

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

**Luk 5:12-16** *And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded." However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*

In verses Luk\_5:12-15 we have the story of the healing of a leper. Luke was a good doctor. He recognized a psychological implication in the healing of this leper that was not much understood in that day.

We are not told how the man discovered that he had leprosy, but it could have happened in the following manner. One day he came in from plowing and said to his wife, "I have a little sore on the palm of my hand. It bothers me when I am plowing. Could you put a poultice on it and wrap it for me?" His wife bandaged his hand, but the next day the sore was worse. In a few days they both became alarmed. His wife said, "You should go to the priest." He went to the priest who put him in isolation for fourteen days. When he was brought out the priest looked him over and found the leprosy had spread. The priest told him he was a leper. The heartbroken man said to the priest "Let me go to my wife and children and tell them goodbye." The priest replied, "You cannot tell them goodbye. You will never be able to take your lovely wife in your arms again. You will never be able to put your arms around those precious children of yours." The man went off, alone. His family brought his food to a certain place and then withdrew when he came to get it. In the distance he could see his wife and observe his children growing day by day.

Then one day the Lord Jesus Christ came by. The leper declared, "If You will, You can heal me." The King of kings replied, "I will, be thou clean." But notice how the Lord healed him. He put forth His hand and touched this man afflicted with leprosy. This poor man had not felt anyone's touch for years. Can you imagine what it must have meant to him to have the touch of Christ's hand upon him?

Has the Lord Jesus touched your life? There are so many lives that need to be touched. If you are His, and you are fishing at His command, I am confident that you can reach someone for the Lord. You need to reach out your hand and touch some soul whom only you can touch for Him today. - McGee

In spite of the Lord's instructions not to publicize the miracle, the news traveled quickly, and great multitudes came to Him for healing. Jesus often withdrew into the wilderness for a time of prayer. Our Savior was a Man of prayer. It is fitting that this Gospel, which presents Him as Son of Man, should have more to say about His prayer life than any other. – Believers Bible Commentary

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

Luk 5:17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

**Luk 5:18-20** *Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."*

This is the account of the paralytic in Capernaum who was healed. Some friends of this man let him down through the roof of a house in order for the Lord Jesus Christ to see him. Both Matthew and Mark record this incident. Mark gives the longest account, though his is the shortest Gospel. The Lord healed this man because these four men brought him into His presence where the poor fellow could hear, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." It was a wonderful word that came to this man.

There are many people who are not going to receive the message of salvation unless you lift a corner of their stretcher and carry them to the place where they can hear the Word of the Lord. They are paralyzed—immobilized by sin and by many other things the world holds for them. Some are paralyzed by prejudice and others by indifference. They are never going to hear Jesus say to them, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," unless you take the corner of their stretcher and bring them to Him.

All of these incidents reveal the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to spread the message of salvation to others. This is why I preach the Word of God—and remember that one man cannot carry a stretcher alone. It took four men to carry the stretcher of the paralyzed man. More men and women are needed today to help get the Word of God out to those who need Him. - McGee

***Luk 5:21-23 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?***

Jesus took notice of the faith that would go to such lengths to bring a needy case to His attention. When He saw their faith, that is, the faith of the four plus the invalid, He said to the paralyzed man, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." This unprecedented statement aroused the scribes and the Pharisees. They knew that no one but God could forgive sins. Unwilling to admit that Jesus was God, they raised the cry of blasphemy. – Believers Bible Commentary

The Lord then proceeded to prove to them that He had actually forgiven the man's sins. First He asked them if it was easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Rise up and walk"? In one sense it is just as easy to say one as the other, but it is another thing to do either, since both are humanly impossible. The point here seems to be that it is easier to say "Your sins are forgiven you," because there is no way of telling if it has happened. If you say, "Rise up and walk," then it is easy to see if the patient has been healed.

The Pharisees could not see that the man's sins had been forgiven, so they would not believe. Therefore, Jesus performed a miracle which they could see to prove to them that He had truly forgiven the man's sins. He gave the paralytic the power to walk. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Luk 5:24-26 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"***

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—The title, the Son of Man, emphasizes the Lord's perfect humanity. In one sense, we are all sons of man, but this title "the Son of Man" sets Jesus off from every other man who ever lived. It describes Him as a Man according to God, One who is morally perfect, One who would suffer, bleed, and die, and One to whom universal headship has been given.

In obedience to His word, the paralyzed man got up, carried his small sleeping pad, and went home, glorifying God. The crowd was literally amazed, and they too glorified God, acknowledging that they had seen incredible things that day, namely the pronouncing of forgiveness and the miracle that proved it.

Jesus Calls Levi

**Luk 5:27-28** *After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.*

Levi was a Jewish tax collector for the Roman government. Such men were hated by their fellow-Jews, not only because of this collaboration with Rome, but because of their dishonest practices. One day while Levi was at work, Jesus passed by and invited him to become His follower. With amazing promptness, Levi left all, rose up, and followed Him. Think of the tremendous consequences that flowed from that simple decision. Levi, or Matthew, became the writer of the First Gospel. It pays to hear His call and follow Him.

**Luk 5:29-30** *Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"*

It has been suggested that Levi had three purposes in arranging this great feast. He wanted to honor the Lord, to witness publicly to his new allegiance, and he wanted to introduce his friends to Jesus. Most Jews would not have eaten with a group of tax collectors. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. He did not, of course, fraternize with them in their sins, or do anything that would compromise His testimony, but He used these occasions to teach, to rebuke, and to bless.

Their scribes and the Pharisees criticized Jesus for associating with these despised people, the dregs of society.

**Luk 5:31-32** *Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Jesus answered that His action was in perfect accord with His purpose in coming into the world. Healthy people do not need a doctor; only those who are sick do. The Pharisees considered themselves to be righteous. They had no deep sense of sin or of need. Therefore, they could not benefit from the ministry of the Great Physician. But these tax collectors and sinners realized that they were sinners and that they needed to be saved from their sins. It was for people like them that the Savior came. Actually, the Pharisees were not righteous. They needed to be saved as much as the tax collectors. But they were unwilling to confess their sins and acknowledge their guilt. And so they criticized the Doctor for going to people who were seriously ill.

A Question About Fasting

**Luk 5:33-35** *Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."*

5:33 The next tactic of the Pharisees was to interrogate Jesus on the custom of fasting. After all, the disciples of John the Baptist had followed the ascetic life of their master. And the followers of the Pharisees observed various ceremonial fasts. But Jesus' disciples did not. Why not?

5:34, 35 The Lord answered in effect that there was no reason for His disciples to fast while He was still with them. Here He associates fasting with sorrow and mourning. When He would be taken away from them, that is, violently, in death, they would fast as an expression of their grief.

***Luk 5:36-39 Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.' "***

The incongruities mentioned in Lu 5:36–38 were intended to illustrate the difference between the genius of the old and new economies, and the danger of mixing up the one with the other. As in the one case supposed, “the rent is made worse,” and in the other, “the new wine is spilled,” so by a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed. The additional parable in Lu 5:39, which is peculiar to Luke, has been variously interpreted. But the “new wine” seems plainly to be the evangelical freedom which Christ was introducing; and the old, the opposite spirit of Judaism: men long accustomed to the latter could not be expected “straightway”—all at once—to take a liking for the former; that is, “These inquiries about the difference between My disciples and the Pharisees,” and even John’s, are not surprising; they are the effect of a natural revulsion against sudden change, which time will cure; the new wine will itself in time become old, and so acquire all the added charms of antiquity. What lessons does this teach, on the one hand, to those who unreasonably cling to what is getting antiquated; and, on the other, to hasty reformers who have no patience with the timidity of their weaker brethren!

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 104.