



Jesus' Great Galilean Ministry Luke 5

Introduction

The first preaching tour of the cities near the Lake of Galilee, together with the reports of Jesus' activities in Jerusalem and Samaria, brought great excitement and attracted many followers. Jesus' Galilean ministry was gathering momentum, His popularity was growing, and the crowds thronged to hear Him. We meet some of His followers in Luke Chapter 5. The apostle Peter later summarized this early stage in Jesus' ministry in his message to Cornelius' household. *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him* (Acts 10:38).

Outline of Luke 5

- I. Catch of Fish - Luke 5:1-11
- II. Cleansing of the Leper - Luke 5:12-16
- III. Controversy over the Paralytic - Luke 5:17-26
- IV. Call of Levi (Matthew) - Luke 5:27-29
- V. Complaint and Three Parables - Luke 5:30-39

I. Catch of Fish - Luke 5:1-11

A. By the Galilean Sea - Luke 5:1-3

The early days of Jesus' ministry were exciting. He was always doing something different and fascinating. He loved life and spread joy. Consequently, people flocked to see Him and to hear the word of God. One day He was by Lake Gennesaret, better known as the Sea of Galilee. It is twelve miles long, six miles wide, seven hundred feet below sea level, and shaped like a harp.

On this particular day the crowds pressed in on Jesus. Two boats stood empty while their owners washed their nets. Jesus entered one of those boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked to be pushed out from land. Sitting in the boat, Jesus taught those who were on the shore (Matthew 13:1).

B. A Fish Story - Luke 5:4-7

When Jesus finished speaking, He said to Simon, "*Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.*" Simon explained that they had fished all night and caught nothing, but he agreed to let down his net. Very quickly it filled with fish and seemed ready to break. Simon and Andrew beckoned to their partners in the other boat, James and John, to help. They came and filled both boats until they began to sink.

C. Simon's Worship of Jesus - Luke 5:8-9

The event overwhelmed Simon. He fell at Jesus' feet in the boat, saying, "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,*" conceding the difference Christ had made in his life, both in fruitfulness and in awareness of his sin. What difference has Christ made in your life? How have you responded to what He has done for you?

D. Fishers of Men - Luke 5:10-11

Simon's partners, James and John, were likewise amazed. Jesus used the teachable moment to catch fish Himself. "*Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men,*" He promised. The fishermen landed their boats, left all behind and followed Jesus to become fishers of men. However, they never forgot the incident. It taught them what to expect. William Carey said, "Ask great things of God, expect great things from God." Jesus taught the lesson again after His resurrection (John 21:6).

II. Cleansing of the Leper - Luke 5:12-16

A. A Man Full of Leprosy - Luke 5:12-15

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this miracle. Somewhere in Galilee a man *full of leprosy* approached Jesus, bowed low before Him and said, "*Lord, if You are willing, you can make me clean.*"

1. A simple plea - 5:12

Somehow the man knew Jesus could cure him, if only He would. Perhaps he remembered the story of Miriam's cleansing from leprosy and believed it was possible for him too (Numbers 12:10-15). His request was basic and clear -- "*make me clean.*" Jesus responded immediately to the man's faith and desperation. What do you want the Lord to do for you today? From what sin do you need to be cleansed?

2. A gracious Savior 5:12

Jesus put out His hand and touched the leper. This was unheard of. No one touched a leper! Lepers were considered unclean and were forced to live alone, outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46). Anyone who touched a leper became ceremonially unclean and subject to infection. Jesus knew that this leper needed a touch. Perhaps no one had touched him in a long time. Jesus knows each one's need. Who needs your touch today?

As He touched the leper, Jesus spoke: "*I am willing, be cleansed.*" Immediately, the leprosy left the man and he was clean. Jesus did not become unclean by touching the leper. On the contrary, the leper became clean at His touch.

More than physical healing took place that day. The leprosy had marked the man, body and soul. He asked not only to be healed but to be cleansed. A leper had to cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" when he walked through the public streets. Leprosy was contagious and irreversible. Symbolically, it was a picture of sin that starts small but increases until it engulfs and controls the person destructively. With no cure there was no hope of a normal life. The leprosy spread until the leper was disfigured, disgraced, and detached. A leper died miserably. Herbert Lockyer calls it "a loathsome and pitiful disease" (All the Miracles of the Bible).

The definition of leprosy today is different from Biblical times. Nevertheless, the parallel to sin is unmistakable. Sin is not contained. Sin grows, expands, and invades healthy places. It is destructive, disgracing, and causes deterioration of abilities and relationships. It isolates. Yet we are all tainted with it. What can we do? We can do what the leprous man did. We can bring our case to Jesus and ask for His cleansing. *Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you are healed* (1 Peter 2:24).

3. Two simple commands - 5:14-15

After such a miraculous and life-changing encounter, Jesus gave the man only two simple instructions to follow: 1) "*Tell no one*" and 2) "*Go and show yourself to the priest.*" (It is possible this had never happened before.) The man obeyed the second order but not the first. Jesus tried to avoid notoriety that would disrupt God's timetable and deflect Him from His primary ministry of teaching. Do you do God's work in God's way or in your own way?

B. Frequent Prayer - Luke 5:16

He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Jesus' recourse, refreshment, and relationship with His Father was prayer. Is this true of you?

III. Controversy over the Paralytic - Luke 5:17-26

A. Pharisees in the Audience - Luke 5:17

Perhaps as a result of the broadcasting done by the man who had been a leper, the *Pharisees and teachers of the law* begin to keep an eye on Jesus. They came out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and other sects developed in the

time between the Old and New Testaments. These groups wielded power and influence over the people because of their moral and ethical stance and their knowledge of the Mosaic Law. They constituted the religious establishment of Israel, yet they, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were the ones who finally insisted on Jesus' arrest and crucifixion (Matthew 27: 1-2).

B. Friends on the Roof - Luke 5:18-19

Four men, who were trying to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus for healing, could find no way through the crowd. But they were not to be deterred. They seemed to know, "where there's a will there's a way". Having come this far, to turn back was unthinkable. Is more determination all you need to overcome some barrier? These men examined their options and creatively eyed the roof. In Jesus' day, roofs were typically made of timbers covered with a mixture of straw and mud, making them penetrable. Soon dried mud and dust must have been falling on those underneath, but it was the cot being lowered in front of Jesus that drew everyone's attention.

C. Forgiveness from Jesus - Luke 5:20

Jesus, seeing their faith, addressed the paralytic and said, "*Your sins are forgiven you.*" He went beyond healing the body to healing the man's soul. In this case, (but certainly not in all cases) the man's illness may have resulted from some sin. To heal his body but not confront the sin would not produce a lasting cure. The man's deep need was forgiveness.

D. Pharisaical Fuming - Luke 5:21

The Pharisees immediately saw the implications of Jesus' words. They considered them to be blasphemy because only God can forgive sins. In that they were quite right. Logically, if God alone is able to forgive sins, and Jesus truly forgave this man's sins, Jesus must be God.

E. Proof Positive - Luke 5:22-26

The purity of His own character and motives allowed Jesus to discern their thoughts and hearts. He asked if they thought it was easier to forgive sins or to heal paralysis. Of course they were unable to do either. To demonstrate His power and help their belief, by His mercy and grace He told the healed man to take up his bed and walk home. This he did, and the Pharisees were silenced for the moment. "We have then the double miracle, a miracle of grace, then a miracle of power. What is the use of all the physical healing in the world if there be no cure of the disease of sin" (All the Miracles of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer)? Are you seeking physical healing from God but not dealing

with your sin? Will you search your heart, examine your life, and confess all known sin? Will you forsake it and ask for healing?

IV. Call of Levi (Matthew) - Luke 5:27-29

Mark and Luke call him Levi, while he calls himself Matthew (Matthew 9:9). Levi was probably Matthew's name prior to his conversion.

A. Jesus' Call - Luke 5:27

Luke tells us that it was *after these things* that Jesus walked by the local tax collector's station, the place of toll (Mark 2:14). He noticed the publican, Levi, and said to him, "*Follow Me.*" Levi was a Jew working for the Romans collecting taxes from his own people. Such publicans were despised by their countrymen and sneered at by the Roman overlords. Publicans could collect as much as they were able from travelers and the helpless populace. Anything over and above the taxes required by Rome was theirs to keep. They lived luxuriously at the expense of their neighbors. Levi must have heard of Jesus and His miracles, and may have heard Him teach in Capernaum. His heart may have longed for fulfillment and meaning to life which his riches had not given him.

B. Matthew's Response - Luke 5:28

Matthew did not have to be invited twice. He got up from his table, forsook all, and walked onto the pages of history as a disciple, apostle, and evangelist of Jesus Christ. Have you answered Jesus' call to leave all and follow Him?

C. Matthew's Feast - Luke 5:29

Overjoyed with his decision and new life, Matthew held a feast and invited his tax collector friends and others, presumably so that they could meet Jesus. In what ways do you seek to introduce your friends to Jesus?

V. Complaint and Three Parables - Luke 5:30-39

A. Pharisees' Complaint - Luke 5:30

Matthew's party stirred up more criticism from the Pharisees who asked Jesus' disciples, "*Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?*" Today the question could be turned around to ask why we Christians do not eat with the shunned and despised in order to tell them about Jesus.

B. Jesus' Answer - Luke 5:31-32

"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." Did Jesus mean that there are some who do not need repentance, or did He mean the need must be acknowledged? The Psalmist stated, *In Your sight no one living is righteous* (Psalm 143:2). Later the apostle Paul wrote, *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23).

C. A Question Concerning Fasting and Prayer - Luke 5:33

Without responding to His discomfiting answer, the Pharisees had another issue to raise. They wanted to know why Jesus' disciples did not fast often and pray as did their disciples and those of John the Baptist? Jesus' disciples seemed to have a good time eating and drinking!

D. An Answer in Three Parables - Luke 5:34-39

1. Feasting friends of the Bridegroom - 5:34-35

Jesus compared Himself to a bridegroom and His disciples to a wedding party who would certainly not fast when the bridegroom was with them. Then, as recorded in Luke, He mentioned His impending death for the first time. "*But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast in those days.*" The comparison of Jesus to a bridegroom occurs several times in Scripture, echoing the Song of Solomon where the bridegroom woos the bride with feasting and love words (Song of Solomon 2:4).

2. Old garments with new patches - 5:36

Putting new patches on worn material does not work. It would be useless to try. When washed, the new patch shrinks and pulls away from the old. The old disintegrates faster and the whole garment is ruined.

3. New wine in old wineskins - 5:37-39

Likewise, new wine in stretched wineskins (animal skins used as wine containers) would continue fermenting and burst the over-stretched skins. It is interesting that He went on to say, "*New wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.*"

The old cloth and the old wineskins, which could not hold the new, symbolizes Judaism under the Mosaic covenant. Though originally God-given, the Law of Moses had lost its authenticity, being hardened by burdensome man-made traditions. The new wine brought by Jesus was vibrant and joyous. It could not be contained in any existing system, even though practiced by Jesus Himself. John the Baptist had said, "*Now the ax is laid to the root of the trees*" (Matthew 3:10). From henceforth the test would be fruitfulness rather than adherence to

the law (John 15:1-8, 16; Romans 7:4; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 1:10; James 3:17-18).

Throughout Church history, God has applied this principle when the Church becomes hardened, inflexible, and unwilling to open the door to truth. This happened at the Council of Nicaea, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and other times as well. Denominations rise and fade, theological trends wax and wane, serving a purpose for one age but failing to adapt to the next. This is not to say that the Bible changes, for *forever*, *O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven* (Psalm 119:89), nor that God changes. He does not (Hebrews 13:8). But systems grow obsolete long before anyone is aware that they have become barren, rigid, and unfruitful.

Applications

1. Are you a fisher of men, like Jesus' apostles? Are you letting down your nets where Jesus directs or are you toiling fruitlessly? Will you ask Him to show you where to fish so that lives will be changed?
2. What sin in your life is making you "unclean"? Will you, like the leper, go to Jesus and ask for cleansing? Will you then obey Him rather than giving in to your own selfish desires? When you are free to follow Him, whom will you tell about it?
3. What changes is God working in your life through the study of this lesson? Have you become a new wineskin filled with new wine? If so, in what way(s)?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. Which section(s) of the notes, were most meaningful to you? Explain why.
2. Do you think the Pharisees were sincere in their objections? Why or why not?
3. Share one thing that you want to remember from studying Luke Chapter 5?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 6:1-5.

4. a. Why did the Pharisees question the actions of Jesus' disciples?

b. In Deuteronomy 23:25, what did the law allow and prevent?

c. Did it prevent Jesus' disciples from doing what they did?
5. a. How did Jesus defend his disciples' actions?

b. Where is the story of David found in the Old Testament? See references in the margin of your Bible.

c. What is the background in Leviticus 24:5-9?
6. a. What conclusion did Jesus give to the Pharisees?

b. ? (Thought Question) Do you think Jesus broke the Sabbath? Explain your answer.

DAY THREE: Read Luke 6:6-11.

7. a. What did Jesus do on another Sabbath?

b. What were the Pharisees doing?
8. a. How did Jesus explain His action to them?

b. What additional information is given in Mark 3:5?

9. a. How did the Pharisees react to the healing of the man?

b. Do you think they wanted to help the man, uphold the law, or discredit Jesus? Give a reason for your answer.

10. a. In John 5:1-13 what did Jesus do? When did He do it?

b. What was the reaction of the Pharisees?

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 6:12-16.

11. a. How long did Jesus pray at that time?

b. What situations would require that kind of prayer today?

12. a. From Luke 6:14-16; Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; and Acts 1:13, list the twelve apostles.

b. Who is always first?

c. Who is last in Matthew, Mark, and Luke?

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 6:17-26 and Matthew 5:1-12.

13. According to Luke 6:17-19 and Matthew 5:1-2, who gathered to hear Jesus teach?

14. a. Who are the four blessed groups in Luke 6:20-22?

b. Who receive the four woes in Luke 6:24-26?

c. Who are called blessed in Psalm 1:1; Psalm 32:1-2; and Psalm 34:8?

d. In which of these ways are you blessed?

DAY SIX: Read Luke 6:27-49.

15. From Luke 6:27-31, list seven points of unconditional love.

16. a. In Luke 6:32-34 what actions receive no credit? Why?

b. In Luke 6:35 what actions will receive great reward?

c. In what way are we told to be like God?

d. ♥(Heart Question) In what way are you like this?

17. In Luke 6:37-38 what actions are promised to receive the same in return?

18. What must happen before we correct or find fault with anyone? Give verse.

19. Where do our words, remarks, and comments come from? Give verse.

20. a. What is the person like who builds his or her life on Jesus' words?

b. What is the person like who does not build his or her life on Jesus' words?

c. Which person do you choose to be? How will you accomplish this?