CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Luke Chapter 5 —

The Call to Follow and the Authority of Jesus

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Luke Chapter 5 shows Jesus calling people to follow Him.

In Chapter 4, He announced His mission and showed His authority over demons and disease.

Now He gathers disciples.

He calls fishermen by a lake.

He touches a man with leprosy.

He forgives and heals a paralyzed man.

He calls a tax collector and eats with sinners.

And He teaches that His kingdom brings something new that cannot be squeezed into old forms.

In every story, Jesus shows authority.

Authority over nature, disease, sin, and religious tradition.

And in every story, people must decide how they will respond.

The chapter moves through six movements:

- The Miraculous Catch of Fish (verses 1–11).
- Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy (verses 12–16).
- Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man (verses 17–26).
- The Call of Levi (verses 27–32).
- The Question About Fasting (verses 33–35).
- Parables of the New and the Old (verses 36–39).

The central truth of Luke 5 is:

Jesus has authority over creation, disease, and sin, and He calls ordinary people and sinners to leave everything, follow Him, and receive the new life of His kingdom.

I. BY THE LAKE OF GENNESARET

Luke 5:1 — The Crowd Pressed In

“One day, as the crowd pressed in on Jesus to hear the Word of God, He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret.”

“The crowd pressed in on Jesus.”

People were hungry for truth.

“To hear the Word of God.”

Luke tells us why they came.

Not only for miracles, but for God's Word.

“The Lake of Gennesaret.”

Another name for the Sea of Galilee.

A large freshwater lake, home to many fishermen.

Cross References

Mark 1:16

> As Jesus walked beside Lake Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Matthew 4:18

> Jesus was walking along Lake Galilee when He noticed two brothers, Simon (also called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishermen, throwing their net into the lake.

Mark 4:1

> Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. Such a large crowd gathered that He got into a boat and sat in it on the water, while the people stayed on the shore.

Spiritual Principle

People hunger for the Word of God.

Key Truth

Jesus brought God's Word to ordinary people in ordinary places.

II. TWO BOATS

Luke 5:2 — Washing Their Nets

“He saw two boats at the water's edge, left there by fishermen who were washing their nets.”

“He saw two boats.”

Jesus noticed ordinary things.

“Fishermen who were washing their nets.”

The work was over.

They had fished all night.

They were tired.

And they had caught nothing.

Jesus came to them at the end of a failed night.

Cross References

Mark 1:19

> A little farther on, He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, getting their nets ready.

John 21:3

> Simon Peter said, “I am going fishing.” The others said, “We will go with you.” They went out in the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Matthew 4:21

> Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, in a boat with their father, mending their nets.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus meets people in their ordinary work and their disappointments.

Key Truth

Jesus comes to tired people after long, empty nights.

III. SIMON'S BOAT

Luke 5:3 — Teaching from the Boat

“He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to push out a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.”

“The one belonging to Simon.”

Jesus chose Simon's boat.

“And asked him to push out a little from shore.”

Jesus asked for a small favor first.

Simon gave Jesus his boat.

“Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.”

The water carried His voice to the crowd.

Simon's fishing boat became a pulpit.

Cross References

Mark 4:1

> A very large crowd gathered, so He got into a boat on the lake and sat down while the people stood on the shore.

Matthew 13:2

> So many people came together around Him that He climbed into a boat and sat there, and the whole crowd stayed on the beach.

Mark 3:9

> Because of the crowd, He told His followers to have a small boat ready for Him so the people would not crush Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus uses what we give Him.

Key Truth

Small acts of obedience often come before big callings.

IV. LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP

Luke 5:4 — Let Down Your Nets

“When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch.””

“Launch out into the deep water.”

Go farther.

Go where it is uncomfortable.

“And let down your nets for a catch.”

Jesus expected results.

A carpenter was giving fishing advice to a professional fisherman.

It made no sense by human logic.

Fish were caught at night in shallow water, not in daylight in deep water.

Cross References

John 21:6

> He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some fish.” They did, and they could not pull the net in because there were so many fish.

Matthew 14:29

> Jesus said, “Come.” So Peter climbed out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

Hebrews 11:8

> Abraham trusted God, so when God called him to leave for a land he would later receive, he obeyed. He set out without knowing where he would end up.

Spiritual Principle

Faith obeys Jesus even when it does not make sense.

Application

Where is Jesus calling you to launch out into deeper water?

V. BECAUSE YOU SAY SO

Luke 5:5 — Simon's Obedience

“Simon replied, “Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because You say so, I will let down the nets.””

“Master.”

Simon showed respect.

“We worked hard all night and caught nothing.”

An honest report.

Experience said it was useless.

“But because You say so.”

These are some of the most important words in the Bible.

Simon did not feel like it.

He did not understand it.

But Jesus had spoken.

“I will let down the nets.”

Obedience based on Jesus' word alone.

Cross References

John 21:3

> They went out and got into the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

Psalm 127:1

> If the Lord does not build the house, the builders work for nothing.

Hebrews 11:8

> By faith Abraham obeyed and went, even though he did not know where.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience rests on Jesus' word, not our feelings or experience.

Key Truth

“Because You say so” is enough.

VI. THEIR NETS BEGAN TO BREAK

Luke 5:6 — A Large Number of Fish

“When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.”

“When they had done so.”

Obedience came first.

“They caught such a large number of fish.”

All night: nothing.

One word from Jesus: more than they could handle.

“That their nets began to break.”

God's blessing was bigger than their equipment.

Jesus is Lord of creation, even the fish of the lake.

Cross References

John 21:6

> They threw the net out, and there were so many fish they could not drag it in.

John 21:11

> Simon Peter climbed into the boat and dragged the net to shore. It was full of large fish, 153 of them. Even with so many, the net did not tear.

Psalm 107:24

> They saw what the Lord did, the amazing things He did in the deep sea.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience to Jesus brings blessing beyond our expectations.

Key Truth

What human effort could not do in a night, Jesus did in a moment.

VII. BOTH BOATS BEGAN TO SINK

Luke 5:7 — Calling Their Partners

“So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they filled both boats so full that they began to sink.”

“They signaled to their partners.”

The blessing was too big for one boat.

“They filled both boats so full that they began to sink.”

Overflowing abundance.

God's blessing was meant to be shared.

Cross References

Mark 1:19

> He saw James and John, Zebedee's sons, in their boat preparing their nets.

John 21:11

> The net was full of large fish, yet it did not break.

Malachi 3:10

> Try Me and see, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. I will throw open heaven's windows and pour out more good things than you have room to hold.

Spiritual Principle

God's blessing overflows and is meant to be shared.

Key Truth

Jesus gives more than enough.

VIII. I AM A SINFUL MAN

Luke 5:8 — Peter Fell at Jesus' Knees

“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!””

“When Simon Peter saw this.”

Luke now calls him Simon Peter.

“He fell at Jesus' knees.”

Not to celebrate the catch.

To bow before the Lord.

“Go away from me, Lord.”

He called Him “Master” before.

Now he called Him “Lord.”

“I am a sinful man!”

In the presence of Jesus' holiness, Peter saw his own sin.

Seeing Jesus clearly makes us see ourselves clearly.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:5

> I cried out, “How terrible for me! I am finished! Every word I speak is sinful, and I live among people whose words are sinful too. And now I have looked at the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies!”

Job 42:6

> So now I hate myself, and I change my heart and sit in dust and ashes.

Judges 6:22

> When Gideon realized it was the angel of the Lord, he cried out, “Oh, Lord God! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!”

Spiritual Principle

Seeing Jesus' holiness reveals our sinfulness.

Key Truth

Peter's first response to Jesus' power was humble confession.

IX. ASTONISHED

Luke 5:9 — All His Companions

“For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,”

Experienced fishermen had never seen anything like it.

They knew this was not luck.

It was the power of God.

Astonishment opened their hearts to what Jesus would say next.

Cross References

Mark 6:51

> Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind stopped. They were completely amazed.

Psalm 107:24

> They saw the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep waters.

Mark 4:41

> They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”

Spiritual Principle

God's power produces awe.

Key Truth

The fishermen knew they were in the presence of Someone greater.

X. YOU WILL FISH FOR PEOPLE

Luke 5:10 — Do Not Be Afraid

“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 people.””

“James and John, the sons of Zebedee.”

They would become close disciples with Peter.

“Don't be afraid.”

Peter said, “Go away from me.”

Jesus said, “Don't be afraid.”

Jesus did not leave.

He drew Peter closer.

“From now on you will fish for people.”

A new purpose.

Instead of catching fish for death, he would catch people for life.

Cross References

Matthew 4:19

> Jesus said, “Come, follow Me, and I will teach you how to catch people.”

Mark 1:17

> “Come with Me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishermen who bring in people.”

Jeremiah 16:16

> I will send for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they will catch them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls sinners and gives them a new purpose.

Key Truth

Jesus answered Peter's confession with a calling.

XI. THEY LEFT EVERYTHING

Luke 5:11 — And Followed Him

“So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything, and followed Him.”

“They pulled their boats up on shore.”

At the moment of their greatest catch.

“Left everything.”

Their boats.

Their nets.

The biggest catch of their lives.

“And followed Him.”

Jesus was worth more than all of it.

Cross References

Matthew 4:20

> At once they left their nets and followed Him.

Mark 1:18

> Right away they left their nets behind and went with Him.

Matthew 19:27

> Peter said to Him, “Look, we have left everything to follow You. What will we receive?”

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means leaving everything behind.

Key Truth

They left their best catch to follow the best Master.

XII. A MAN COVERED WITH LEPROSY

Luke 5:12 — If You Are Willing

“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.””

“A man… covered with leprosy.”

Luke the doctor notes how severe it was.

In the Bible, “leprosy” covered several serious skin diseases.

People with it were declared unclean.

They had to live apart from others.

No one touched them.

“He fell with his face to the ground.”

Humble and desperate.

“Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

He did not doubt Jesus' power.

He wondered about Jesus' willingness.

Cross References

Matthew 8:2

> A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, “Lord, if You want to, You can make me clean.”

Mark 1:40

> A man with a skin disease came to Jesus, knelt down, and begged, “If You are willing, You can heal me.”

Leviticus 13:45

> Anyone with this kind of skin disease must tear his clothes, leave his hair uncombed, cover his mouth, and shout to others, “Unclean! Unclean!”

Spiritual Principle

Come to Jesus humbly, trusting His power.

Key Truth

The man knew Jesus could; he was about to learn Jesus would.

XIII. I AM WILLING

Luke 5:13 — Jesus Touched Him

“Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” He said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.”

“Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man.”

No one had touched him in a long time.

Jesus could have healed with a word.

But He touched him first.

Jesus was not made unclean.

The man was made clean.

“I am willing.”

The answer to every humble heart.

“Be clean!”

“And immediately the leprosy left him.”

Cross References

Matthew 8:3

> Jesus reached out and touched him. “I want to,” He said. “Be clean.” At once he was healed.

Mark 1:42

> Right away the disease left him, and he was made clean.

2 Kings 5:14

> His skin became like the skin of a little child, and he was clean.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is willing to cleanse those who come to Him.

Key Truth

Jesus' touch heals what isolates us.

XIV. SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIEST

Luke 5:14 — As a Testimony

“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.””

“Don't tell anyone.”

Jesus did not want to be known mainly as a miracle worker.

Crowds seeking only healing could hinder His teaching ministry.

“Show yourself to the priest.”

The priest would declare him clean.

Then he could return to his family and community.

“As a testimony to them.”

A witness to the priests that God was at work.

Jesus respected the law of Moses.

Cross References

Leviticus 14:2

> These are the instructions for the person with a skin disease on the day he is made clean. He must be brought to the priest.

Matthew 8:4

> Jesus told him, “Do not tell anyone. Go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as proof to them.”

Mark 1:44

> Do not say anything to anyone. Instead, go show yourself to the priest and offer what Moses commanded for your healing, so people will know.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus restores people to community.

Key Truth

Healing included being welcomed back.

XV. THE NEWS SPREAD ALL THE MORE

Luke 5:15 — Crowds Came

“Yet the news about Him spread all the more, so crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.”

“The news about Him spread all the more.”

The man could not keep quiet.

“Crowds of people came.”

“To hear Him and to be healed.”

The demands on Jesus grew.

More people.

More needs.

Cross References

Mark 1:45

> The man went out and began telling everyone, spreading the news so much that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly.

Matthew 4:24

> News about Him spread, and people brought Him all who were sick.

Matthew 9:26

> The news of this spread through the whole region.

Spiritual Principle

The more Jesus does, the more people come.

Key Truth

Great ministry brings great demands.

XVI. JESUS OFTEN WITHDREW

Luke 5:16 — Lonely Places and Prayer

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

“But.”

The crowds grew.

But Jesus did not let them crowd out prayer.

“Jesus often withdrew.”

Not once.

Often.

It was His habit.

“To lonely places and prayed.”

If the Son of God needed time alone with the Father, how much more do we?

Cross References

Mark 1:35

> Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus went off by Himself to a quiet place to pray.

Mark 6:46

> After saying goodbye to them, He went up on a hill to pray.

Matthew 14:23

> When the people had gone, Jesus climbed a hill to pray alone. Night came, and He was still there by Himself.

Spiritual Principle

The busier life becomes, the more we need prayer.

Application

Do you have a regular time and place to be alone with God?

XVII. THE POWER OF THE LORD

Luke 5:17 — Pharisees and Teachers of the Law

“One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.”

“Pharisees and teachers of the law.”

The Pharisees were a group who carefully kept the law and its traditions.

The teachers of the law were experts in Scripture.

Many sincerely loved God's law.

“From every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.”

Jesus had drawn attention.

They came to examine Him.

“The power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal.”

God was ready to act.

Cross References

Mark 2:6

> Some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

Matthew 9:3

Some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This man is speaking against God!”

Acts 10:38

God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good and healing.

Spiritual Principle

God's power is present where Jesus is.

Key Truth

Some came to receive; some came to inspect.

XVIII. CARRYING A PARALYZED MAN

Luke 5:18 — Friends Bringing a Friend

“Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.”

“Some men came carrying a paralyzed man.”

The man could not come by himself.

His friends carried him.

“To lay him before Jesus.”

Their goal was simple.

Get their friend to Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 2:3

Some people came, bringing a paralyzed man carried by four of them.

Matthew 9:2

Some men brought to Him a paralyzed man lying on a mat.

Acts 9:33

> There Peter found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been in bed for eight years.

Spiritual Principle

Some people can only come to Jesus if others carry them.

Application

Who can you help carry to Jesus?

XIX. THROUGH THE ROOF

Luke 5:19 — Lowered Before Jesus

“When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.”

“They could not find a way.”

An obstacle.

“They went up on the roof.”

They did not give up.

“And lowered him… through the tiles.”

Creative.

Determined.

Costly.

“Right in front of Jesus.”

They got him where he needed to be.

Cross References

Mark 2:4

> Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Him and lowered the mat the man was lying on.

Deuteronomy 22:8

> When you build a new house, put a wall around the edge of the roof, so no one falls off and you are not guilty of their death.

Matthew 9:2

> They brought a paralyzed man on a mat.

Spiritual Principle

Faith overcomes obstacles to bring people to Jesus.

Key Truth

Love finds a way.

XX. YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

Luke 5:20 — When Jesus Saw Their Faith

“When Jesus saw their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.””

“When Jesus saw their faith.”

Their faith was visible in their actions.

The faith of the friends mattered.

“Friend.”

A warm, personal word.

“Your sins are forgiven.”

Not what anyone expected.

They came for healing.

Jesus dealt first with the deeper need.

Our greatest need is not physical, but spiritual.

Cross References

Mark 2:5

> When Jesus saw how much they believed, He said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Matthew 9:2

> When Jesus saw their faith, He said, “Take heart, son. Your sins are forgiven.”

Psalm 103:3

> He is the One who pardons every wrong I have done and makes every sickness well.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness is our deepest need.

Key Truth

Jesus sees the need beneath the need.

XXI. WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD?

Luke 5:21 — The Charge of Blasphemy

“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?””

“Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?”

Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming what belongs only to God.

“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

They were right about this.

Only God can forgive sins.

So Jesus was either a blasphemer, or He was God.

There was no middle ground.

Cross References

Mark 2:7

> Why does this man talk like that? He is insulting God! Only God can forgive sins.

Matthew 9:3

> Some of the law teachers thought, “This man is speaking as if he were God.”

Isaiah 43:25

> I am the One, the only One, who erases your wrongs because of who I am. I will keep no record of your sins.

Spiritual Principle

Only God can forgive sins.

Key Truth

By forgiving sins, Jesus claimed the authority of God.

XXII. JESUS KNEW WHAT THEY WERE THINKING

Luke 5:22 — In Your Hearts

“Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

“Jesus knew what they were thinking.”

They did not say it out loud.

But Jesus knew.

Only God knows the heart.

“Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

Jesus addressed the hidden doubt.

Cross References

Mark 2:8

> Right away Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking, and He said, “Why are you thinking these things?”

Matthew 9:4

> Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you think evil things in your hearts?”

Matthew 12:25

> Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, “Every kingdom fighting against itself will be ruined.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows our hidden thoughts.

Key Truth

Nothing in the heart is hidden from Jesus.

XXIII. WHICH IS EASIER?

Luke 5:23 — A Question

“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

It is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven.”

No one can see whether it happened.

It is harder to say, “Get up and walk.”

Everyone would see whether it worked.

Jesus was about to prove the invisible by doing the visible.

Cross References

Mark 2:9

> Which is easier to say to this paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Stand up, take your mat, and walk”?

Matthew 9:5

Is it easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up and walk”?

John 5:8

Jesus said to him, “Stand up. Pick up your mat and walk.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' visible works prove His invisible authority.

Key Truth

The healing would show the forgiveness was real.

XXIV. AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

Luke 5:24 — Get Up and Go Home

“But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So He said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.””

“The Son of Man.”

Jesus' favorite name for Himself.

It comes from Daniel 7, where the Son of Man receives everlasting authority.

“Has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

Not only in heaven.

Here.

Now.

“Get up, take your mat and go home.”

The proof.

Cross References

Mark 2:10

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has the right on earth to forgive sins.

Matthew 9:6

> So you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat, and go home.”

John 5:8

> Get up, pick up your bed, and walk.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has authority to forgive sins.

Key Truth

Forgiveness is available on earth, now, through Jesus.

XXV. IMMEDIATELY HE STOOD UP

Luke 5:25 — Praising God

“Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on, and went home praising God.”

“Immediately he stood up.”

No therapy.

No slow recovery.

“Took what he had been lying on.”

The mat that carried him, he now carried.

“And went home praising God.”

He gave glory to God.

He was forgiven and healed.

Cross References

Mark 2:12

> He got up, took his mat, and walked out in front of everyone.

Matthew 9:7

The man got up and went home.

Acts 3:8

He sprang up on his feet and started walking. He went into the temple area with them, walking, leaping, and giving praise to God.

Spiritual Principle

God's grace produces praise.

Key Truth

The man who was carried in walked out.

XXVI. REMARKABLE THINGS TODAY

Luke 5:26 — Filled with Awe

“Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.””

“Everyone was amazed.”

“And gave praise to God.”

“They were filled with awe.”

“We have seen remarkable things today.”

The word Luke uses can also mean “unexpected” or “beyond belief.”

They had seen sins forgiven and a body healed.

Cross References

Mark 2:12

Everyone was amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Matthew 9:8

The people who saw it were struck with wonder, and they gave glory to God for giving this kind of power to human beings.

Acts 3:10

> They knew he was the beggar who always sat by the temple gate, and they could hardly believe what had happened to him.

Spiritual Principle

God's works should lead us to worship.

Key Truth

When Jesus forgives and heals, God gets the praise.

XXVII. A TAX COLLECTOR NAMED LEVI

Luke 5:27 — Follow Me

“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,”

“A tax collector by the name of Levi.”

Levi is also called Matthew.

Tax collectors were seen as traitors and cheaters.

“Sitting at his tax booth.”

In the middle of his work.

“Follow Me.”

Two words.

Jesus called a man everyone else rejected.

Cross References

Matthew 9:9

> As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. “Follow Me,” He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him.

Mark 2:14

> As He walked along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth. “Follow Me,” Jesus said. And Levi got up and went with Him.

Matthew 4:19

Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls those others reject.

Key Truth

No one is too far gone for Jesus to call.

XXVIII. LEVI LEFT EVERYTHING

Luke 5:28 — He Followed Him

“and Levi got up, left everything, and followed Him.”

“Levi got up.”

An immediate response.

“Left everything.”

The fishermen could go back to fishing.

Levi could not easily go back to tax collecting.

His decision was costly and final.

“And followed Him.”

Levi went on to write the Gospel of Matthew.

Cross References

Matthew 9:9

Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.

Mark 2:14

Levi got up and followed Him.

Matthew 19:27

Peter answered, “We have given up everything to follow You.”

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means a decisive break with the past.

Key Truth

Levi gave up a fortune and gained a Savior.

XXIX. A GREAT BANQUET

Luke 5:29 — Tax Collectors and Others

“Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.”

“Levi held a great banquet for Jesus.”

He celebrated his new life.

“A large crowd of tax collectors and others.”

He invited his friends.

People like him.

He wanted them to meet Jesus too.

Levi's first act as a disciple was evangelism.

Cross References

Matthew 9:10

> While Jesus was eating at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His followers.

Mark 2:15

> Later, Jesus was eating at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and His followers, for many were following Him.

Luke 15:1

> The tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

New believers often reach friends others cannot reach.

Application

Who in your circle needs to meet Jesus?

XXX. WHY DO YOU EAT WITH SINNERS?

Luke 5:30 — The Complaint

“But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to His disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?””

“Complained to His disciples.”

They did not ask Jesus directly.

“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Sharing a meal meant friendship and acceptance.

They thought holiness meant keeping away from sinners.

Jesus showed that holiness reaches out to rescue them.

This is a danger for religious people in every age.

Cross References

Matthew 9:11

> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His followers, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Mark 2:16

> The teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with sinners and tax collectors. They asked His followers, “Why does He eat with them?”

Luke 15:2

> The Pharisees and teachers of the law complained, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Spiritual Principle

True holiness reaches out to sinners.

Spiritual Warning

Religious people can forget that they too needed grace.

XXXI. THE SICK NEED A DOCTOR

Luke 5:31 — Not the Healthy

“Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

A doctor goes where the sick are.

He does not avoid them.

Jesus is the Great Physician.

He came for those who know they are sick with sin.

Luke the doctor would have loved this saying.

Cross References

Matthew 9:12

> Jesus heard this and said, “Healthy people do not need a doctor. Only sick people do.”

Mark 2:17

> Jesus heard them and said, “It is the sick, not the well, who need a doctor.”

Jeremiah 8:22

> Is there no healing medicine in Gilead? Is there no doctor there? Then why are my people not healed?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus came for those who know they need Him.

Key Truth

Jesus is the doctor for sin-sick souls.

XXXII. SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

Luke 5:32 — Not the Righteous

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.””

“I have not come to call the righteous.”

Those who think they are already good enough.

“But sinners to repentance.”

Jesus welcomed sinners.

But He did not leave them as they were.

He called them to repent and change.

Only Luke includes the words “to repentance.”

Cross References

Matthew 9:13

> I did not come to call good people, but sinners.

Mark 2:17

> I did not come to invite good people, but sinners.

1 Timothy 1:15

> You can trust this saying, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners, and I am the greatest sinner of all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes sinners and calls them to repent.

Key Truth

Jesus accepts us as we are, but He loves us too much to leave us that way.

XXXIII. YOURS GO ON EATING

Luke 5:33 — The Question About Fasting

“They said to Him, “John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but Yours go on eating and drinking.””

“John's disciples often fast and pray.”

Fasting was a sign of devotion and mourning.

“But Yours go on eating and drinking.”

Jesus' disciples were feasting at a banquet.

The critics thought they were not serious about God.

Cross References

Matthew 9:14

> Then John's followers came and asked, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your followers do not?”

Mark 2:18

> John's followers and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “Why don't Your followers fast?”

Matthew 11:19

> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a man who eats too much and drinks too much wine, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!”

Spiritual Principle

Religious practices must flow from the right heart and season.

Key Truth

Devotion is not measured only by outward practices.

XXXIV. THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH THEM

Luke 5:34 — No Fasting at a Wedding

“Jesus answered, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?”

“The friends of the bridegroom.”

Wedding guests.

“While he is with them.”

Jesus is the Bridegroom.

A wedding is a time for joy, not mourning.

While Jesus was with them, it was a time to celebrate.

Cross References

Matthew 9:15

> Jesus answered, “The friends of the bridegroom are not sad while he is with them, are they?”

Mark 2:19

> Jesus said, “Wedding guests do not fast while the groom is still with them.”

John 3:29

> The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who stands by the bridegroom is glad when he hears his voice.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' presence brings joy.

Key Truth

Following Jesus is like being at a wedding feast.

XXXV. THE BRIDEGROOM TAKEN AWAY

Luke 5:35 — Then They Will Fast

“But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.””

“The bridegroom will be taken from them.”

A quiet hint of the cross.

“Taken” suggests being taken by force.

“In those days they will fast.”

Fasting has its place.

After Jesus ascended, the early church did fast and pray.

Jesus was not rejecting fasting, but teaching its proper time and purpose.

Cross References

Matthew 9:15

> The day will come when the groom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.

Mark 2:20

> But the time is coming when the groom will be taken away, and on that day they will fast.

John 16:20

> I tell you the truth, you will cry and be sad, but the world will be glad. You will be sad, but your sadness will turn into joy.

Spiritual Principle

There is a time to feast and a time to fast.

Key Truth

Jesus spoke of His death early in His ministry.

XXXVI. A NEW PATCH ON AN OLD GARMENT

Luke 5:36 — It Will Not Match

“He told them this parable: “No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old.”

“No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one.”

It would ruin the new.

And it would not fit the old.

Jesus did not come merely to patch up old religion.

He came to bring something new.

Cross References

Matthew 9:16

> No one sews a patch of new cloth on an old coat. The patch would shrink and pull away, making the tear worse.

Mark 2:21

> No one sews unshrunk cloth on an old coat. If he does, the patch will pull away, the new from the old, and make a worse tear.

Ephesians 4:22

> You were taught to take off your old self, the one that belonged to your old way of life and was ruined by its lying desires.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does not patch old lives; He makes new ones.

Key Truth

The gospel is not an add-on to an old way of life.

XXXVII. NEW WINE INTO OLD WINESKINS

Luke 5:37 — The Skins Will Burst

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.”

“No one pours new wine into old wineskins.”

Old wineskins were dry and brittle.

New wine was still fermenting and expanding.

“The new wine will burst the skins.”

The life of the kingdom cannot be contained in rigid old forms.

Both would be lost.

Cross References

Matthew 9:17

> People do not put new wine into old leather bags. If they do, the bags will break, the wine will spill, and the bags will be ruined.

Mark 2:22

> No one pours new wine into old wineskins, or the wine will split the skins.

Joshua 9:13

> These wineskins were new when we filled them, but look how cracked they are now.

Spiritual Principle

The new life of Christ needs a new heart to hold it.

Key Truth

The kingdom of God cannot be squeezed into old patterns.

XXXVIII. NEW WINESKINS

Luke 5:38 — For New Wine

“No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.”

New life needs new hearts.

God does not just reform us.

He makes us new.

Fishermen.

A man with leprosy.

A tax collector.

All received new life and a new way of living.

Cross References

Matthew 9:17

> They pour new wine into new bags, and both are kept safe.

Mark 2:22

> New wine needs new wineskins.

2 Corinthians 5:17

> Whoever is joined to Christ has been made into something new. What was old has passed away. Look, something brand new has come!

Spiritual Principle

God gives new hearts for new life.

Key Truth

In Christ, we become new.

XXXIX. THE OLD IS BETTER

Luke 5:39 — Resistance to the New

“And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, ‘The old is better.’””

“No one after drinking old wine wants the new.”

Only Luke includes this saying.

People get comfortable with what they know.

“The old is better.”

Many resist what Jesus brings simply because it is new and unfamiliar.

Jesus understood why people resist change.

But comfort with the old must not keep us from what God is doing.

God's ancient path of faith is good, but He fulfills it in Christ.

Cross References

Matthew 9:17

> New wine is put into new wineskins.

Mark 2:22

> Pour new wine into new skins.

Jeremiah 6:16

> Stop where the roads meet and look around. Ask which way is the old and good road, and travel on it. Your souls will find rest there. But you answered, “We refuse to go that way.”

Spiritual Principle

Comfort with the familiar can make us resist what God is doing.

Spiritual Warning

Do not let “the old is better” keep you from the new life Jesus gives.

XL. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM LUKE 5

1. Jesus Calls Ordinary People

“From now on you will fish for people.”

Principle:

Jesus calls fishermen and tax collectors to follow Him and transforms their lives.

2. Discipleship Means Leaving Everything

“They… left everything, and followed Him.”

Principle:

True discipleship means leaving everything behind and trusting Him.

3. Jesus Has Authority to Heal and Forgive

“The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

Principle:

Jesus heals the body and forgives sins, proving His divine power.

4. Jesus Welcomes Sinners

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Principle:

Jesus welcomes sinners and outcasts, offering repentance and new life.

5. The Kingdom Requires Transformation

“New wine must be poured into new wineskins.”

Principle:

The kingdom of God cannot simply be added to old ways; it makes us new.

XLI. FOUR PEOPLE JESUS TOUCHED

Luke 5 shows four very different people meeting Jesus.

Peter the Fisherman

A sinful man who fell at Jesus' knees.

Jesus gave him a new purpose.

The Man with Leprosy

An outcast no one would touch.

Jesus touched him and made him clean.

The Paralyzed Man

A helpless man carried by friends.

Jesus forgave him and made him walk.

Levi the Tax Collector

A man everyone despised.

Jesus called him to follow.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

No one is too sinful, too unclean, too helpless, or too despised for Jesus.

XLII. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

In Luke 5, Jesus shows authority in every area.

Over Creation

“They caught such a large number of fish.”

Over Disease

“Be clean!”

Over Sin

“Your sins are forgiven.”

Over Human Hearts

“Jesus knew what they were thinking.”

Over Lives

“Follow Me.”

Over Religious Tradition

“New wine must be poured into new wineskins.”

Key Truth

There is no area of life where Jesus does not have authority.

XLIII. RESPONDING TO JESUS

Luke 5 shows the right responses to Jesus.

Obedience

“Because You say so, I will let down the nets.”

Humility

“I am a sinful man!”

Faith

“Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

Determination

“They went up on the roof.”

Surrender

“Left everything, and followed Him.”

Witness

“Levi held a great banquet.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Meeting Jesus calls for obedience, humility, faith, surrender, and witness.

XLIV. WHAT LUKE 5 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is Lord of Creation

“Launch out into the deep water.”

He Is Holy

“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

He Is Willing to Cleanse

“I am willing. Be clean!”

He Prays

“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

He Forgives Sins

“Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

He Is the Son of Man

“The Son of Man has authority on earth.”

He Is the Great Physician

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

He Is the Bridegroom

“The bridegroom… is with them.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the holy Lord who willingly cleanses, forgives, and calls sinners to new life.

XLV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why was it hard for Simon to obey Jesus' command to let down the nets?

He had fished all night and caught nothing, and fishing in deep water by day made no sense to an experienced fisherman.

Question 2

What did Simon say that showed his faith?

“Because You say so, I will let down the nets.”

Question 3

How did Peter respond to the great catch of fish?

He fell at Jesus' knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

Question 4

What new purpose did Jesus give Peter?

“From now on you will fish for people.”

Question 5

Why was it remarkable that Jesus touched the man with leprosy?

People with leprosy were unclean and isolated. No one touched them, yet Jesus touched him and made him clean.

Question 6

What did Jesus often do when the crowds grew?

He withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Question 7

How did the friends of the paralyzed man show their faith?

They carried him and lowered him through the roof to get him to Jesus.

Question 8

Why did Jesus forgive the man's sins before healing him?

Because forgiveness is our deepest need.

Question 9

Why did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy?

Because only God can forgive sins, and Jesus claimed that authority.

Question 10

What did Levi do after he followed Jesus?

He held a banquet so his friends could meet Jesus.

Question 11

What did Jesus mean by “It is not the healthy who need a doctor”?

He came for those who know they are sinners and need Him.

Question 12

What should Luke 5 change about the way Christians live today?

Luke 5 should cause believers to live:

- Obeying Jesus even when it does not make sense.
- Humbly confessing their sin.
- Fishing for people.
- Leaving whatever keeps them from following Jesus.
- Making regular time for prayer.
- Bringing friends to Jesus.
- Welcoming sinners with grace and calling them to repentance.
- Receiving the new life Jesus gives instead of clinging to the old.

XLVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Luke 5 asks several important questions.

Will I Obey Jesus Because He Says So?

Even when my experience says it is useless?

Have I Seen My Sin in the Light of Jesus?

Like Peter?

Have I Left Everything to Follow Him?

Or am I holding something back?

Do I Believe Jesus Is Willing?

To cleanse and help me?

Do I Make Time to Pray?

Even when life is busy?

Who Am I Carrying to Jesus?

Like the friends of the paralyzed man?

Do I Welcome Sinners?

Or do I keep my distance like the critics?

Am I Holding On to the Old?

Or am I letting Jesus make me new?

XLVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Because You Say So”

Simon was tired.

He had worked all night.

He had caught nothing.

He was washing his nets.

He was ready to go home.

Then a carpenter told him to go back out.

Into deep water.

In the daytime.

Everything Simon knew said it would not work.

But Simon said:

“Because You say so, I will let down the nets.”

And the nets began to break.

This creates a powerful principle.

Our experience is not the final word.

Our feelings are not the final word.

Jesus' word is the final word.

Principle:

When Jesus speaks, obey, even when it makes no sense, because His word is enough.

XLVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Luke Chapter 5 shows Jesus calling people to follow Him.

He fills empty nets.

He calls fishermen to fish for people.

He touches a man no one would touch.

He withdraws to pray.

He forgives a paralyzed man and makes him walk.

He calls a tax collector.

He eats with sinners.

He teaches that His kingdom brings new life.

Luke 5 therefore reminds us:

Never let past failure stop you from obeying Jesus.

Never think you are too sinful for Him to call.

Never doubt that Jesus is willing.

Never let busyness crowd out prayer.

Never keep your distance from those who need Jesus.

The church does not need people who only watch the miracles.

It needs:

People who obey because Jesus says so.

People who leave everything to follow Him.

People who carry their friends to Jesus.

And people who welcome sinners and call them to new life.

The same Jesus still calls:

Tell people that Jesus is willing to cleanse.

Tell people that their sins can be forgiven.

Tell people that Jesus calls sinners.

Tell people that He makes all things new.

And as you live:

Obey.

Follow.

Pray.

Bring others to Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Jesus meets us in our ordinary work and our empty nights.

Thank You that His word is greater than our experience.

Thank You that He calls sinners like Peter and Levi.

Thank You that He is willing to touch and cleanse the unclean.

Thank You that He forgives sins and makes the helpless walk.

Thank You that He is the Great Physician for sin-sick souls.

Thank You that He makes us new.

Forgive us when we have trusted our experience more than His word.

Forgive us when we have held on to things instead of following Him.

Forgive us when we have let busyness crowd out prayer.

Forgive us when we have kept our distance from those who need Him.

Help us say, “Because You say so.”

Help us leave everything to follow Jesus.

Give us friends we can carry to Him.

Make us fishers of people.

And make us new wineskins for the new life of Your kingdom.

“Because You say so, I will let down the nets.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

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

Central Truth

Jesus has authority over creation, disease, and sin, and He calls ordinary people and sinners to leave everything, follow Him, and receive the new life of His kingdom.

Luke 5 in One Sentence

Jesus fills Peter's empty nets and calls fishermen to follow Him, touches and cleanses a man with leprosy, forgives and heals a paralyzed man lowered through a roof, calls Levi the tax collector and eats with sinners, and teaches that the new life of His kingdom cannot be poured into old wineskins.