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LUKE

Luke 5:12-26

How can we become the Christ-centered church our world so desperately needs? Join us in Luke's Gospel, the most expansive biography of Jesus in the Bible. With the beloved physician as our guide, we hope to experience Jesus so we can participate with the new reality God is bringing into our world.

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The Big Idea

Jesus brings a new authority; It's not an authority that seeks to control or manipulate, but one that heals, restores and redeems.

Good to Know

There's a new sheriff in town!

- This passage beautifully demonstrates the kind of authority Jesus embodies through His healing, cleansing and forgiveness toward those who come needy, as well as His uncanny ability to challenge the "sacred cows" people create in order to elevate themselves above others.
- **"Covered with leprosy" (vs. 12)** does not necessarily equate to modern "leprosy" (i.e., Hansen's disease). In biblical times, "leprosy" was a catch-all term for various skin ailments listed in Leviticus 13-14. These conditions ranged from relatively harmless to deadly.
- Since this man was "covered in leprosy," we should imagine that his case was severe. He was not only suffering from the disease itself, but also facing the social stigma of being forced to live apart from his community. It is very likely that he had not been physically touched in many years. Imagine that!
- **"Be clean" (vs. 13)** - Normally, anyone who touched a leper became "unclean," but instead of Jesus being infected by leprosy, He "reverse-infected" the leprous man with healing and holiness!
- **"Show yourself to the priest" (vs. 14)** - Leviticus 14 outlines the necessary steps to confirm that someone with a contagious skin disease was truly ready to be reintegrated into society without endangering others. Jesus wanted to follow the proper process.
- This is the first time Luke mentions the Pharisees (vs. 17). While it's tempting to picture them as a monolithic group of power-hungry villains in beards and long robes, try to resist that urge.
- The term "Pharisee" likely comes from a Hebrew word meaning "separatists." They were not an official denomination or political party, but rather a movement of ordinary people trying to restore Israel to "real" Jewish faith by doubling down on the teachings of Moses (Torah). Over time, they compiled a massive collection of sermons and study guides on how to apply the Torah, which was eventually written down as the Talmud, a text still studied by Jewish people today.

- Many Pharisees rejected Jesus because He called them out for elevating their traditions—especially regarding the Sabbath and ritual washing—above Scripture. However, some were sincere in their love for God and eventually accepted Jesus as the Messiah.
- The reason so many Pharisees were present was that Jesus was becoming extremely popular, and they wanted to ensure He wasn't leading the masses away from Moses' teaching.
- **"The power of the Lord was with him to heal" (vs. 17)** does not mean that Jesus sometimes had access to healing power and sometimes did not. Rather, it emphasizes that His power to heal was clearly evident in that moment.
- **"Through the tiles" (vs. 19)** – Ancient Palestinian roofs were constructed with a layer of clay tiles placed over insulating grass reeds, which rested on large wooden beams.
- **"Your sins are forgiven" (vs. 20)** – Psalm 103:3 tells us that the Lord not only forgives sins but also heals diseases. Many Jews believed that all disease was a consequence of sin, a perspective Jesus refutes in John 9:2-3.
- **"Who is this who speaks blasphemies?" (vs. 21)** – There was already an established process for receiving God's forgiveness, and it involved the temple and a trained, licensed priest. Yet here was Jesus, acting as if God had personally authorized Him to forgive sins. It would be like someone with no medical training suddenly performing open-heart surgery in his living room. How would you react?
- **"Son of Man" (vs. 24)** – This was Jesus' favorite way of referring to Himself. The phrase literally means "Son of Adam," but it was also used by the prophet Daniel to describe a Messianic figure who would receive great glory and power (Daniel 7:13-14). For Jewish people, this title was packed with meaning—much like how terms like "Man of Steel" or "The Dark Knight" immediately evoke specific images and stories in our modern culture.
- **"Extraordinary things" (vs. 26)** is the word *paradoxa* in Greek, (paradoxes). The combination of healings and the astounding authority claims of Jesus were not things people had ever seen before or expected.

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. Think about a time when you felt desperate for healing, restoration or forgiveness. What did you do with that need? Who or what did you turn to?
2. The leprous man comes to Jesus and says, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." What does this reveal about his understanding of Jesus' authority?
3. Jesus does something radical—He touches the man before healing him. Why is this significant in a society that viewed lepers as untouchable? What does this tell us about Jesus' heart for the outcast?
4. How do you see Jesus' healing power at work in your own life (physically, emotionally, spiritually)? Are there areas where you struggle to believe that He is both willing and able?

5. Jesus welcomed the desperate but challenged the self-righteous. Where do you see yourself in this passage? Are you coming to Jesus with humble dependence, or are there areas of self-righteousness that you need to surrender?
6. Both the leprous man and the paralyzed man experienced Jesus' healing power in different ways. How do these two stories together paint a picture of the kind of authority Jesus has?
7. If Jesus truly is the King of a new kingdom, what is one practical way you can live under His reign more fully this week?

Prayer

Jesus, you are a king who is willing and able to heal, restore and forgive. You are a king who restores the broken and challenges the self-righteous. Help us joyfully participate in your kingdom! Amen.

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