There was no way to get the man on his **mat** to **Jesus**.

(19b) So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

- The houses were flat-roofed with stairs going to the **roof** because residents often resorted to the **rooftops** in the evening hours.



(20.) Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven." (21) But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, "Who does

He think He is? That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!" (22) Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? (23) Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'? (24) So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

- In many miracles, someone needed **faith** (vs. 20). This time it was the men who brought the paralyzed man who had the **faith**, not the paralyzed man.
- The reasoning of the **teachers** and **Pharisees** was correct (vs. 21). **Only God can forgive sins**. The point they refused to acknowledge was that *Jesus was God* in the flesh. John 20:28. It must have been very disturbing for the **teachers** and **Pharisees** to be told what they were **thinking** (vs. 22).
- Luke is writing to a Roman official and has been stressing Jesus' **authority**. Luke 4:6, 32, 36 and here in vs. 24. **Authority** is used 13 times in Luke.
- This echoes the Book of Daniel where the **Son of Man** (vs. 24) received **authority** from the **Ancient of Days**. Cp. Vs. 21.

As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into His presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey Him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14
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(25.) And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. (26) Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God, exclaiming, "We have seen amazing things today!"

- The crowd had seen Jesus pronouncing forgiveness of sins and followed by a miracle to prove it.
- **Evidence for the miracle:**
 - His friends knew he was **paralyzed** (vs. 18).
 - The healed man was a local man and so his case was known locally (vs.25).
 - He walked immediately. No therapy was needed. Confinement would have made him weak (vs. 25).
 - He carried out his own stretcher (vs. 25).
 - The critics could not find a flaw or they could have stoned Jesus for blasphemy (vs. 21).
 - A physician investigated and recorded this.

Jesus is building His “staff” — that select group of disciples who will devote the rest of their lives to furthering His message. They would be His *apostles* with permanent power-of-attorney to represent Jesus.

Four men from the fishing industry have been picked, though formal appointment as *apostles* is still ahead. He has had conflict with the professional teachers of the Law of Moses, but none of them qualify. Among them were the Pharisees — separatists — that remained aloof from sinners. They would be of no use in this

project to reach the lost. Their protocols required staying a distance from sinners.

Now he needs a good man from the outcasts of society. He found him in Matthew Levi. As many Galileans, he had a dual name. One part was Jewish (Levi). Like Nathanael, his Matthew name meant "Gift of God." But he was still an outcast. He collected taxes at the place of toll on caravans, ship owners and perhaps on the fishermen that would soon be his traveling companions.

Luke is telling Theophilus, a government official, that Matthew was an employee of the Roman Government. Jesus had picked him instead of the religious professionals of Israel.

Edersheim portrays the call of Matthew so graphically:

"Those white-sailed ships would bring crowds of listeners; the busy caravan on that highway would stop, and its wayfarers turn aside to join the eager multitude, to hear the Word or see the Word. Surely, it was not 'a time for buying and selling,' and Levi would have little work, and less heart for it at his custom-house. Perhaps he may have witnessed the call of the first Apostles; he certainly must have known the fishermen and shipowners of Capernaum. And now it appeared, as if Jesus had been brought still nearer to Matthew."

JESUS COLLECTS A TAX COLLECTOR

(27.) Later, as Jesus left the town, He saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow Me and be My disciple," Jesus said to him. (28) So Levi got up, left everything, and followed Him.

- Matthew **Levi** had been listening to Jesus. This was not an instant decision. Financial books had to be balanced and notices given to his employer before he could leave government service. He left behind security working for the Roman Government and a steady salary. Socially, he was an outcast for collecting taxes for Rome. Jesus chose a diverse group. Matthew made a great contribution — especially in writing his Gospel.

(29.) Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. (30) But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum? " (31) Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. (32) I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

- It would be difficult for **Levi** to turn back after going on record before his friends. This was a well-attended feast made up of social outcasts. The Pharisees and teachers **complained bitterly** to **Jesus' disciples** about His choice of company (vs. 30). Perhaps this was a move to undermine their confidence in Him.
- Jesus used the **Pharisees'** definitions. They considered themselves to be in good health and so the **doctor** was now dealing with the **sick** society of **tax collectors** and **sinners**. They considered themselves **righteous** and Jesus' target group was **sinners** who knew they needed to **repent**. He did not even attempt to demonstrate the sickness or unrighteousness of His critics.

JESUS CRITICIZED FOR BEING A PARTY GOER

(33.) One day some people said to Jesus, "John the Baptist's disciples fast and pray regularly, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are Your disciples always eating and drinking?" (34) Jesus responded, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. (35) But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

- The critics asked, "Why do your men party while ours fast?" Jesus responded, "This is **celebration** time for the wedding party because the **groom** is here. **Fasting** comes later when the **groom** is gone."

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS WILL STRETCH YOUR MIND

(36.) Then Jesus gave them this illustration: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn't even match the old garment. (37) "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. (38) New wine must be stored in new wineskins. (39) But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the new wine. 'The old is just fine,' they say."

- "We don't patch an old **garment** with new **cloth**. This causes a tear." (In the days before pre-shrunk cloth.)
- "Likewise, we don't put **new wine** (that will expand as it ferments) into an **old wineskin** that has already stretched to its maximum."
- The new message of Jesus was not to be poured into the old container of Judaism. Things that do not harmonize

should not be put together. So his disciples would behave differently as in verse 33.

- People will say, "Give us the good old days."
- **Burton Coffman** says it clearly.

"There are three comparisons:

- (1.) new cloth on an old garment,
- (2.) new wine in old wineskins, and
- (3.) no man having drunk old wine desires new.

The meaning is very similar in all three, and they stress Jesus' unwillingness to make the ceremonial fasts of the Old Testament a large feature of the new kingdom, the necessity of finding new "wineskins" (disciples) who would be able to receive his new teaching (as in the call of Matthew), and Jesus' understanding of the fact that many of John's disciples (though not all) would prefer the old ways to the new methods of the approaching kingdom.