

Luke 5:17-31 (PM)

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[0 : 0 0] As we get into Luke chapter 5, the roof on the house was opened, and at that very moment the gates of heaven were opened as well. They were trying to put a man who was in desperate need into close contact with this Jesus.

And this is the Jesus that we read throughout the Gospels as the one who teaches his disciples to pray, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, notice that language, on earth as it is in heaven.

And as the dust is swirling from the deconstruction of the roof and the sun is piercing through that dusty air, Jesus looks at everybody in this crowded Galilean home and he says, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority, and here's the phrase again, authority on earth to forgive sins.

I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home. And so what we discover in this marvelous and dramatic little episode is that this healing of the paralytic, this healing of the cripple is a sign, it's a revelation of something more profound, it's Jesus' authority to forgive.

So Luke wants us to know that in Jesus, when we see Jesus at work, we are seeing the power of God at work on earth. Re-establishing God's authority over human life by liberating the human heart from the paralyzing and crippling disease of sin.

[1 : 3 3] A few years earlier, there was a man named David who celebrated this reality by saying, blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the person against whom the Lord counts no iniquity. So I don't know what has brought you here this evening in particular, but the reality is, is that if any of us have lived any amount of years in this life, we know how desperately forgiveness is something that we need, and something that we need to be able to extend to others.

But based on our experiences, this can be a really hard thing. and I think what Jesus wants you and I to experience tonight is the blessing that it is to receive his forgiveness he wants every person every day to experience that blessing so I simply want to ask you do you know the sweetness of forgiveness in your own life do you know this blessing not only as your greatest need but as your greatest hope and do you know what it's like to live under the freedom under the liberty of the authority of God's kindness and grace when I do marriage prep with couples I like to ask them lots of questions it's a great thing great time to get to connect with people but the first question I love to ask is what do you guys think is the key to a lifelong God-honoring faithful and joyful marriage what do you think is the key and then I just sit back and really enjoy hearing the variety of answers that I get a whole range of things some people are like never go to bed angry and I say good luck with that and then some people are like go on a date night every week and I say you need to live close to family if you want to do that some people like establish clear and consistent lines of communication like please explain to me how to do that and then there are other people who are like have a lot of kids and some people like have no kids never know what's going to come out but it's even fun more interesting to see their faces when I give my answer after they've given theirs I just say it's one word forgiveness in marriage you will either have to grapple with the reality of forgiveness or not and it will make all the difference in the world last year my grandmother died and my sister adopted a two-week-old baby girl in the same week death and life and I know just from some of you in the congregation that I've connected with in the last week there have been those of you who have lost family members and those of you who have received children and grandchildren in the last few days death and life and it makes me I remember last year I was wondering you know about my grandmother's broken life and my niece's new beginning my grandmother knew the woes of the world and my niece had no clue what her life was going to contain yet and I found myself asking what do I wish that my grandmother knew more deeply in her life what is it that I wish my niece will know as she grows up and I kept coming came back to the same word over and over again it's the joy of forgiveness the freedom and the healing and the blessing that come from knowing that you are fully known and that you are fully loved and that you are fully forgiven and that that forgiveness will free you up to be the person that God actually made you to be in your life this according to Jesus Christ is the heart of the gospel this is what he came to earth to do and to say and to give with absolute authority clarity and clarity he says in verse 24 the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins and it is this authority of Jesus that is the special focus of our passage tonight but before talking about authority it's important that we rehash what Mark and I think Will were telling us in the little skit did you notice that little acronym for sin it's really important because Jesus says I have authority to forgive sins it's authority for something very specific and unique here and so understanding that sin is more than just the garbage that clutters our life or the anxieties that grip our hearts or the worries that fill our minds or the sewage of the soul as some people would say those are really gripping images and they get a portion of the truth but they don't cut to the

heart of it sin as Mark taught me this week means to shove off God s means a personal rejection of him and saying I'd rather not live with you I'd rather live without you I it means I'm in charge so I don't want you God but I'm going to elevate my place to where you should sit and then it means and no to you and your rules meaning I don't want to have anything to do with you and I've actually offended you because you are my loving creator but I've rejected the very one who has given me life and so what we discover in that little acronym that Mark helpfully taught me this week is that sin is first and foremost not just all the bad things I've done on the earth and the ways I've failed and I've gone wrong sin is this dramatically vertical breakdown of relationship with God yes it's all these horizontal things but it's all these horizontal things because first and foremost there has been this breakdown with God with the one who created us and without whom we cannot live as we were meant to flourish that's why David in Psalm 51 after committing adultery like one of the worst horizontal sins we could imagine David says against you God you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight and that's why the scribes and Pharisees in our passage in Luke 5 question Jesus in that little crowded Galilean house they say who is this who speaks blasphemies who can forgive sins but God alone at the heart of our passage is a question of authority and the question of authority is rooted in a question about identity who is this Jesus who stands before the crowds and says I have authority to forgive see Jesus came to a world suffering from a crisis of authority in part because they did not know Jesus identity yet and I think we too live in a world that is suffering from a crisis of authority in part because many of us do not know Jesus identity yet who can forgive sins but God alone we see this crisis of authority in Africa as religious extremists and tribal distinctions still lead to deadly violence we see this crisis of authority in Ukraine and Russia as a dictator seeks to expand his sovereign reach beyond its legal limits we see this crisis of authority in China as a communist regime seeks to squelch or squeeze out any sparks of democratic revolution we see this crisis of authority in central and south

America as drug lords continue to ravage cities and governments benefit from the proceeds and we see this crisis of authority on our own doorstep in our own neighborhood in the west as each individual person is given the job the impossible job of divining defining for himself or herself what it means to be human so it's no wonder that so many of us are so anxious it's no wonder that so many of our young ones and our young adults have become disillusioned with claims to authority yet Jesus does not back down from what he said here Jesus does not soften his message Jesus still declares the narrow road to life Jesus unapologetically challenges all other ultimate claims to authority and says I have divine authority to do the one thing that every single person on earth needs and that's to heal them of their sin and one of the questions that we have when we come away from this is could it be that Jesus authority is a different kind of authority than what we see in the earth could it be that Jesus use of authority is a better use of authority than what we see in the world not authority that oppresses and takes but one that liberates and gives not authority that diminishes and dehumanizes but authority that redeems and restores not authority that condemns but authority that forgives and what if this authority of Jesus Christ his authority to forgive was the only answer to the world's authority crisis the son of man came because he has authority on earth to forgive sins so two questions as we close in the last two minutes here what is the sign that I am living under the authority of Jesus's kindness and grace so what is the sign that I am living under his authority well it's in verses 27 to 29 it's the example of Levi he leaves everything to follow Jesus and for Levi this would have been a costly thing because he was employed by the Romans and he had Roman authority behind him to collect taxes and the Romans would let him collect as many taxes as he could possibly collect give this much to the Romans and then keep whatever else he had gathered from people so it was actually an abuse of authority that was often built into being a tax collector that made you very wealthy and rich so it's a radical change for Levi to leave everything his abuse of authority for his own gain to follow Jesus so what does it look like when we live under the freedom of Jesus grace we detach from our old way of life and we attach ourselves to Jesus Christ and then notice how Levi feasts with him he celebrates the grace that he has received with his savior and then he sets a table and he invites his other friends his co-workers and his neighbors to join in the feast because he is delighted by the grace that he has received and he wants others to know the freedom that that grace can give them to this according to this passage is what it looks like to repent and discover new life assured of God's authority to forgive but what does it look like if we are not actually living under the authority of Jesus forgiveness well in verse 30 we get another example it's that of the scribes and the Pharisees and what is the key response that we are told here grumbled the scribes and the Pharisees grumbled at Jesus disciples grumbling settles into our heart

[13:06] when grace has not taken rule and reign there and we become people who are quick to judge constantly questioning the motives and behaviors of others we become people who are slow to forgive struggling to see the grace of God at work in other people's lives we become people who protest and who police on the one hand withdrawing changing churches seeking greener pastures on the other hand complaining critiquing controlling until things change the way that we want them to change and at its foundation if we are not living in the goodness of God's forgiveness and grace we refuse to admit our need for forgiveness and when we see that others need it we refuse to extend it and then we find ourselves in that really sad and tragic place like the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son where we refuse to join the party of sinners who know they are sick and in need of a physician which is exactly why Jesus came not to call those who are healthy but those who are sick and need a physician I think that's why Jesus once said blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs and theirs alone is the kingdom of God my brothers and sisters I speak these things to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit amen