

AM Luke 5:1-16 Master at Work

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[0 : 00] Luke's Gospel in chapter 5, we're going to read the first 16 verses this morning. Luke chapter 5 and verses 1 through 16.

Luke chapter 5, we're getting to read in verse 1, this is the word of God. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked them to put out a little from the land.

And he sat down and talked to people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing.

But at your word, I will let down the nets. And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.

[1 : 14] And they came and filled both the boats so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid.

From now on you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him saying, I will be clean.

And 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 Moses commanded, for a proof to them.

[2 : 17] But now, even more, the report about him went abroad. And great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

Amen. This is the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Old Testament to the prophecy of Isaiah. And Isaiah chapter 6.

Isaiah chapter 6. I think we see illusions in Isaiah's reaction to seeing the Lord. To what we see in Simon Peter's reaction to seeing Jesus once they take in this miraculous haul of fish.

Simon's response is, of course, to say, depart from me all the while, clinging on to the Savior. Isaiah chapter 6. I'm going to read the whole chapter.

It's not a long chapter. Isaiah chapter 6. I'm beginning to read at verse 1. This is the word of God. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.

[3 : 26] And the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings. With two he covered his face. And with two he covered his feet. And with two he flew.

And one called to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called.

And the house was filled with smoke. And I said, woe is me for I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King. The Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me. Having in his hand a burning coal. That he had taken with tongs from the altar.

And he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away. And your sin atoned for. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?

[4 : 28] And who will go for us? Then I said, here I am. Send me. And he said, go. And say to this people, keep on hearing. But do not understand.

Keep on seeing. But do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull. And their ears heavy. And blind their eyes. Lest they see with their eyes.

And hear with their ears. And understand with their hearts. And turn and be healed. Then I said, how long, O Lord? And he said, until cities lie waste without inhabitants.

And houses without people. And the land is a desolate waste. And the Lord removes people far away. And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. And though a tenth remain in it. It will be burned again like a terebinth. Or an oak whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump. Amen.

[5 : 26] This is a reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Let us turn. Let's turn in our Bibles then please to Luke chapter 5. Luke chapter 5.

And we're going to consider these first 16 verses together. Luke chapter 5. And verses 1 through 16. I wonder if you've ever watched a craftsman at work.

Now I mean a proper, real, genuine craftsman. It's quite something to behold. To watch someone perhaps take a piece of wood. And turn it into something.

Carve it into something beautiful. Every year during the school holidays. The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Northern Ireland. We'll have craftsmen at work that you can sit and watch. Craftsmen at work that you can sit and observe. How they work. You know you'll go into one of the houses. And there'll be a lady there who's baking bread on an open fire. And somehow every time it just turns out right.

[6 : 26] Or you'll go into another house. And there'll be a man there. Weaving wicker baskets and wicker shapes. The thing with a craftsman is though. That what they do always seems so easy.

Because they're so good at it. But then the dreaded question comes. Well do you want to have a go? And suddenly then you realise. That it's not quite so easy.

Now how does that relate to what we read here in Luke chapter 5. Well here's Peter. The master fisherman. Here's Peter. Who's made his living off the sea.

Here's Peter who's built up his business with his partners. And he's being told how to fish by Jesus. By this carpenter. Here comes this itinerant preacher telling him how it's done.

Here is the craftsman being told by the amateur how it's done. And yet of course Jesus is the God of the universe. Jesus is of course the one who set each star in place.

[7 : 28] Jesus is of course the one who made the sea. And all that is in them. We want to think about three things this morning. We want to see three things from these first 16 verses of Luke chapter 5.

Firstly we want to see how Peter set a test. Will he listen to Jesus? Will he obey what Jesus tells him to do? Secondly then we want to see how Peter's set apart.

That as he passes this test that Jesus gives him. Jesus sets him apart to go and catch men. And then thirdly we want to see how things are set right.

That as this leper comes to Jesus. He sets him right not only physically but spiritually. He sets him right not only in his body. But tells him to go and offer the offering that the law of Moses commands him.

To do he sets him right physically. But also sets him right spiritually. So those three things. Set a test. Set apart. And set right. So firstly then we want to think about how Peter is set a test.

[8 : 34] And we see that in the first seven verses. Verses one to seven. We see Peter being set a test. So remember where we left Jesus. It's been a few weeks since we've been in Luke's gospel.

Two weeks certainly at least. We see what happens. He heals many in Capernaum. He'd fulfilled. Remember we thought about how Jesus had fulfilled. All of those manifesto promises.

All of the pledges that he'd made. The people crowded around him. They wanted to stop him from leaving their town. They wanted to keep him where he was. And yet Jesus himself as he tells us in Luke chapter 4.

Came not to be a miracle worker. Came not to be a healer. Well we see Luke 4 verse 43. He said to them. I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns as well.

For I was sent for this purpose. And as we come to Luke chapter 5 then. What do we find Jesus doing? As we come to Luke chapter 5.

[9 : 33] Bearing in mind what we read in Luke chapter 4. Well we find him teaching the word of God. On one occasion. Verse 1. While the crowd was pressing in on him.

To hear the word of God. Notice that. That the crowd was pressing in on him. Not to see the miracles. The crowd was pressing in on him. Not to be healed. The crowd was pressing in on him. Not to have their infirmities dealt with. But the crowd was pressing in on him. To hear the word of God. That was why he was sent. To teach people about the kingdom of God.

Jesus standing by the lake sees two boats. But the fishermen were told. Had gone out of them. Verse 2. And they were washing their nets. Their night's fishing was done.

Their work was done. And now they were making preparations for the next day. Now they were getting their nets ready. They were washing their nets. So that the water didn't corrode them.

[10 : 30] Store that away. It's going to become significant in a few moments time. Jesus sees these two boats. The fishermen's night's work is done. They're fixing. They're washing. They're mending their nets.

And Jesus gets out into one of these boats. Simon's boat we're told. And he tells them to put out a little from land. Take me out a little bit Jesus says.

Why? So that more people could hear about the kingdom of God. So that more people could hear about the right relationship that Jesus came to offer.

Now Jesus notice here. Jesus didn't just teach them in their synagogues. Jesus didn't just teach them in the so called sort of religious settings of the day. He taught them on the way.

Jesus didn't just use the religious buildings and say. Well come and hear my sermon on the Sabbath. But rather he taught them by the shoreline. He taught them on the way.

[11 : 33] And it can be very easy to compartmentalize our lives. Can't it? To think that the Bible. To think that church. To think that Christian things live in this little box.

They live in the Sunday box. That they don't make any difference to what happens Monday through Saturday. But Jesus reminds us here that we're to take every opportunity.

That we're to make the most of every opportunity. This crowd was pressing in. This crowd wanted to hear the word of God. And Jesus didn't say. Well come on Sunday I'll give you something.

Rather he took every opportunity. And we're to take that opportunity when a friend asks us about church. To take that opportunity perhaps when a family member shares with us about the hopelessness of life.

When an opportunity presents itself we must take it. We must be ready in season and out of season. We must always be ready to give an answer for anyone who asks us for the reason of the hope that is in us.

[12 : 40] So we see Jesus taking every opportunity. He wants as many people as possible to hear about the kingdom of God. And then after the sermon's over verse 4 if you like. After the sermon's finished.

He says to Simon. What does he say verse 4? Now there are two things that are wrong with this from a worldly perspective.

Two things that are wrong with this from Simon's perspective. Firstly, the fishermen in the Bible didn't fish in the deep. You know we kind of have this image in our heads.

Perhaps of a North Sea trawler. Goes out into the deep. Let's down its nets. And kind of corrals all the fish together. That wasn't how the Bible fishermen fished. They fished in the shallows.

They were fished close to the shoreline. And secondly, you would never fish in the middle of the day. In the middle of the day the fish would be hiding.

[13 : 41] In the middle of the day the fish would be trying to escape the warm temperatures. I remember when I used to do a little bit of fishing. There was always the old men on the riverbank who'd say.

Well you need to come first thing in the morning. You need to come before the river gets too hot. You need to come before the water gets too warm. Or you'd arrive first thing in the morning and you'd see men who'd been there all night.

Camping out all night. I have to say that's probably why I didn't stick with the fish. And I wasn't going to camp out all night. And I certainly wasn't going to get up early enough to make it. But notice what Simon does.

He doesn't say well what do you know? I mean aren't you a carpenter? He doesn't say well I'm the fisherman here. I'm the one with the years of experience.

I'm the one who's done this since I was a boy. Leave it to me. No. Rather what does he say? Verse 5. Master. We toiled all night and took nothing.

[14:43] We've been fishing all night and haven't caught a thing. But at your word we will let down our nets. Now notice there's going to be a cost here in this. Because what do we read?

Verse 2. The fishermen were busy washing their nets. The fishermen were busy making ready their nets for the next night's fishing. But here Jesus says well look let down your nets into the deep. So they're going to have to wash their nets again.

They're going to have to make these preparations again. It's going to cost them in terms of time. It's going to cost them in terms of effort. It's going to cost them in terms of sleep. And yet Simon takes Jesus at his word and says look.

We've worked all night. We've done what we know to be best. But at your word. We'll let down our nets. It's going to be costly.

But Simon had to obey Jesus. But why? That's the question that sprang to my mind as I was reading this. Why? Simon is the fisherman.

[15:51] Simon is the one who knows what he's doing with all due respect. Why does this fisherman. This seasoned business owner. Why does he listen to this carpenter? Why does he listen to this carpenter? I think it comes back to what we've read about Jesus time and time and time again.

Simon remembers been sitting in his boat. Simon remembers listened to the message that Jesus has just preached. And what do we read about Jesus? That he teaches as one who has authority. And not as their scribes.

Simon sees something different about Jesus. Simon sees something different about Jesus. See something authentic about Jesus. See something unique about Jesus and says well look.

It's got to be worth it. It's got to be worth it. And this is what we need friends. To view the word of God as authoritative.

To view the word of God not just as the words of men. But as it is as the word of God. Simon here takes Jesus at his word. Simon here recognizes who Jesus is.

[17:00] Simon recognizes that Jesus is the Christ. Christ. And so he's prepared to do what he says. We can only do that of course as the Holy Spirit does his work.

Of convicting. Of convincing us. This isn't something that comes naturally to us. It's something that has to be given to us. This appreciation that the Bible is true.

This appreciation that the Bible is the word of God. That this isn't just Luke's made up history. That this isn't just Luke's fable of what happened with Jesus.

But this is the word of God. So the test being set then. Look. Go let down your nets into the deep. Despite everything that seems wrong with it. Despite everything that from a human perspective seems wrong with it. Will Simon let down the nets? Will he obey the word of Christ?

[17:57] Will he obey what Jesus says? Well of course he does. Will he obey the word of God? He finds that Jesus doesn't disappoint.

They include verse 6. Such a large number of fish. That their nets are just about broke. They have to get their other boot. They have to get their partners on the other boot.

To come and help them. And even when they come. There's such a large number of fish. That both boats nearly sink. Both boats are nearly sinking. Under the weight of the catch.

When we obey Jesus Christ. When we are obedient to the word of God.

We will find that he does not disappoint us. When we obey God. When we obey Jesus Christ. We will find that we lose nothing.

[18:55] Despite what the world might tell us. Despite what it seems in the world's eyes. Obeying God. Is always best in the long run. I'm sure most of you this morning.

Are familiar with the story of Dan Walker. Dan Walker is a BBC presenter. But he's also a committed Christian. One of his passions in life is football.

When he started out as a journalist. He always wanted to work on Match of the Day. And he was told. As soon as he went to work for the BBC. He was told. If you want to get anywhere in our sports department.

If you want to get anywhere towards Match of the Day. Then you have to work on Sundays. That's just the way it is. Dan decided to obey God. Rather than man.

He refused to work Sundays. Despite how it seemed in the world's eyes. Despite the fact that everyone in the BBC said. Well you'll never make it anywhere. Dan Walker is now the face of BBC Breakfast.

[19 : 55] Dan Walker did the World Cup in Russia recently. And leads a lot of the BBC football coverage. And the seemingly prudent thing to do would have been to compromise.

Wouldn't it? The seemingly prudent thing to do would be to say. Well. It's only a few Sundays. It's only every now and then. Well it doesn't really matter does it? But he didn't. And he wasn't disappointed. The prudent thing for Simon to do would have been to say. Well look. The nets are clean. Look. Everybody's tired.

Everyone's going to have to start working again in about four hours time. It's the wrong time of day for fishing. And yet he didn't. And he wasn't disappointed.

Obedying God and obeying the Lord Jesus Christ will never lead to disappointment. There will be times in our lives when there will be a prudent option. There will be times in our lives when the option that seems best is just to compromise a little bit.

[21 : 05] In return for a big reward. But when that comes. Remember that God will not disappoint those who are obedient to him.

That God will not disappoint those who are faithful to him and to his son. So Simon's been set a test then that he's passed. Secondly we want to see how Simon is set apart.

How Peter is set apart. We see that in verses 8 through 11. Verses 8 through 11. Peter sees this happening. He sees the huge catch of fish that's being brought ashore.

And what does he do? Verse 7. Verse 8 sorry. When Simon Peter saw it. Verse 8. He fell down at Jesus' knees saying depart from me. For I am a sinful man.

O Lord. It's a strange statement. It's a strange image isn't it? We're used. As we're going to see in a few moments time. We're used to people falling down at the feet of Jesus. But here we're told that Simon specifically fell down at the knees of Jesus.

[22 : 12] But the image is similar. You can almost imagine him there on his knees. Saying depart from me for I am a sinful man. What have I to do with you Lord?

It's a similar image to what we find in Isaiah 6. That's why we read from it. Isaiah given this image of the glory of the Lord. Isaiah given the image of the holiness of God. Says what? Woe to me for I am ruined.

And my eyes have seen the king of glory. When we catch a sight. When we catch a glimpse. When we catch a moment of the true greatness.

Of the true holiness. Of the true majesty of God. When we catch a sight of the true sinfulness of ourselves. This will always be the response.

When we see how sinful we are by nature. We will cry with fear. Depart from me. Oh Lord. We know that in the presence of a holy righteous sinless God.

[23 : 21] We cannot stand. And yet we know this morning. That in the presence of a holy God.

We have one who pleads our case. We know this morning. That in the presence of a holy righteous God. We have one. Who intercedes for us.

One who shed his blood. So that we might live. We see who his partners were. Verse 10. We see who the other business people were. Verse 10.

Those who were called from the other boat. To come and help. They were James and John. The sons of Zebedee. These men who would become pillars of the church. These men who would become instrumental.

In spreading the gospel. These men who would follow Jesus. Even to his death. These men who would take the gospel. Out to the ends of the earth. Who would begin that process. Start life as ordinary.

[24 : 20] Humble fishermen. Don't get me wrong. They're businessmen. Don't get me wrong. They're probably reasonably well off. But they start out life as ordinary.

Humble fishermen. And Jesus sets them apart to the task that they're going to fulfill. Do not be afraid. Simon. Verse 10. From now on you will be catching men.

It's time to put away the fishing nets. It's time to give up the boat. It's time to bring the boat ashore. And get on with the real work. Here we have the disciples being set apart.

Here we have the disciples being set apart. To follow the Lord. Being called to come apart. From the ordinary affairs of the world. And to come and follow Christ.

To come and win souls. To come and tell people. About the kingdom of God. As I read this.
[25 : 20] It's a reminder to us. Of why we have. A full time paid pastorate. Isn't it? Simon here is called apart. He's set apart.

He's called to leave his nets behind. With the express purpose. The express aim of teaching people about the kingdom of God. He's called and set apart with the express purpose.

Of winning people into that kingdom. Of catching no longer fish. But catching men. He's called. To give his full time undivided focus.

To learning from Christ. Telling others. About Christ. And so too friends. That's what you should expect any pastor to do.

I don't mean to disparage those. Who do tent making work. After all. We read of the. The apostle Paul. Making tents. So that he could support the needs of ministry. I don't mean to downplay.

[26 : 18] And to denigrate. Our brothers and sisters. And brethren churches. Who don't have a minister. But yet I think as we read scripture. That's what God reveals to us.

That there are people who are called. There are people who are set apart. To be ministers of the word. And notice what they do.

Verse 11. When they brought their boats to land. They left everything and followed him. They'd been set a test. Simon Peter had been set a test.

Will you follow me? Will you let down the nets? Even when it seems silly. He'd passed. And now this next test comes. Well look. Are you prepared to leave everything behind? And come.

And follow me. And he passes again. Verse 11. And they'd bring their boats to land. They'd tie them up. They'd secure them. No longer are they going to need them. And they leave everything.

[27 : 15] And follow him. Such was his authority. Such was his teaching. Such was his hold on them. Simon decides that this man's worth giving up everything to follow.

Peter then. He's been set a test. Which he's passed. He's been set apart here. For the kingdom work. And then finally. We want to think this morning. About this man. Who was set right.

Set right. And we see that in verses 12 through 16. We're told as we come to verse 12. That while he was in one of their cities. There came a man full of leprosy.

Now this must have been on the outskirts of the city. It must have been as Jesus was traveling between the cities. It must have been just as he was coming in to the city. That this man come and found him. Because this man with leprosy wouldn't have been allowed in the city.

Similar idea of course to what we see today. With the coronavirus isn't it? As soon as you have the virus. You're expected to isolate yourself for 14 days. You're expected to be in quarantine for 14 days.

[28 : 23] Anyone with leprosy would have been expected to stay outside the city. In case that leprosy then affected everyone else. Inside the city. And he comes and he falls before Jesus.

And says to him. Lord if you're willing. Lord if you're willing. Then you can make me clean. But don't miss the sense of anticipation.

That would have been building here. We know the answer. So it's perhaps not the same for us. But as you read Luke's gospel for the first time. As you were one of the people whom Luke wrote his gospel for. As you were Theophilus reading this gospel.

You would have thought well is Jesus willing? Is Jesus willing to touch this man? Is Jesus willing to make himself unclean?

Is Jesus willing to heal him? Here's this man who's a social outcast. Here's a man who's been cut off from everyone.

[29 : 20] Here's a man in isolation. Here's a man who has to shout unclean. Unclean everywhere he goes. In case someone brushes against him.

Is Jesus willing? Of course he is isn't he? Verse 13. Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him saying.

I will. Be clean. Something that no one else has done for a long time. Something so simple.

Something so. Everyday run of the mill. And yet something so profound. I will. Be clean.

And leprosy left him. It's a wonderful picture of the gospel isn't it? Because Jesus comes and is willing to heal all those who come to him.

[30 : 24] He's willing to forgive all those whose sin has been committed. He's willing to touch them and cure them from their infirmities. He's willing to cure them of their deepest problem of sin.

Is Jesus willing this morning? Is Jesus willing to make us clean? Is Jesus willing to forgive us this morning?

He is. If we come to him. And what does he say to the man? Verse 14. So he's healed him. The leprosy's left him. Verse 13. Verse 14. He charged him to tell no one. But go and show yourself to the priest. And make an offering for your cleansing. As Moses commanded for a proof to them. Why? The man's been healed. Jesus knows that he's been healed. Jesus has cleansed him from this leprosy. So why does he say go and show yourself to the priest?

[31 : 25] Why does he say go and make the offering that Moses commanded? Why does he tell him to do that? Isn't it enough that the leprosy's left him? Isn't it enough that he's cleansed?

Remember what Jesus said. He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. He came not to put the law down but to put it right. He came not to demean the law but to bring its fulfillment.

Jesus here in a very real way says to the man. Look this is what's right. This is what's appropriate. Go and fulfill the law of Moses. Part of the reason why the law still has a place in our Christian lives today.

Is it not as a means of salvation of course. But as a means of showing us how we live lives that are God honoring. How we live lives that are pleasing to God. And it's a fine line to tread this morning. My obedience of the law gains me no standing with God. My obedience of the law doesn't make me right with God. There's no merit in keeping the law as a means of salvation.

[32 : 33] But there's much profit in obeying the law to live a life that honors God. Jesus as we see this episode here then sets the man right.

He sets him right physically. I will be clean. But he also sets him right spiritually. Go. And do what Moses commanded. And that's what Jesus offers each one of us this morning as we come. That we can be set right with God. That our sin can be forgiven. That that relationship that has been destroyed can be set right.

That that relationship that is fundamentally fractured ever since the Garden of Eden. Can be restored through his death and his resurrection. That's what Jesus offers to us this morning. That's what Jesus holds out to us this morning. That is Jesus saying I will be clean. But we have to be like the man here in the narrative.

[33 : 40] We have to come and ask for forgiveness. We have to come and ask for cleansing. So that our sin might be forgiven. Lord if you're willing you can make me clean.

I will. Be clean. Amen.