

Luke's Gospel: Chapter 5

Disciples are Called...

Jesus calls the first disciples (Luke 5 v 1 to 11)

Some Bible commentators have said that Matthew's gospel tells us what Jesus *said*; Mark's gospel shows us what he *did*; Luke's gospel how he *felt*; and John's gospel tells us who he *is*. As we read through the stories of this chapter, notice the range of emotions shown by Jesus, and the other people with whom he interacts...

- In these verses, how did Simon show obedience and humility?
- What special commission did Jesus give Simon (v 10)?
- What did Jesus demand of the first disciples and why?

"But at your word I will let down the nets" (v 5) – Simon Peter could have come up with many excuses: 'we worked all night and I'm tired', 'the best fishing is at night, not in the day time', 'all these crowds have scared the fish away'. But Simon did what Jesus asked because he believed in Jesus. When Jesus directs our work, we see results...

Jesus cleanses a leper (Luke 5 v 12 to 16)

The condition of leprosy is a model of sin and its effects. Like sin it is a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts a person and makes him essentially 'dead'. Lepers were universally scorned by society and religion: they were especially despised by the Rabbis, who saw their state as a special judgment of God...

- How would you describe the leper's attitude to Jesus?
- What did he want in addition to healing?
- What risks did the leper take?
- What risks did Jesus take?
- Why do you think Jesus commanded the leper to be somewhat secretive about his healing?
- Why was he to show himself to the priests?
- "But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (v 16) – what does this short verse tell us about Jesus' prayer life? What is the value of private, personal prayer?

Jesus heals a man who was paralysed (Luke 5 v 17 to 26)

- How did the paralytic's four ingenious friends provide a model of caring?
- When Jesus said 'Man, your sins are forgiven you', how do you think the paralytic felt?
- How did he feel when he had been healed?
- There was a large crowd present, yet no one disputed the fact that a miracle had taken place. Instead, how did the onlookers react?
- How did this miracle answer the questions of the 'teachers of the law'?

With man, both forgiveness and miraculous healing are impossible: but Jesus demonstrates that he has the 'authority' to do the invisible (forgive a man's sins) by doing something miraculous that they could see (healing his paralysis).

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Jesus calls Levi (Luke 5 v 27 to 32)

- Tax collectors were despised as traitors: they were excommunicated from the Jewish faith. In verses 28 and 29 what did Levi (Matthew) do and why? What can we learn from his example?
- What was Jesus' attitude towards the 'tax collectors and sinners'? Why did he adopt this attitude?

A question about fasting (Luke 5 v 33 to 39)

- What do these parables (word pictures) mean?
- Who is the bridegroom?
- Who is the bride?
- What is meant by the old garment and the old wineskins – and the new cloth, new wine and new wineskins?

Jesus' point is clear. You cannot fit his new life into the old forms. This explains why Jesus did not begin a reform movement within Judaism: he came to bring us new life! As Paul would write later, in 2 Corinthians 5 v 17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."