

CAPITOL STUDIES

FEBRUARY 19, 2025 • WEEK 6



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



Miracles In Galilee



CALVIN COOLIDGE WAS THE ONLY U.S. PRESIDENT born on July 4 (though *three* U.S. presidents have died on July 4: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe). The calm, cautious Governor of Massachusetts entered office as the 30th President in 1923 after the death his predecessor, President Warren G. Harding. He was then elected in his own right in 1924, alongside a former Lincolnite (Charles G. Dawes).

Few things could make John Calvin Coolidge Jr. angry, and for that reason, he was nicknamed “Cool Cal.” However, when his ire was stirred by big-government wastefulness and over-taxation, “Silent Cal” is purported to have said, “Collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery.”¹ No one really likes taxes. Even in Jesus’ day, tax collectors were hated by most everyone, except Jesus.

Pastor Arin Hess,
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I. THE LAKE

Luke 5:1-3

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; ²and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. ³And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. ²

The shore of the lake of Gennesaret, otherwise known as the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberius, made a perfect amphitheater with excellent acoustics. It was a wonderful place for people to sit and listen to a teacher. In this story, as was often the case when Jesus was teaching or preaching, the crowd pressed around Him to hear the Word of God. Can you envision the people crowding closer and closer to Jesus as He spoke? On this particular day, providentially, Peter and the other fishermen were there, washing their nets after a night of unproductive fishing. Jesus saw the boats and an idea came into His mind: He could teach from the boat out in the water. People wouldn't be right on top of Him. Everyone would be able to see. He could speak to all. So, Jesus asked Simon to put the boat "out a little way." Then He began to teach.

Luke 5:4-5

When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets."

When Jesus was finished, He told Simon to put "out into the deep water," and let down his nets. Simon protested. Normally, the fish that were caught in shallow water close to shore at nighttime moved back out to the very deep portion of the sea, a place too deep to be caught in nets in daylight. Little by little, Jesus moved Peter out of his comfort zone. Peter was probably thinking, "He doesn't really know anything about fishing. He's a... a teacher, a carpenter." But out of respect, Peter obeyed Jesus, the One he knew as Master. Perhaps Jesus did this to pay Peter for the use of his boat or maybe to provide for his family while he followed Jesus. But we know He did this to prepare Peter for the work that He had for Him to do. **They may have been master fishermen, but Jesus was/is Master of every situation.**

Luke 5:6-11

When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; ⁷so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."



¹¹ When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Peter knew the failure that came through his own efforts and the success that resulted from obeying Jesus' Word. His nets were fuller than they had ever been, so full he needed help from his fellow fishermen, which then resulted in both boats being so full they began to sink. Immediately, Peter was overwhelmed with fear of the Lord (and probably the fear of sinking). He was broken over his own sinfulness as he realized he was in the presence of the Holy One Who ruled over every realm, even the fish. There was no other way to explain it. (Compare Isaiah's vision of the Lord in chapter 6 of Isaiah.) Note that familiar phrase, "Do not fear." Simon and his companions, including James and John, were now at a point where they could be used by the Lord to "catch men." They truly left everything to follow Him. "About four years after fishing with Jesus, Simon Peter would be waist deep in another catch, not of fish but of people. Luke tells us that when he threw out the net of the gospel on the day of Pentecost, he gathered in three thousand souls (Acts 2: 28-41)."³

II. THE LEPER

Luke 5:12

While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

The problem of leprosy was far reaching in that day. (Nine cases are recorded in the Bible.) "While the OT term for leprosy included other skin diseases, this man may have actually had true leprosy (Hansen's Disease), or else his cure would not have created such a sensation."⁴ This leprosy was "one in which the disease, starting from a small spot ate away the flesh until the wretched sufferer was left with only the stump of a hand or a leg. It was literally a living death.... The most terrible thing about it was the isolation it brought. The leper was to cry 'Unclean! Unclean!' Wherever he went; he was to dwell alone... outside the camp... banished from society."⁵ Desperate, this leper falls on his face before Jesus, meekly saying, "Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean." The leper did not question Jesus' ability to heal him. "The Greek construction suggests that maybe the Lord would be willing, but maybe not—and if He wasn't, who would fault Him? This was a leper at His feet."⁶

Luke 5:13-14

And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus, in compassion, reached out and touched the untouchable, saying simply, "I am willing." Imagine how it felt to be touched *by Jesus* after so long without the tender touch of any human being. With the command and touch of omnipotence, the leper was **immediately** healed.





But Jesus didn't stop there. He was concerned about the man's full reintegration into society. A leper who was cleansed needed to follow through with the procedures of purification in the temple (Lev. 13-14). How might this relate to a newborn child of God, a sinner cleansed from his sin?

Luke 5:15-16

But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Though the leper was charged by Jesus to tell no one, how could he keep quiet? Mark 1:45 says, "he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere." People were coming from even greater distances now to hear Jesus. He took time to teach and heal their sicknesses. Wherever He went, He was surrounded with people in need. But Jesus knew He needed time alone to pray, recharge, and recover. What can we learn from this?

III. THE LAME

Luke 5:17

One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

Jesus' crowds continued to grow. Pharisees and other teachers of the law came from **every village** in Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem, probably to see who this Jesus was. Though the power of the Lord to heal was with Him and clearly validated His deity, verse 21 indicates the scribes and Pharisees had no desire to believe.

Luke 5:18-21

And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. ¹⁹But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. ²⁰Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

The paralyzed man could not get to Jesus on his own, but he had friends who bore him up and were determined to get him there. Though it appeared there was no way they could do that because of the crowd, they did not give up. Their loving effort in carrying him to the roof and letting him down through the tiles paid off. Jesus dealt with the man's greater need first. He saw the sincere faith of all of them and proclaimed forgiveness for his sins. To the scribes and Pharisees, this was blasphemy because only God could forgive sins. "A certain section of the Jews...



desired not great principles but a rule to cover every conceivable situation. From the Ten Commandments... [t]housands of rules and regulations began to emerge. These were called the Oral Law, and they began to be set even above the Ten Commandments.”⁷ As Swindoll reminds us, “Like the Pharisees, when our spiritual lists get longer and our negative mentality gets deeper, our God gets smaller. We resist His acting outside our realm of understanding.”⁸

Luke 5:22-26

But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”— He said to the paralytic—“I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.” ²⁵Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. ²⁶They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

Jesus’ omniscience made Him well aware of the thoughts and reasonings of the scribes and Pharisees. He asked questions to point out their foolishness, then clearly showed His authority and omnipotence by “immediately” healing the lame man. (This is the first time Luke uses the name “Son of Man” in this Gospel.) Joy filled the heart of the paralytic as he went home glorifying God. “All” in the crowd that day were astonished. With fear like Simon Peter, they also recognized the greatness of One Who could only be God.

IV. LEVI

Luke 5:27-29

After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” ²⁸And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. ²⁹And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.

“Tax collectors were among the most despised persons in this society. The money they collected was often partly extorted for personal gain and partly a tax for Rome, which made them not only thieves, but also traitors to the Jewish nation.”⁹ They were often considered in the same class as prostitutes. Jesus took the initiative to enlist a follower from a class that his society despised. He noticed Levi who, after his encounter with Jesus, changed his name to Matthew. Jesus knew Levi’s heart. When Levi left everything behind and followed Jesus, it was an irreversible decision. He was so excited that he couldn’t wait to share Jesus with others in the same occupation. “Jesus made sinners feel welcome in His presence. Consequently, He felt welcome in theirs.”¹⁰

Luke 5:30-32

The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?”





³¹And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

The Pharisees and scribes continued to find fault with Jesus and His disciples wherever they could. They tried their best to trick Jesus with their questions, but His answers always silenced their mockery and rebuke. In this case, He gave them an explanation they could not refute—sick people, not healthy ones, need a doctor. Even so, those who recognized their sinfulness are the ones Jesus called to repent.

Luke 5:33-35

And they said to Him, “The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.”

³⁴And Jesus said to them, “You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? ³⁵But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.”

Jesus fasted, at least once, according to His own teaching—in private. All other fasting, except that done for a feast day, was to be a voluntary sober time for specific reasons such as penitence and earnest prayer. Jesus explained there was a time to fast and a time to feast, a time to be somber and a time to be joyful. His disciples were like wedding attendants who could not fast because they were so happy for the bridegroom. With a hint of what lay ahead for Him, Jesus did say that one day they would fast—when the bridegroom was gone.

Luke 5:36-39

And He was also telling them a parable: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

³⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.

³⁸But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, “The old is good enough.”

Those who had acquired a taste for Old Covenant ceremonies and Pharisaic traditions were loath to give them up for the new wine of Jesus’ teaching. In Luke, Jesus is not simply calling sinners to follow Him; He is calling them to repentance, which entails an abandonment of their former ways of thinking and living and a complete break with their former life and sometimes profession. Celebration is associated with repentance and change—joy! Levi celebrates the joy that comes with Jesus’ call. He leaves the camp of sinners but does not ignore the sinners.

CONCLUSION

In each of the miracles in this chapter, Jesus words and miracles proclaimed, “I AM GOD—God is among you. I call sinners, not the righteous, to repentance.” Salvation had come to all mankind—Gentiles as well as Jews, the outcast as well as the upright.



“Call me, Lord, out from a shallow faith near the shore, which requires no risks and offers no rewards. Call me to a deeper commitment to You. And when you call, grant that I would be quick in my boat, swift to my oars, and fast with my nets. And I pray, grant me the eyes to see who it is who labors by my side—an awesome and almighty God. Take me to a place where I have worked hard by my own strength and yet ended up with empty nets. Take me there to show me the depths of Your dominion and the net-breaking fullness of Your power. Keep me ever aware that You are Lord. And ever aware that I am a sinful person. And in that knowledge, keep me ever on my knees before You. At Your bidding, O Master, I will let down my nets. And at your bidding I will leave them forever behind. For what You have to offer is infinitely more than all the seas of this world ever could.”¹¹

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arin Hess".

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert W. Wood, “Hate Paying Taxes? 12 Quotes You’ll Love,” *Forbes.com*, Dec. 2, 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertwood/2012/12/02/hate-paying-taxes-12-quotes-youll-love/>
2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
3. Charles Swindoll, *The Origination of Something Glorious*, Insight for Living, Word Publishing, 1994, pg. 115.
4. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1460.
5. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, revised edition, The Daily Bible Study Series, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1975, pg. 58.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Barclay, pg. 60.
8. Swindoll, pg. 121.
9. *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1407-1408.
10. Swindoll, pg. 127.
11. Ken Gire, *Intimate Moments with the Savior*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1989, pg. 33.



