



**CAPITOL[®]
COMMISSION**

Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders



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“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32

Luke 5:1-39 - Jesus, the Holy One of God, Extends Holiness

Last week we discussed Jesus’ exercises of authority (in teaching, over sickness, and over demons). Jesus’ ministry continues in Galilee, with the crowds growing ever larger (Read 5:1-11). Luke tells of a time where the people are so pressing in on Jesus that He enlists Simon Peter’s boat to give His teaching platform a little space. But then after teaching He directs these professional fishermen to go back out to fish. The protests from Simon do not last and they wearily do as instructed. After catching nothing all night, they now can barely get the haul into two boats and their nets begin breaking. Jesus demonstrates His authority over nature, specifically, fish—which He will do again and again (see Matt 17:27, John 21:11). Note Peter’s response in v 8. Instead of gratitude for the catch, he instead begs Jesus to leave him. The reason Peter gives is his awareness that Jesus is holy and the confession Peter definitely is not. Jesus’ response is not to affirm Peter’s lack of holiness or to condemn him, but rather to call he, and the brothers James and John, to follow Him and make them “fishers of men”. These three form the innermost circle of Jesus’ 12 disciples (other gospel accounts note that Andrew, Peter’s brother, actually followed Jesus first).

Read 5:12-16. A leperous man approaches Jesus. Being unclean, the man must stay out of the cities according to the Law of Moses. But he obviously knows that Jesus is different from all the other teachers; he states if Jesus would just will it he would be cured. Not only does Jesus agree to heal him, He reaches out and *touches* the unclean man. This may have been the first physical touch for this man in years and would mean a restoration of all his broken relationships. The law stated in great detail how to treat a variety of skin diseases (Leviticus 13-14), always from the viewpoint of preserving cleanness within the camp. Here we see Jesus unaffected by the man’s uncleanness, and actually imparts purity in healing. This holiness that Peter feared is communicated from Jesus to the man, instead of the disease communicated to Jesus. His instruction to the man to follow through with the law by reporting to the priests, with the additional phrase, “for a proof to them” indicates Jesus reaching out to the Jewish priests. Luke tells us Jesus then withdrew from the crowds to find lonely places to pray (v 16).

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those in our state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office, are available online at capitolcom.org, and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Rom 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Tim 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.

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Read 5:17-26. Jesus' activities have now attracted the attention of Pharisees and law school professors from "every village in Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem". They closely observe this man, whose teaching and miraculous works attract such attention. On this day we see the familiar account of the paralyzed man being lowered through the roof. They obviously seek healing, but based on their faith, Jesus instead forgives the sick man's sins. This provokes the "holy men" of the culture, who rightly say, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" They miss the point, that Jesus is God and possesses this authority. As evidence, He completely heals the man by speaking directly to him by His own authority—a brilliant way to make His point. Note also that Luke tells us Jesus perceived their thoughts! But there is a point of tragedy we do not want to miss here: Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile notes the people are amazed in verse 26, but none comes to Jesus seeking His forgiveness.* In this way, they are much like those who say, "That was a good sermon" but never yield themselves to Jesus as Lord and get forgiven their sins.

Read 5:27-39. Jesus begins to run counter to the Pharisees, thought to be the standard of holiness to the people. By calling a tax collector, the epitome of sinfulness, to follow Him, like the sinful Galilean fishermen earlier, Jesus sends a powerful statement on how He extends holiness. Levi (a.k.a., Matthew) throws a great feast, eliciting grumbling from the Pharisees and scribes. Doesn't Jesus know that sitting with sinners leads to sinfulness (e.g., Psalm 1)? A better question: Do the Pharisees still not know who He is and how He is untouched by sin? Jesus responds to their concern by stating He, the physician, came not to treat the well (righteous), but the sick (sinners). Unfortunately, these men are so self-righteous they do not see their own need for Jesus' holy touch. They continue directing criticism to Jesus on His disciples' lack of fasting. Their own disciples, and even John the Baptizer's disciples fasted, but here Jesus' disciples are eating and drinking. His response uses a wedding analogy: a time of joyfulness in contrast to the Pharisees' hypocritical seriousness. Here we get the first indication of Jesus' mission, to be taken away from His followers. At the cross, tragedy and mourning will be their time of prayer and fasting, but not while He is physically with them. And, after His resurrection, they will be joyful again forevermore.

Jesus closes with a parable about the patching of an old garment or an old wineskin. This introduces the new life with Him, a new covenant to replace the old one. The old covenant, starting with Abraham, called for obedience to God as a path to righteousness. Now Jesus has come to make all things new, including how we are to be made righteous—by His payment for our sins on the cross. There is no mixing of a little legalism with this new way; it is all or nothing.

* Anyabwile, Thabiti, "Exalting Jesus in Luke", 2018.

Applications

1. We are celebrating Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday and culminating with Jesus' resurrection one week later. How does God's holiness impact your daily life? Does the concept encourage you or put you off? Our initial response may be resistance, but should lead us to follow Jesus, as Peter did.
2. Do not miss the offer of Christ: His holiness shows us our need for forgiveness—ask Him for that today!

Happy Holy Week! I hope we can all celebrate Resurrection Day with our families this Easter Sunday, keeping in view that resurrection from the dead is the hope and promise of God to His children at the end of the age!

My desire is to highlight Jesus Christ to you. Toward that end, I am available to discuss any biblical topic or question you may have. I especially want to ensure all who read the studies understand how Jesus Christ is distinctively important to the entire world and to each of us individually. Lastly, all Bible studies are available at Capitol Commission's Alabama page: <https://capitolcom.org/state/alabama>.

Plan to attend our in-house Bible Study during session: Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. in Room 602 of the State House.

A key facet empowering our ministry is prayer, especially prayer for our elected leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands Christians to obediently pray for all in authority. A tool for America's churches to help consistently pray for you, our elected leaders, is available to all via: www.Pray1Tim2.org - Select Alabama and sign up for daily email reminders, courtesy of Capitol Commission. Share this link with your home church!