

Calling the Outsiders Luke 5v1-32

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 October 2017

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] So Luke chapter 5, which is on page 1032, Luke chapter 5, starting at verse 1.

One day, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, which was also known as the lake of Galilee, with the people crowding round him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch.

Simon answered, Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

[1 : 36] When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man. For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken.

And so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, Don't be afraid. From now on you will fish for men.

So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy.

When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

I am willing, he said, be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, Don't tell anyone, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them.

[2 : 50] Yet the news spread about him, spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village in Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up onto the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, Friend, your sins are forgiven. The Pharisees and teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?

[4 : 05] Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven? Or to say, Get up and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralysed man, I tell you, Get up, take your mat and go home.

Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on, and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, We have seen remarkable things today.

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. Follow me, Jesus said to him. And Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus answered them, It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

[5 : 25] Well, let's keep that open before us. Amazing, incredible encounters with Jesus Christ.

Let's pray before we look at it together. Our Father God, we marvel and wonder at these people who met Jesus.

And it is our prayer that we would meet and encounter Jesus afresh today through your word. That the pictures and the understandings that we might have, we would surrender them to you afresh. And that you would paint before us a portrait of Jesus. That we would see him as he really is. And we would understand his work and his calling. And that we too would leave everything and follow him.

[6 : 50] Help us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. The Apprentice, that TV show, is best known for the catchphrase you're fired.

You're fired. The host, Lord Shaker, looks to select various business partners from about 20 candidates and only the best person is chosen.

The people that are there, well, they're all very successful, very talented, confident, popular, and they all appear very good looking. And out of this group, Lord Shaker, must select one person to be his partner.

And if you show any sign of weakness, failure, or incompetence, you're fired. You're out of the game. Well, that's how life works, doesn't it?

If you're clever and talented and popular, well, you get to go places. But if you live with some kind of impediment or you can't quite hold things together and you struggle to fit in and you've got this label, outsider, well, then you get ignored and overlooked.

[8 : 17] You're fired. Only the best are chosen. Well, it seems that in the kingdom of God, it's only those who know they are weak and only those who know they fail who do get hired.

Look what Jesus says in verse 31. It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

I have not come to call the righteous, those who think they are good, but sinners to repentance, those who know they fail and mess up.

Chapter 4, Jesus had just identified himself to be God's chosen king. Remember, as he read from the prophet Isaiah, the spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, to bring grace to the world.

And Jesus stood up and he said, I am the Messiah. I am the one who has come to bring favour to people. And as he begins his public ministry, as he goes out meeting people, Jesus is seeking mission partners.

[9 : 39] calling people to be with him. First, the outsider sinner. So as we march into chapter 5, we are introduced to a number of different kinds of people, all who encounter Jesus.

And they all have something in common. I wondered if you noticed it as we read through. They are all outsiders. First, we are introduced to the leper.

If you look in verse 12, while Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. Now, it could be any kind of skin disease.

It could be leprosy or it could be something even as basic as ringworm. And people who had the skin disease like leprosy were considered a danger to society.

If you had a skin disease, well, you were contagious and you were considered ritually or ceremonially unclean. That meant you couldn't go to the temple to worship God.

[10 : 50] You were barred. You weren't allowed in there. You weren't even allowed into the local synagogue. You weren't even allowed in the marketplace where everybody gathered. So long as you had a skin disease, you were on the outside.

God was off limits. You were an outsider. And then we meet the paralytic.

Verse 17. One day, as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village, so obviously news about Jesus was spreading and they were coming from Judea and Jerusalem and were sitting there and the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

Some men came carrying a paralytic, a man who couldn't walk, and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.

Now, literally, this guy, we don't even know his name. He's on the outside. He can't get near to Jesus. He can't walk.

[12:00] The crowd is too big and no one is making room for him to get in. In fact, the religious leaders who are in the inside, who are all able-bodied, have taken up the best of seats.

And he and his friends are left on the outside. And then we meet Levi, don't we, in verse 27.

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi, sitting at his tax booth. Levi, of course, is also known as Matthew, who would later write Matthew's gospel.

But for now, we see him here as Levi, and he's a tax collector. And they were the worst of the worst. They were scum. As a tax collector, Levi worked for the enemy, the occupying Roman authorities. They acted as informants, traitors of their very own people. And to make matters worse, not only would they charge a certain amount of tax, but they would always add on a little bit extra and keep it for themselves.

[13:18] Levi was not just on the outside. Outsiders considered tax collectors on the outside of them. So here we're introduced to all these outsiders, but there's one more.

We met him at the very beginning in verse four. When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Simon of course would become Peter.

He says, put out into deep and let down the nets for a catch. Simon answered, Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything, but because you say so, I will let down the nets. Fishing was always done in the evening time when the sun was down. That was the best time to go fishing. Here they are having fished all night. And then Jesus, a carpenter, I mean, what does he know about fishing?

Let down your nets. When they had done so, verse six, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled to the partners in the other boat to come and help.

[14:34] And they filled the boat so full that they began to sink. Now you picture yourself as Simon the fisherman, a tough job. you've worked hard all night.

You're not going to get any pay because you've got no fish. In fact, it would be quite common to go for days, even weeks, with no money at all because you catch no fish.

And then all of a sudden, your boat, and not just your boat, but your mate's boat, is full with the weight of fish. They're falling out over the sides. Ching, ching.

You can see the dollar signs flash or whatever currency they used, I don't know, in Simon's eyes. I'm rich. Look at all this money. Look at what we're going to make when we go down to the market today.

But that's not how he responds, is it? Look at verse 8. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, go away from me, Lord.

[15:41] I am a sinful man. You see, encounters with Jesus is an encounter with the living God.

Because only God could make fish swim into your net at a time of the day when you don't catch fish.

fish. For Simon, as he was just about his business washing his nets, he is confronted with the power and the purity of the Creator Almighty God.

And knowing what God is like, that God is perfect and pure, and that you cannot even look upon God without being struck down. And knowing what Peter is like, what Simon is like, that he's weak and failing, that he has been confronted with the living God, he falls down on his knees.

He can't even bear to look. Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man. I can't be with you, Jesus.

[16:57] I am not worthy. I am a broken, sinful mess. I can't come near. I am an outsider.

You see, when we truly grasp and understand who Jesus is, and as Luke orders his material in such a way that we begin to meet him and hear his words and see what he does, we realise that when confronted with Jesus, us, we are all outsiders.

To other people we might appear to be successful and popular and confident and live in a certain place and have a great job and we might appear to have it all together and that we're morally good and religious and life goes well but an encounter with the God-man Jesus Christ.

Hearing his words, seeing what he does, we see that we are not like him at all, but that he is powerful and he is pure and we are not good enough for him.

We are all on the outside. We are all sinners just like Simon, just like Levi, just like the man who is lame and just like the leper.

[18 : 38] How would Jesus respond? Get away from me Simon, you dirty rotten sinner. Stay away from me.

I don't want to have anything to do with you. Amazing grace. Look at verse 10, the second part of verse 10. Then Jesus said to Simon, don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid. Peter knew his old testament that when people met God, they fell down dead. Don't be afraid. From now on, you will catch men or literally you will fish for people.

So they pulled up their boats and shore left everything and followed. Simon is a sinner. And Jesus knows what Simon is like.

And Jesus knows what I am like and what you are like. And we can come here and we can have masks on and we can hide the things that are deep down in our hearts. But Jesus knows exactly what we are like.

[19 : 53] But when he sees Simon, he sees not just confession, I am a sinner. He sees one who is humble and completely dependent on God.

Look again at what he says in verse 8. He fell at Jesus' knees and says, go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man.

Simon is dependent. As he falls on his knees, he is looking for mercy and grace. And grace and mercy he receives from an outsider to an insider, from catching fish to now fishing for people.

His whole life in an instance has been changed and transformed. He's not fired. He's hired. Jesus is saying to Simon, I want you now to tell people about me.

Tell them about the grace and the mercy that you have received. Treat people as I have just treated you. You see, Jesus calls outsiders to follow him and to join him in his great mission of welcoming outsiders so that they too can go and welcome others.

[21 : 19] Well, how is Jesus going to do that? How does he just suddenly see Simon in one way and then say, listen Simon, it's okay, you can come and catch people now?

Well, I think the following stories illustrate what actually is going on in Simon's life. First, cleaned. if we look at the story in verse 12 of the leper, we saw that he is an outsider. He is unclean. Now, if you were to touch someone or to come into contact with someone with a skin disease, well, then you became contaminated.

So, just even sitting within their vicinity, the law said, well, you've now become unclean. In other words, you are now an outsider as well. The law was very, very clear to those who had a skin disease.

This comes from Leviticus 13. The law said, anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkept, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, unclean, unclean.

[22 : 36] As long as they have the disease, they remain unclean. they must live alone. They must live outside the camp.

So, you see, you had to be very, very careful about coming into contact with a leper. If you saw one, you ran the other way. You avoided them at all costs.

Well, look at the middle of verse 12. When this leper saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Well, what would Jesus do? To be near a leper runs the risk of being contaminated, becoming unclean. To engage with this leper means, well, other people would see you and you could become ostracised and pushed to the outside and you would be treated like him.

Jesus, amidst the crowds, reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said.

[23 : 49] Be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him. I mean, the miracle is incredible. Something extraordinary has just happened.

Instead of Jesus being the one who becomes unclean, it goes into reverse. The leper becomes clean. Everybody else the leper had touched, they became unclean.

But now as Jesus reaches out and touches him, Jesus doesn't become unclean, but the leper does become clean. Instead of his uncleanness being passed on to Jesus, Jesus' cleanliness is passed on to him.

And by a simple word of command, be clean, the leper has his life restored. He's no longer an outsider.

He now can walk into the marketplace, he can now go to the temple, that's why Jesus said to him in verse 14, go show yourself to the priest, go show them that you're clean and that you can go and worship God.

[24 : 57] It's just a brilliant picture. of the compassion and love of God towards people like you and me, of God reaching down and touching unclean people like us.

And through Jesus, our uncleanness, all our impurity, all our sin is removed, and we instead are covered with his purity.

So that people like you and I can come and stand in the presence of God. Jesus has come to clean us so that we can be welcomed into his mission.

But not just cleaned, forgiven. Remember the lame man? we left him in verse 18 on the outside.

Verse 19, when they could not find a way to do this, that was to get to Jesus because of the crowd. Well, they went up onto the roof, which would have been flat roofs, and they lowered him on his mat through the tiles, easy to take apart and drop somebody down, into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

[26 : 22] Now he's on the inside, right in front of Jesus. Now Jesus can heal him and make him walk. walk. But what does Jesus say, verse 20, when Jesus saw their faith, their dependence, their humility, he said, friend, your sins are forgiven.

Well, this guy, he can't walk and he wants Jesus to make him walk again. That's why he's there. But Jesus sees past the physical and he sees the heart and he sees the life and he sees a greater need for this man.

The need to be forgiven, yes, physically he's on the inside, he's right in front of Jesus, but he needs to be brought to the inside.

He needs to be made clean. He needs to be forgiven. You see, unless we experience forgiveness, we remain on the outside.

Without being made clean, we cannot be part of his mission. Verse 21, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?

[27 : 38] Who does he think he is? Who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus' claim to forgive sins is sending out another clear message.

I am God. I have the authority to forgive to forgive your sins. Yes, only God can forgive sins, but don't you realise who I am?

I can forgive your sins and I can wipe the slate clean and give you a fresh start so that your sins, past, present and future, are remembered no more, no longer held against you.

And to prove it, look at verse 23, Jesus says to them, which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or to say, get up and walk?

Well, it's easy to say, your sins are forgiven. I mean, I could say that to any one of you. I could say, your sins are forgiven, your sins are forgiven. How do you know if your sins are forgiven?

[28 : 50] How do you prove it or disprove it? Anybody can say, your sins are forgiven. It's much harder to say, get up and walk because it must be proven by that person getting up and walking.

Verse 24, but so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralyzed man, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.

Jesus heals the man physically to prove he can forgive sins spiritually. He does a greater work, more than this guy ever thought or imagined.

he takes him from the outside and brings him into the inside. And unless we have come to experience this forgiveness from God, we remain on the outside.

And the point is clear, it's only when we're forgiven and cleaned that we can be part of his mission. because his purpose is to call us to his mission.

[30 : 22] Look at the story of Levi. The encounter with Jesus is just stunning. It's a brilliant little story. Verse 27, after this Jesus went out and he saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth.

Follow me, Jesus said to him. And Levi got up, left everything and followed him. It's astounding. Tax collectors are outsiders and they should stay outsiders.

They're meant to be condemned, not welcomed. But these are the people that Jesus calls. He cleans them, he forgives them, and he says, follow me.

Verse 28, and Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Well, Simon's response was pretty much the same, wasn't it?

Verse 11, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything, and followed him. Now, we know that Simon, as we read through the Gospels, that he did continue to fish.

[31 : 37] and it's very possible that Levi continued to be a tax collector, although an honest one. So, what does it mean that they left everything and followed him?

Well, in following Jesus and leaving everything, it's the same call that goes out to us. Jesus is saying, look, your priorities in life have now changed.

I am your priority. Their whole life was now reorientated around the mission and the plan of Jesus, who was to call people into his mission.

Jesus has become central. Their life was all about now serving his purpose, whether they were fishing or tax collecting or whatever they did, their mission was about serving his purpose.

Jesus was now their Lord. God that is what and how Jesus was referred to, a title that was reserved for God alone.

[32 : 46] In other words, there is no longer any I or me. It's no longer what I want or what I want to do. But what does God say in his word and what should I obey?

He is my master. I must follow him. And that's the call of Jesus when he cleans us and forgives us. He is calling outsiders like you and me to follow him and to join him in his mission of welcoming outsiders. So third, outsider sinners welcome others.

Levi immediately understands that because he has been welcomed, brought from the outside to the inside by Jesus, he now welcomes other people.

Look at his response, verse 29. Then Levi held a great banquet, this massive party in his house, for Jesus and a large crowd of the tax collectors and others were eating them.

[33 : 58] Levi sends out an invite to all his other tax collector friends. all the other outsiders. He says, come to my house, come and have a party.

Because he wants them to meet Jesus. He wants them to experience what it is to be cleaned and forgiven and called. And here we see mission at its simplest but at its best.

Sitting down with his friends, eating and drinking and talking about what Jesus has done in your life. But not everyone is happy. Verse 30. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belong to their sect, remember they've come from all over the places.

We read that in verse 17, wanting to know who this Jesus is. faith. And they complained to the disciples, why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

[35 : 08] Remember tax collectors were like traitors. They were working for the occupying Romans. For the Pharisees, God's Messiah was meant to come in in a blaze of glory and get rid of the Romans and overthrow the enemy and set up and establish God's kingdom and restore everything and everybody to their rightful place.

But here's the Messiah, sitting down in the middle of these outsiders, sitting amongst these traitors, sitting amongst the outsiders, eating and drinking.

And in case we're missing the point, that's precisely the mission of Jesus. He says, verse 31, it is not the healthy who need the doctor, but it's the sick.

I haven't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. As we finish, I want to ask ourselves some questions.

How are we doing at welcoming others? sinners? Do you sit down and eat with tax collectors and sinners?

[36 : 36] Let me ask a couple of questions. Who are the people that you intentionally socialise with and chat to? I don't mean the people who you kind of bump into at work or in college and kind of they're there, but who do you intentionally take time out with and socialise with?

Or do you just like to keep it safe and hang out with the good Christians? After all, we don't want to become contaminated by those who live in moral lives, do we?

Who do you invite into your homes? Or who do you invite out if you go out for dinner or a drink? The nice people? The ones that believe the same kinds of things that you believe?

After all, we don't want to become unclean by those who hold different views about abortion or gender identity. We don't want to touch them.

Or perhaps the sad reality is you actually don't know anyone you could welcome. There's no one you can invite. Maybe you've lost the reason that Jesus called you in the first place.

[37 : 58] Maybe we've become like a Pharisee gossiping about those who eat and drink with sinners. I'm not going to be like them.

Well, let me remind us all. Jesus has not cleaned us and forgiven us so that we can stay in our nice cozy Christian bubble with our nice Christian friends, sending nice little Christian text messages on

our Facebook page.

church. Jesus welcomes outsiders like you and me so that we can go and welcome outsiders in.

Three things to consider.

Very simply, how do we go about welcoming others? Three things. Intentional. Be intentional. Take the time to think through, right?

Okay, at the weekend, I'm going to go and meet people. I'm going to go and invite them and they're going to come over to the house or I'm going to go out and see them. Be intentional. Plan it.

[39 : 08] Yes, it's going to be sacrificial and you won't get to do the things you want to do, but be intentional about where you go and the people you hang out with. Second one, communal.

That is, don't do it alone. Invite other believers along with you to meet other people. If you're having friends over, invite all kinds of friends over.

Be intentional. Be communal. And the last one, be real. And I simply mean by that, look, Jesus sees right into our hearts.

we don't need to put on a mask or a pretense to pretend that we're better or superior, that we don't mess up or we don't fail. Be real about your life.

Admit your weakness. Admit where you need help. Show that you are dependent on an amazing God and an amazing Savior who comes to clean us, who comes to forgive, and who comes to call us to be part of his mission.

[40 : 27] Let's just pray a minute. Let's pray a minute. Let's pray a minute.

Let's pray a minute. Let's pray a minute.