

Luke Chapter 5 Continued

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 Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was [present] to heal them."

“Pharisees”: The Pharisees and Sadducees were hung up in tradition. The Pharisees were what we would call the people of the middle class today. The Sadducees were from the upper class, and some from high-priest families. The law was everything to them. They really thought themselves better than just the average person. They were righteous in their own sight.

There were about 6,000, legalistic sect of the Jews who were known for their rigid adherence to the ceremonial fine points of the law. Their name means “separated one.” Jesus’ interaction with the Pharisees was usually adversarial. He rebuked them for using human tradition to nullify Scripture.

We see here, that the Pharisees and doctors of law had heard of Jesus' fame, and they came to see if they could trap Him. They were all here to see if they could find anything wrong with what He said to see if they could accuse Him. This power of the Lord is Jesus' healing power.

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."

These are very good friends who will bring this helpless man to Jesus to be healed. Palsy is a disease of the nervous system. Shaking of hands and legs is a symptom.

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."

“Through the tiling”: This appears to have been a home with roof tiles which, when removed, gave access to lower the man between the roof beams. The extreme measures they took to lay this man before Jesus indicate that the crowds following Him were very large.

With the press of people around Jesus, it would have been impossible for men carrying a paralytic to get close enough to Him, even if they waited until He left the house.

This is determination. They could not get in for the crowd. So they let him down through the roof right in front of Jesus.

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

“Thy sins are forgiven”: Christ ignored the paralysis and addressed the man’s greater need first. In doing so He asserted a prerogative that was God’s alone (verse 27, 7:49). His subsequent healing of the man’s paralysis was proof that He had the authority to forgive sins as well.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke this happening is told, this is a very important message then. Some illness is brought on by sin. Faith is a very important factor in getting healed and in getting forgiveness of sin, as well. NO man has the power to forgive sin. Jesus lets His Godhood show when He forgives this man's 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?"

“Blasphemies”: Their assessment would have been correct if He were not God incarnate.

They make a true statement here, in that only God can forgive sin. Their error is in the fact that they do not recognize Jesus as God the Son (Messiah). They accuse Jesus unjustly of blasphemies. These scribes, Pharisees and lawyers are the educated people of their day. They know the letter of the law, but do not understand the things of the spirit.

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

“Perceived their thoughts”: I.e., by means of His omniscience (Matt. 9:4; John 5:24-25).

You see, Jesus didn't have to be told what they were saying, He understood their hearts. He knew the evil they were thinking, even before they said it. He looks into the intents of the heart. In other words, their hearts were planning evil.

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

“Whether is easier”: It is certainly easier to claim the power to pronounce absolution from sin than to demonstrate the power to heal. Christ actually proved His power to forgive by instantly healing the man of his paralysis.

If He could do the apparently harder, He could also do what seemed easier. The actual forgiving of the sins was in reality the more difficult task, however, because it ultimately requires Him to sacrifice His life.

Now Jesus is about to show these skeptics that not only will He forgive this man's sins, but He will cause him to walk, as well. They will be even more alarmed as the man is healed before their very eyes.

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."

“That you may know”: His ability to heal anyone and everyone at will, totally and immediately (verse 25), was incontrovertible proof of His deity. As God, He had all authority to forgive sins. This was a decisive moment and should have ended once and for all the Pharisees’ opposition. Instead, they began to try to discredit Him by charging Him with violating their Sabbath rules.

Jesus is speaking to these scribes, lawyers, and Pharisees and says I will show you that what I said is not blasphemy. I will show you I am the Son of God by healing this man. Then He says to the sick of the palsy, take up thy couch and go into thine house.

Not only does He say the man is healed, but total strength is suddenly restored in that he cannot only walk, but carry a couch, as well.

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."

We see here an instant healing and restoration.

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."

“Strange things”: The response is curiously non-committal, not void of wonder and amazement, but utterly void of true faith.

This "all" surely includes the scribes and Pharisees. It seems this miracle left them speechless. The scribes and Pharisees could have said no more for fear of being mobbed by the people. Give God the glory for it all. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. There was no way to explain away what had happened.

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."

“Levi”: Matthew’s name prior to his conversion.

A publican was a collector of the Roman taxes. Publicans were a hated group, especially by the Hebrews. Levi is the same as Matthew. Jesus called him from the seat of customs to follow Him.

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

“Left all”: This implies an irreversible action (verse 11; 9:59-62).

This "Levi", or Matthew, was to be one of the twelve disciples. He never hesitated. He came immediately.

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."

“A great company of publicans” Levi’s immediate response was to introduce his former comrades to Christ.

As I said, these publicans were hated by the Hebrews. It was felt that their job was not one to be proud of. Matthew gave a big dinner in honor of the Lord. It was thought to be a sin for the Hebrews to eat with publicans and sinners.

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

“Eat and drink”: Consorting with outcasts on any level, even merely speaking to them, was bad enough. Eating and drinking with them implied a level of friendship that was abhorrent to the Pharisees (7:34; 15:2; 19:7).

These scribes and Pharisees begin to Jump on the disciples. They figure they might win an argument with the disciples.

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

“I.e., those who think they are whole don’t seek healing.

“Whole ... sick”: The Pharisees thought they were well, religiously pure and whole. The outcasts knew they were not. Salvation can’t come to the self-righteous.

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

Jesus works on their self-righteousness here. He says you are so righteous already; I could not possibly be of any help to you. I must help those hopeless sinners. If you are already righteous, you do not need to repent and be saved. We can see that they quickly jump off of this subject in the next verse.

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?"

“Fast often”: Jesus did fast on at least one occasion (Matt. 4:2), but privately, In accordance with His own teaching (Matt. 6:16-18). The law also prescribed a fast on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29-31; 23:27), but all other fasts were supposed to be voluntary, for specific reasons such as penitence and earnest prayer.

The fact that these Pharisees raised this question shows that they thought of fasting as a public exercise to display one’s own spirituality. Yet, the Old Testament also rebuked hypocritical fasting (Isaiah 58:3-6).

Here they are trying to stir up strife between the disciples of John and Jesus' disciples. The strange thing is that they respected John the Baptist, even though he plainly told them who Jesus was: but they did not believe Jesus.

Luke 5:34-35 "And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

Jesus is speaking of the joy and power that is here, as long as His presence is here; but there will be a day of sorrow with His followers. Most of His followers will be so frightened and disillusioned that they will run and hide.

Fasting is an extension of prayer to the utmost. As long as Jesus is physically with them, there is no need to fast.

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."

“New cloth unto an old garment”: That new cloth does not work on old material is analogous to trying to patch New Covenant truth onto old Mosaic ceremonial forms.

This putting the material together, new and old, could be speaking of how hard it is for the Jews and Gentiles to worship together. If a group of new Christians try witnessing to Jewish people, they will listen, if you call Jesus the Messiah. We Christians, are looking for our Savior; the Jews are looking for their King. The same king only two different views of Him.

Luke 5:37-38 "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." "But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."

“New wine into old bottles”: Animal skins were used for fermentation of wine because of their elasticity. As the wine fermented, pressure built up, stretching the wineskin. A previously stretched skin lacked elasticity and would rupture, ruining both wine and wineskin.

Jesus used this as an illustration to teach that the forms of old rituals, such as the ceremonial fastings practiced by the Pharisees and John's disciples, were not fit for the new wine of the New Covenant era (Col. 2:17). In both analogies (verses 16-17), the Lord was saying that what the Pharisees did in fasting or any other ritual had no part with the gospel.

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

To me, this is speaking of how incompatible the law for the Jews and grace for the Christians are. It is so difficult for the Jews, who do not believe Jesus is Messiah; and Christians, who

believe Jesus is Savior, to worship together, New and old together are not compatible. The Jews are satisfied with the law. Christians want salvation by grace through Jesus.

Luke Chapter 5 Continued Questions

1. Where did the Pharisees and doctors of law come from to see Jesus?
2. What was present to heal them?
3. Why were the Pharisees there?
4. What was wrong with the man whose friends brought him to Jesus?
5. When they couldn't get through the crowd, how did they get him to Jesus?
6. What is palsy?
7. When He saw their faith, what did Jesus say to the man?
8. What does that tell us about disease?
9. Who has the power to forgive sins?
10. What did the scribes and Pharisees accuse Jesus of?
11. Where are these scribes and Pharisees in error?
12. Who are these scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of law?
13. How did Jesus know?
14. They know the letter of the law, but do not know what?
15. Jesus healed the man to prove what to the Pharisees?
16. What did Jesus tell the man to do when He healed him?
17. What did the sick of the palsy do?
18. The people were amazed and _____.
19. What is the beginning of wisdom?
20. Who was sitting at the seat of custom?
21. What other name is he known by?

22. What did Levi do to honor Jesus?
23. Who hated the publicans?
24. What is a publican?
25. Who needs a physician?
26. Who did Jesus come to call to repentance?
27. What did John's disciples do that Jesus' disciples did not?
28. What did Jesus call Himself in verse 34?
29. What shows the incompatibility of the law and grace?
30. Christians do not accept just the law, but want what?