

AM Luke 5:17-39 Guess who?

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[0:00] These to Luke 5, Luke chapter 5. And we're going to read these verses 17 through 39. Verses 17 through 39 of Luke chapter 5.

Luke chapter 5, beginning to read that verse 17. This is the word of God. On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there.

Who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed.

And they were seeking to bring him and lay him before Jesus. But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd. They went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles in the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

[1:14] When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them. What do you question in your hearts? Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven you? Or to say, Rise and walk?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, Rise, Pick up your bed, And go home.

And immediately he rose up before them, And picked up what he had been laying on, And went home glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, And they glorified God, And were filled with awe, Saying, We have seen extraordinary things today.

After this he went out, And saw a tax collector named Levi, Sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, Follow me. And leaving everything, He rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, And there was a large company of tax collectors, And others reclining at table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, Saying, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answered them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, But those who are sick.

[2:23] I have not come to call the righteous, But sinners to repentance. And they said to him, The disciples of John fast often, And offer prayers, And so do the disciples of the Pharisees, But yours eat and drink.

And Jesus said to them, Can you make wedding guests fast, While the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, When the bridegroom is taken away from them, And then they will fast in those days.

He also told them a parable. No one tears a piece from a new garment, And puts it onto an old garment. If he does, He will tear the new, And the piece from the new, Will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, The new wine will burst the skins, And it will be spilled, And the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine, Desires new, For he says, The old is good. Amen. Let's turn to Psalm 24.

[3:24] Psalm 24. And we're going to read the whole, Of the psalm together. As we come to, Luke chapter 5, In a few moments time, The central question, That the religious leaders, Are asking themselves is, Well who is this man?

The central question, That they're trying to get the answer to, Is who is this man? And it's a similar question, That we find in Psalm 24. Well who is this king of glory? And it is the Lord, Clothed in strength, And might, It is the Lord.

Psalm 24, Beginning to read, At verse 1, This is the word, Of God. The earth, Is the Lord's, In the fullness thereof. The world, And those who dwell therein, For he has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands, And a pure heart. Who does not lift up his soul, To what is false, And does not swear deceitfully.

He will receive blessing, From the Lord, And righteousness from the God, Of his salvation. Such is the generation, Of those who seek him. Who seek the face, Of the God of Jacob.

[4 : 48] Lift up your heads, So gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the king of glory, May come in. Who is this king of glory, The Lord, Strong and mighty, The Lord, Mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift them up, O ancient doors, That the king of glory, May come in. Who is this king of glory, The Lord of hosts, He, Is the king, Of glory.

Amen. This is a reading of, Let's turn then please, To Luke chapter 5, Luke chapter 5, And these verses 17, Through 39, 17 through the end, Of this section here, In Luke, Chapter 5, I recently took the boys, To McDonald's for dinner, One night, I'm not sure what had happened, Suzanne was obviously, Away somewhere, And I'd been left in charge, Of making provision for dinner, So I did what every self-respecting parent, Does in that situation, And I took them to McDonald's, Anyway, The toy they were given away, With their happy meal, That particular day, Were little miniature versions, Of classic board games, The game that the boys got, With their happy meal, Was guess who, I'm sure most of you are familiar, With the board game, You have a selection of characters, On a board, And you pick one, And then your opponent, Asks you a series of questions, To try and figure out, Who the character you have picked is,

You know they might say, Is yours a man, And you'll say yes or no, Is he wearing a hat, Does he have glasses, That kind of thing, Does he have a beard, Until eventually they'll say, Well is yours Keith, Or Gavin, Or whoever it happens to be, The clues that you give them, Lead them to the person in question, The clues that you give them, Lead them to the person, On your card, And as we come to Luke, Chapter 5, This morning, As we come to these verses, 17 through 39, I think we see something similar, Happening with the religious leaders, And Jesus, He's giving them, Clues, He's showing them, Who he is, And the, The things that he does, Causes them to ask questions, About him, They'll say in the first section, Well who can forgive sin, But God alone, Secondly then, They'll say, Well, Why do you eat, With tax collectors, And sinners, And then thirdly, They'll say, Well, Well Jesus asked them,

A question really, He'll ask them, What sort of wine, Do they want, It's using those three questions, Using those three ideas, That we want to think about, Luke chapter 5, This morning, Firstly, We want to ask the question, Well, Who can forgive sin, Secondly then, We want to ask the question, Well why do you eat, And drink with tax collectors, And sinners, And then thirdly, We'll ask the question, Well what sort of wine, Do you want, So firstly then, Who can forgive sin, Who can forgive sin, And we see that in verses 17, Through 26, Verse 17 through 26, So we remember where we are, In Luke's gospel, Last week, As we thought about Luke chapter 5, Those opening 16 verses, We saw how Jesus, Had called his first disciples, How they'd left everything, Behind and followed him, We saw finally, How he had cured the man, Who was full of leprosy, How he reached out, And touched him, The man said, If you are willing, You can make me clean, Jesus' response was of course,

[8 : 19] I will, Be clean, We finish by thinking about, How all the people wanted him around, All the people wanted, A piece of Jesus, All the people wanted to keep Jesus, In their town, But then of course, He would withdraw, To the quiet places, To the desolate places, Verse 16, And pray, And as we come to verse 17 then, That explains the context for us, Doesn't it?

Because what do we read, Verse 17, On one of those days, During those days, When his fame was increasing, During those days, Whenever everyone wanted, To know about him, During those days, Whenever everyone, Was interested in him, Whenever everyone, Was talking about him, It was during those days, That the following events, Take place, And notice again, What we see Jesus doing, In verse 17, On those days, One of those days, Sorry, As he was, Teaching, As he was, Teaching, Can't stress this enough, We've said it time, And time and time again, As we thought about Luke's gospel, We can get so caught up, In the miraculous, That we're going to see, In a few moments, We can get so caught up, In the miracles, That Jesus does, That we forget actually, Most of the time, We find him teaching, Most of the time, We find him, Telling people about, The kingdom

of God, But what else,

Are we told, In this opening verse, Well we notice, That the crowd, Has slightly changed, Hasn't it? Verse 16, In that previous section, It was all of the people, Wanted to know about Jesus, All of the people, Were coming to him, All of the people, Were pressing around him, His fame went out, Amongst the people, And yet as we come to verse 17, On one of those days, As he was teaching, Who's the crowd now?

It's the Pharisees, And the teachers of the law, Who were sitting there, And notice again, Who had come from every village, Of Galilee and Judea, And from Jerusalem, So not only are the crowds, Flocking from everywhere, But actually the religious leaders, The Pharisees, The scribes, The teachers of the law, They're flocking from the surrounding areas, To come, And listen to Jesus, No longer is it the crowd, Who are amazed at his teaching, Because he taught as one, Who had authority, But now it's the scribes, And the Pharisees themselves, Of course the scribes, And the Pharisees today, Get a bit of a, A bad press, Don't they?

You know ultimately, We're going to see, How the scribes and the Pharisees, Respond to Jesus, But we need to remember, And we need to read, The Bible in its context, The scribes and the Pharisees, As they would have been, The respected people, They would have been, The religious people, If the ordinary man, On the street, Had a question about, Religious affairs, He would have gone, To the scribes and the Pharisees, If the man on the street, Had a question about, The law of God, He would have gone, To the scribes and the Pharisees, So we have this view, Of them today, That is very much determined, By the end of the story, By the end of the narrative, But actually at the time, They were, Respected people, It would have made sense, To the people, Who read this gospel, For the first time, That the scribes and the Pharisees, Were there, Jesus was here, Teaching about the kingdom of God, Jesus was here, Teaching about, How to be right with God, And so the scribes and the Pharisees, Need to check this out, They need to understand, What Jesus is saying, They need to understand, What this new message is,

[11 : 54] The power of the Lord, Was at work in Jesus, With Jesus, Verse 17, At the very end, To heal, And it's then, We're introduced to these friends, Luke here, Doesn't put a number on it, But Mark tells us, That there were four of them, They bring this man, Who's paralyzed, To see Jesus, They want Jesus, To help their friend, But verse 19, They can't get in, They can't get to Jesus, They can't get that, Face to face contact, Because of the crowd, But they won't be deterred, A little thing, Like a large crowd, Won't stop them, I was watching, The Scottish football cup, A few years ago, And there was a match, Between Aukerlech, Talbot, And Air United, It was a huge match, For Aukerlech, It was played, At their home ground, And everybody wanted, To get in, But obviously, It was a fairly small ground, So not everyone, Could get in, Not everyone, Who wanted a ticket, Could get in,

So people had taken advantage, Of every vantage point, That they could find, You know, People had climbed up trees, Near the ground, So that they could see, People had gone, To their friends flats, Overlooking the ground, So that they could see, The crowd, Wasn't going to stop them, The crowd wasn't going to stop them, From seeing this match, Just like these friends here, The crowd won't stop them, From getting their friend, To see Jesus, So they go up on the roof, Now it's not like, Our roofs, You know our roofs are slanted, For very good reason, We have a lot of rain, And it needs to stop the water, Stagnating, But they were flat roofs, Covered roofs, That probably covered, A courtyard, Or an area, Where Jesus would have been, Teaching from, They pull away, A few of the lower tiles, And lower the man, Into this courtyard, So that he might, See Jesus, And so that Jesus, And might see him, It's an astonishing act,

Of friendship isn't it, It's an astonishing act, Of faith in Jesus Christ as well, You see they knew Jesus, Was the one who could help their friend, They knew Jesus was the one, Who could heal their friend, They knew Jesus was the one, Who could do something, For him, And they weren't going to allow anything, To stop him from seeing Jesus, But how often do we make excuses, Too tired for church this week, I'm too tired from a busy week, I can't be annoyed with the hassle, And yet these men knew, That Jesus could help their friend, They knew that Jesus, Was the only hope for their friend, We have that same hope, We have that same confidence, In the Lord Jesus Christ, If not at least we should, Jesus is the only one,

Who can help our friends, Jesus is the only one, Who can help the people, Who come to the drop in, Jesus is the only one, Who can help the mothers, And fathers, And grandparents, And carers, As they come to first steps, And yet how often, Can we make excuses, Then we come to verse 20,

We see what Jesus response is, So the roof above him, Has been opened, This man has been lowered in, In front of him, And verse 20, How does Jesus respond, When he saw, Their faith, Now people leap on this, And they'll say, Well what, Jesus means here, Is that when he saw, The faith of the four friends, When he saw the fact, That they had faith, That Jesus could help their friend, Then he acted, But that's not the case at all, Is it?

Certainly the friends, Had faith that Jesus could help them, Or else why bother bringing, Their friend at all, But this man himself, Also had faith, That Jesus could help, This man also had trust, In Jesus, Notice what Jesus says though, Again we can miss the impact of this, Because we know the story, We know the narrative, We know what happens, But notice what Jesus said, When Jesus saw their faith, Verse 20, He said, Man, Your sins are forgiven you, Now for the people, Who were sitting there at the time, That would have been shocking, For the people who first read this gospel, That would have been shocking, Why is Jesus forgiving his sins, Doesn't he see that the man can't walk, Why is Jesus bothering with his sins, Why doesn't he help, The man, But again, Remember who the crowd is, Remember who's there, The Pharisees,

[16:49] And the teachers of the law, Were sitting there, The Pharisees, And teachers of the laws, Had come to see, What Jesus was about, Had come to see, What the kingdom of God was about, And Jesus says to them, What? When he saw their faith, He said, Man, Your sins, Are forgiven you, And it gets to the heart, Of the gospel, Doesn't it, It gets to the heart, Of the message, It gets to the heart, Of what the kingdom of God, Is all about, Because no matter, What may heal us physically, No matter if we catch, The coronavirus or not, Our greatest need, Is always to have our sin dealt with, First and foremost, Our greatest need, Is always to be right with God, Until that fundamentally, Fractured relationship is fixed, Then everything else, Will remain broken, Today people look around, And they see the ills of society, And they say, The church should be doing, Something about that, The church should be doing, Something about the alcohol problem, In our town, The church should be doing, Something about the heroin problem,

In our town, The church should be doing, Something about the homelessness, Problem in our town, And in many cases, Perhaps we should, But what we have to remember, Is that the gospel, Isn't about fixing society, Social problems, The gospel doesn't, Just make us better people, The gospel is the good news, Of sins forgiven, That's the gospel, And yet the religious leaders, Grumble don't they, Verse 21, And the scribes, And the Pharisees, Began to question, Saying, Well, Who is this, Who speaks blasphemies, Who can forgive sins, But God alone, Now notice, Their theology is right, The things that they say, Are right, No one can forgive, Sins but God alone, Their theology is right, Right, But their application of it, Is lousy, Their application is that, Well, No one can forgive sins, But God alone,

This man says, That he's forgiven sins, Therefore he must be a blasphemer, They don't ask the question, They don't stop to think, Well could this man be God, Could this man be, King David's greater son, No, Rather they say, Simply he's a blasphemer, Right theology, Right knowledge, Right understanding about God, Doesn't always lead to right practice, Knowing stuff about God, Is no substitute for knowing God himself, We can know all of the right things, Understand intellectually, All of the right doctrines, But unless we know God, It's no substitute, So Jesus, Verse 22, We're told, Jesus perceived their thoughts, Again picking up similar ideas, That we see in Psalm 139, That we open this service with, When Jesus perceived their thoughts,

He answered them, Well look, Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, Or rise, Pick up your bed, And walk, It's easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, Isn't it, Because there's no outward evidence, Of that, There's no outward, Manifestation, Of that, Jesus can say, His sins are forgiven, But there's no proof, Jesus continues, I'm going to show you, That I'm the one who has authority, I'm going to show you, That I'm the son of man, I'm going to show you, That I'm King David's greater son, I'm going to show you, That I'm the one with the power, To forgive sins, So I say to you, Verse 24, Rise, Pick up your bed, And go home, And sure enough, What do we read, Verse 25, Immediately he rose, Picked up what he'd been lying on, And went home, Glorifying God, The question is right,

Who can forgive sins, Only God can forgive sins, And Jesus is the only one this morning, Who can forgive our sins, Jesus is the only one this morning, Who can cleanse us, From our sin, Come to him this morning, And know that that healing, Is better than any physical healing, Come to him this morning, And know the peace, And joy, Of sins forgiven, Come and know that that barrier, Between you and God, Has been broken down, That that barrier, That existed between you, And a holy

righteous God, Has gone, Who forgives sin, Who forgives sin, Who was God alone, In Jesus Christ alone, Secondly then, We want to think about, This question they ask next, Which is well, Why do you eat, And drink, Why do you eat and drink, And we see that in verses 27, Through 32, So following this confrontation then, Following being accused of blasphemy,

[21 : 59] By the religious leaders, Jesus leaves, And as he's going out, On the way out of town, He passes this tax collector, Named Levi, Sitting in his tax booth, Now, Tax collectors then, Were not like the tax collectors, Of today, What would happen is, That the tax collector, Generally would buy the rights, Of the Roman government, To collect taxes in that area, The Roman government would say, Well you know, This is how much tax, Needs to be collected from this area, How you do it, Is up to you, How you went about, Collecting that tax, Was entirely your business, But you had to pay that amount, Regardless, Of what happened, They would be some of the most hated, Some of the most corrupt people, In any town, And yet Jesus, As he passes by Levi, As he sees Levi, Sitting at his tax booth, Says, Come, And follow me, And again, Notice the response of Levi,

Verse 28, Leaving everything, He rose, And followed him, Just as the four men, Had done in the previous section, With their boats, They left everything, And followed him, For Levi, This is going to be costly, Don't forget, He's just bought the rights, Of the Roman government, He's just bought this, This right, To collect taxes, In the town, He's paid his money, Up front, And now Jesus is saying, Leave everything, And follow me, It's going to cost him, A great deal financially, The Roman government, Is still going to be looking, For their taxes, And yet he leaves everything, And follows him, It's a reminder to us, Isn't it, That there's no people, Beyond the reach, Of the grace of God, No people, Whom God, And his mercy, Cannot save, The tax collectors, The tax collectors, Were hated, The tax collectors, Were the lowest, Of the low, And yet one of them, Became a disciple, God in his mercy, Might choose to save, Some of the most lowly, Despised people, In our society, There is no one, So low, That the grace of God, Cannot find, And notice what Levi does, As we thought about a little bit, With the boys and girls, Just a few moments ago, Verse 29, Levi makes this great feast, In his house, And there's this large, Company of tax collectors, And others reclining, A table with them, There's this great crowd, Of people that Levi has drawn, There's this great crowd, Of people that Levi, Has gathered together, His work colleagues, If you like, This large company, Of tax collectors, He wants them, To hear about his newfound faith, He wants them, To meet the saviour, He wants them, To meet the Christ, And so he throws this great feast, So that they can meet him, He makes it possible, For his friends, To see Jesus, I'm sure most of you, This morning, Have been to a, A tupperware party, Or similar, You know, There was a, A party, But ultimately, There was always an ulterior motive, As well, You know, The person who was throwing the party, Wanted you to buy some tupperware, Off them, That's the same thing here, I imagine, Levi throws a party, Of course he does, But he does it, Because he wants his friends, To meet Christ, He does it, Because he wants them, To see Jesus, He wants them to know, The freedom, And the forgiveness, That Jesus offers, And what a great example, Levi is to us, Because he knows, What's happened to him, He knows, That his life, Has been changed, By meeting Jesus, He knows, That his life, Has been transformed, By meeting Christ, And now he wants others, To see, And share in that as well, He invites his friends, To see Jesus, And we need to be mindful of this, It can be so easy to live, In a little,

Christian bubble, For want of a better term, Where we don't meet any people, Out there, Where all the people, That we talk to, Are Christian people, And yet we need, To bring people, To church, We need to be inviting, Our friends and family, Who don't know Jesus, To come and see him, To come and meet him, To come and know, That peace of sins forgiven, We need to be, Making opportunities, To invite others, To see the glory, Of who Jesus is, Levi wasn't content, With this individual salvation, He wasn't content, That salvation, Had found him alone, He wanted to bring, As many of his friends, And family, And colleagues, And co-workers, Along as possible, Notice verse 30, What happens, The religious people, Are grumbling, Again, But notice, The slight change, That's taken place,

[27 : 04] Previous section, They were quite content, To go to Jesus, They were quite content, To say, Well what is this blasphemy, But now, As they come to verse 30, Who do they pick on?

The Pharisees, And their scribes, Grumbled, At his disciples, They've had quite enough, Of a confrontation, With Jesus, They've had quite enough, Of dealing with him, So this time, They grumble, At the disciples, Well why do you eat, With tax collectors, And sinners, Why are you bothering, With people such as this, Why are you making yourself, Unclean, By associating with,

These tax collectors, And sinners, And Jesus' answer, Is brilliant isn't it, Well those who are well, Have no need of a doctor, Only those who are sick, I've come not to call, The righteous, I've come not to call, Those who are good living, But sinners to repentance, You see the religious leaders, Were right in their own eyes, They'd kept the law of God, They'd done everything, They needed to do, According to the law of God, They didn't have any need, Of Christ, They didn't have any need, Of forgiveness, Whereas the tax collectors,

And sinners, Knew they needed God, Knew they needed Christ, And would come to repentance, And faith in him, Sometimes the longer, We go on in the Christian life, It's easy for this same attitude, To creep in amongst us, We can sometimes forget, That we're sinners, Saved by grace, We can sometimes forget, The pits, That we've been pulled from, The mire, That we've been set free, From ourselves, We're not righteous, In and of ourselves, We're not good, In and of ourselves, But we're saved in Christ, And he's come to call sinners, To repentance, Who can forgive sins, Well it's Christ, Who forgives sins, Why do you eat with sinners, And tax collectors, Because they need to know Christ, Thirdly then, We come to this strange section,

And we've called it, What sort of wine do you want, But that question, Isn't actually in the text anymore, What sort of wine, Do you want, And we see that in verses 33, Through 39, It's a parable, That Jesus tells, In response, To another question, The Pharisees asked, They asked Jesus, And his disciples, Didn't fast, Why don't you fast, Look, The disciples of John, Fast often, The disciples of the Pharisees, Fast often, But yours, Eat, And drink, And Jesus says, Well look, They've got the main event, With them, They've got the bridegroom, With them at the minute, They can't fast, When the bridegroom's here, The time will come, When they will fast, But not, When the wedding's going on, And they illustrate the point, He tells them this parable, About a piece of garment, That has been sewed on, To an old piece of garment, About wine, You know, No one pours new wine, Into old wineskins, If you're that way inclined, You can go and read the commentaries, And read about why, Pouring new wine,

Into old wineskins, Is a bad idea, I don't care about that, So much as to, What does it mean? What does it mean, For us this morning? How does it affect us, This morning?

[30 : 30] How should we, Understand this, This morning? Well I think we get part of the answer, In verse 39, What does Jesus say? No one after drinking, Old wine, Desires new, For he says, The old is good, Or the old, Is better, Is better, So what does that mean, What Jesus is reminding, These religious leaders of here, These religious leaders, Who were so confident, In their standing before God, Who were so sure, That they were right, Before God, Who were so sure, Of their own obedience, What Jesus is reminding them of, Is that this new religion, This new way of relating to God, That he brings, Isn't just a topping up, Of the old, But rather it's something, Radically different, Of course there's continuity, Of course there's, That Jesus tells us, That he has come, Not to abolish the law, And the prophets, But to fulfill it, But what he offers,

Is something radically, Different, It wasn't just, Topping up the old ways, Of Judaism, It wasn't just, The equivalent of putting new wine, Into old wines, And skins, Rather Jesus says, That the religion, He brings, Is a religion, Based not on works, But on grace, Based not on the law, Per se, But based on mercy, And right relationships, Through the work of Christ, There are some though, Who are content, With the old way, There are some, Who are content, With the old wine, There are some, Who won't even bother, Trying, This new wine, And that of course, Perfectly summed up, Those religious leaders, Didn't it, They had their way, Of doing things, They had their way, Of relating to God, They had their way, Of being right with God, And they weren't prepared, To change, They preferred that, To the new wine, That Christ offers, And the question,

The question we have to answer, For ourselves this morning, Is what sort of wine, Do we want, Are we happy with the old wine, Are we happy with the, The old way of doing things, Of trying to save ourselves, Of trying to keep enough laws, So that eventually, We're right with God, Or do we want this new wine, That Christ offers, Based on mercy, And grace, You see, You can't have it both ways, You can't have a religion, Where you try and, Save yourself, Where you try and, Make yourself right with God, You can't just add Jesus Christ, On top of that, Because if you do, Then the wineskins will burst, Rather we need the new wine, That Christ offers us, This morning, Of grace, And mercy, Of obedience not our own, Of righteousness not our own, Of right relationship with God, Based on his work, Alone, So the question is, Well which wine do you want, This morning, Which way are you living,

This morning, The self-righteous life, Of the Pharisee, Or the sinful life, The knowingly sinful life, Of the tax collector, And sinner, Who gives up everything, To follow Christ, Amen, So, And,.