

I. Choosing the First Disciples (Simon (Peter), James, and John)

- A. Lake Gennesaret - (vs. 1) Gennesaret was the name of the town and the plain on the sea of Galilee's northwest coast. "Sea" is a very appropriate name for this body of water. Its surface area is roughly 64 square miles, 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Jesus was already drawing such large crowds that He was seeking large open spaces in which to teach. The scene here is hundreds of people pressing around to get close enough to hear and see Him.
- B. The Fishermen - (vs. 2) Only Luke tells us of this miraculous fishing story and what he wants us to see is the potential for offense or rejection that Simon could have had. Even if Simon believed that Jesus was the Messiah, it didn't mean that the Messiah knew how to fish or anything about it. Simon, on the other hand, knew his trade and knew that Jesus was not a fisherman.
 1. Luke pointed out that there were two boats side-by-side and the fishermen were washing their nets. Simon was a drag-net fisher. This was commonly run between two boats moving side by side. Simon ran a drag-net between his boat and his partner's James and John's boat. A drag-net of that day was made of linen and used only at night when the fish could not see them. They also would have only used them in shallow water where the net could reach the bottom, thus not allowing the fish to swim below the net.
- C. Put out into the Deep for a Catch - (vs. 4) Now it is day time and Jesus tells Simon to launch his boat out into the deep and let down the net he just washed. Multiple things are totally wrong with this strategy.
 1. You shouldn't use a drag-net in deep water during the daytime. The fish can see it and simply swim under it or away from it.
 2. It's difficult and very inefficient to run a drag-net with just one boat, yet that's what Jesus asked Simon to do.
 3. No one wants to fish all night, and then clean up their nets just to throw them back into the water in a time wasting manner just so they can spend time cleaning them again.

- D. At your Word, Master (vs. 5) There were many times when Simon did not respond rightly to various things Jesus asked or did. However, this time he knocks it out of the park. Jesus just told the Nazarenes that God was looking for humble hearts who would take Him at His word, believing in His goodness and leadership. He tests hearts by asking them to do things that don't make sense or challenge their mindsets. Everything Jesus was asking Simon to do made no sense and was on the verge of insulting, as he had just washed his nets after fishing all night.
- E. The Miraculous Catch (vs. 6–7) However, Simon obeyed Jesus at His word and caught so many fish that he didn't have the strength to haul the nets in. Simon called his partners, who helped him and they filled both boats with fish. Luke makes sure we catch the detail that the nets were breaking there was such an abundance of fish.
- F. Simon's Response (vs. 8) Since Simon's trade was fishing, he knew more than most that Jesus commanded fish to swim into his net. Simon's response was actually in fear of judgment, knowing that only God could command animals and fish to do His will. (Is. 6:5; Mat. 8:8; Rev. 6:14-17)
- G. Jesus Assurance and Calling (vs. 10) Jesus tells Simon not to be afraid of Jesus' judgment upon his sins and calls him to "follow him". This particular term was used often by a Master of some trade to a potential apprentice or a Rabbi to a potential disciple. It was an invitation to learn the trade from the Master so that you could Master it yourself in time. This is Luke's trademark language when Jesus invited a person to live and work closely with Him in ministry.
- H. They left Everything (vs. 11) Luke will emphasize the radical nature of whole hearted abandonment to Jesus many times in His gospel. Here is our first encounter with this theme. Simon had just caught the largest catch of his entire life, a truly once in a lifetime moment. However, Simon and his companions chose the priority of following Jesus over all else.

II. Healing a Leper

- A. A man full of Leprosy - (vs 12) The accounts are clear that Jesus healed hundreds or more likely thousands of people during His ministry. What this tells us is that if a particular healing is highlighted by the Spirit, it is because there is a greater message being spoken than just the physical healing. This particular miracle was

to be a testimony to the reader about Jesus' person and work. It authenticated His heart to those who felt untouchable and full of sin.

B. According to Jewish law and customs, one had to keep 6 feet (2 meters) from a leper. Culturally, the only thing more defiling than contact with a leper was contact with a dead body. For these reasons, leprosy was considered a picture of sin and its effects. It is a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts its victim and makes him essentially dead while alive. Therefore, society and religious people scorned lepers. Rabbis especially despised them, and saw lepers as those under the special judgment of God, deserving no pity or mercy.

C. If you're Willing, you Can Make me Clean - (vs. 12) The leper had no doubt about the ability of Jesus to heal; his only question was if Jesus was willing to heal. This was significant because leprosy was so hopeless in the ancient world that healing a leper was compared to raising the dead; yet this leper knew that all Jesus needed was to be willing. The language that the leper uses indicated he wanted more than physical healing. He wants cleansing, not only from the leprosy, but also from all its debilitating effects on his life and soul.

“The leper is sick in mind as well as body. In my vast experience and research concerning disease it is abundantly clear that there is an attitude to leprosy different from the attitude to any other disfiguring disease. It is associated with shame and horror, and carries, in some mysterious way, a sense of guilt...shunned and despised, frequently do lepers consider taking their own lives unfortunately many do.” - Dr. A. B. MacDonald

D. He put out His Hand and Touched him - (vs. 13) Jesus heals bodies, raises the dead, commands the wind and waves, and dispels demons with a single word. Yet here, Jesus reaches out to the man and touches him. This was most likely the first time this man had felt someone touch him in years as he was deemed untouchable. Jesus is beyond simply “willing” to heal the leper. He loves him dearly and wants to be near him and impact his heart and mind with love.

E. Tell no one - (vs. 14) Jesus often commanded those that He healed or delivered not to tell anyone who He was. There are all sorts of opinions as to why He did this. The most common one is that “He was not ready to be revealed yet, and did not want to draw attention to Himself.” Although this is probably the most popular opinion, there are definitely some other reasons to offer. So far in Luke’s Gospel, thousands of people are already seeking Him out, and His Father spoke audibly from heaven telling everyone who He was at His baptism.

1. Friendship and Intimacy - The original Greek translated, “tell no one”, strongly suggests a confidentiality of friendship rather than a command of silence. In other words, Jesus did something for this man out of personal friendship, nearness, and compassion for him. A possible better translation would be, “This is about me and you, so let's keep this between us.”
2. Truly Known - As we can see in just a few verses, Jesus becomes known as a healer. However, we must ask ourselves if this is what He wanted? Did he want to primarily be seen as a healer of diseases or something more?

I don't believe Jesus' miracles were primarily calculated to make Him famous or a celebrity (though they certainly did give testimony to His ministry). More so, Jesus healed to meet the needs of specific individuals and to demonstrate the evident power of the Messiah in the setting of love and care for the personal needs of people. - David Guzik

- F. Go show yourself to the Priest - (vs. 14) Jesus told the man to go and show himself to the priest because the law of Moses required it for him to enter back into society. When the man reported it to the priests, they had to perform ceremonies that were rarely, if ever, practiced. However, Jesus wanted to do more than just heal this man, He wanted him restored to his community and family. He wanted to give Him life and life abundantly. (Lev. 14)

III. Healing a Paralytic

- A. Pharisees and Teachers of the Law from Everywhere Sitting By - (vs. 17) Luke is clear that these individuals have come from far and wide as skeptics, versus the people who have come from far and wide to be healed. The name Pharisee literally means “the separated ones”. They separated themselves from everything they thought was unholy, and they thought everyone was separated from the love and approval of God, except themselves of course.
- B. The Power of God was Present to Heal Them - (vs. 17) This verse indicates two things. First, that Luke wants us to know once again that Jesus emptied Himself of His power and relied upon the empowering and timing of the Spirit to heal. Second, original Greek points to the Pharisees as the definite article of the “them” in the phrase “to heal them”. The power and desire of God was there to heal the

Pharisee's hearts and they will be given the opportunity to be healed of their pride and blindness through the healing of the paralytic.

- C. Lowered the Paralytic through the Roof and He saw their Faith - (vs. 20) Jesus looked up at the four men who had just torn the roof off the building, struggling with crude ropes tied to each corner of the stretcher with their friend on it. The verse is clear that this is the "faith" that he saw. This verse is not talking about something internal that He saw in the spirit. It's talking about their physical actions. Their bold, determined action to bring their friend to Jesus proved they had real faith for their friend to be healed.
- D. Your sins are forgiven you - (vs. 20) We see in a minute that Jesus primarily said this to provoke the prideful minds of the Pharisees, but he is also saying this in truth to the paralyzed man. It is very important to understand that Jesus is not equating this man's sins with his condition because in a moment he's going to clearly differentiate "the power to forgive sins" and the "power to heal" as two separate things. The idea here is not that his sins caused his paralyzed condition but rather that he had a greater need than to be healed from paralysis.
- E. Who is this who speaks blasphemies - (vs. 21) The religious leaders used the right kind of logic. They correctly believed that only God could forgive sins, and they were even correct for examining this new teacher. Their error was in refusing to see who Jesus actually was: God the Son, who has the authority to forgive sins. He was not rejected because of their theology but rather because of their sin and pride which Jesus wanted to heal.
- F. Which is easier to say - (vs. 24) Jesus is actually saying that "it's easy to say things that are unprovable". You can say to someone "your sins are forgiven" but how do you know it? How can it be proven that their sins are actually forgiven?
- G. Son of Man has Power to Forgive Sins - Using his question from the verse before, Jesus says "I'm now going to prove to you that I have power to forgive sins, when I tell this man to get up, pick up his bed and walk, and he does then you can know that I also have the power to forgive sins."
1. Son of Man - This is the first time Jesus uses this title to refer to himself in Luke's gospel but it won't be the last. This is actually Jesus's favorite title to refer to himself and we only see it one place in the entire Old Testament, so we know exactly the claim that He is making. It is of note that he will claim this very same claim to some of these very same men in

a short time and it will seal His death. I don't just have the power to forgive sins but I also have the power to judge them. (Dan. 7:13-14)

IV. Choosing Levi (Matthew)

- A. He saw a Tax Collector - (vs. 27) In that day, tax collectors were despised as traitors and extortioners. The Jewish people rightly considered them traitors because they worked for the Roman government and had the force of Roman soldiers behind them to oppress the people with overtaxation. The Jewish people rightly considered them extortioners because they could keep whatever they over-collected for profit. A tax collector bid against others for the tax-collecting contract. The Romans awarded the contract to the highest bidder. The man collected taxes, paid the Romans what he promised, and kept the remainder. When a Jew entered the customs service, he was regarded as an outcast from society. He was disqualified as a judge or a witness in a court session, was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community, his disgrace extended to his family.
- B. Follow Me - (vs. 27) The same unmerited invitation that He offered to the fishermen was offered now to an individual who was currently living a lifestyle of extortion, greed, and traitorous oppression. He does not ask him to repent or confess and He does not insist on correct theological understanding before he can come into fellowship. If He says it to this man, He says it to all.
- C. Then Levi gave a Great Feast with a Great Number of Tax Collectors - (vs. 29) The joy of Levi causes him to invite all his friends and he throws a feast. This must have been quite a large and public feast as there were also Pharisees and other religious leaders there who watched from a distance with disdain. Shared meals in the Mediterranean world symbolized shared lives, and for some, an endorsement of acceptance. The religious leaders objected to Jesus and His disciples eating and drinking with these tax collectors and sinners because of the supposed risk of assumed endorsement and ceremonial defilement. "Sinners," to the Pharisees, were those who lived unfaithfully to God: irreligious people.
- D. I have not Come to Call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance - (vs. 32) Even though the question was posed to the disciples, Jesus answered it. It's important to note that Jesus does not give their sinful actions and thoughts a pass. The call for Levi to come follow Him did require repentance but invitation had to come first. He has invited sinners into relationship with Him, so that He can call them to repent through relationship. The initial repentance that He asked of Levi resulted

in feast-throwing joy. He equates their sinful condition to a sickness that needs to be cured by a physician.

V. The Question of Fasting

- A. Why Don't you Fast according to Tradition? (vs. 33) Jesus was already known as a gifted and respected teacher of the law. He seemingly was not walking in the tradition of mournful fasting which was a regular practice (two times per week) of both the Pharisees and John the Baptist. They mourned and fasted for righteousness sake. We would use the language of intimacy and sensitivity today to define the heart behind why they fasted.
- B. Can the Friends of the Bridegroom Mourn when He is With Them? (vs. 34) You must picture the scene. All sorts of notoriously wicked people are sitting around feasting in joy and laughter. There were stories being shared by friends and cheerful celebrations as another favorite dish was passed around the table. In the midst of it sits Jesus who is clearly as joyful as they are as he shares in the laughter of his new found relationships. More than likely, there was some coarse language, inappropriate stories, and probably more than one who had had too much to drink. As the religious leaders observed the scene, they insisted that Jesus bring a stronger spirit of mourning and repentance and less joy.
1. Jesus uses the picture of a wedding feast referring to himself as the Bridegroom and the individuals at the feast as His friends. Not only is this a word picture, but it is also exactly what is happening before their eyes.

There was a popular rabbinic text called the Scroll of Fasting, and in it was a custom that said that fasting was forbidden on certain specified days devoted to joyous celebration of Israel's blessings from God. Jesus appealed to this kind of thinking. - David Guzik

2. During the weeklong wedding feast of Jesus's day, it was understood that joy was more important than conformity to religious rituals. If any ceremonial observance would detract from the joy of a wedding feast, it was not required. Jesus said that His followers should have this kind of happiness and outlook in everyday life.
- C. He Will be Taken Away and then They will Fast. - (vs. 35) He meant that He was the bridegroom, who had come to claim His bride, (his people). His disciples were His friends (attendants) who rejoiced at this upcoming wedding with Him.

Therefore, to compel them to fast and mourn was inappropriate. Thus, Jesus rebuking His questioners inferred that if the Pharisees knew who He was they would be rejoicing as well.

However, Jesus implied that the bridegroom would die (be "taken away from them"). This was one of Jesus' early hints at His death, perhaps the first. When He died, His disciples would fast. They probably did this after His crucifixion but before His resurrection. They also do it after His ascension and before His return to the earth

D. Unshrunk Cloth and Wineskins - (vs. 36) Jesus now gives two parables in light of their correction of Him not adhering to the religious traditions of the day. Jesus said He came to fulfill the law, not abolish it. The original Greek word translated "fulfill" means to make complete or perfect. The religious leaders of His day believed that the expression of their faith was the perfect complete. Jesus gives two parables to inform the leaders of that day that they needed to change their minds and hearts in order to embrace what God wanted to do.

1. Unshrunk Cloth - The old garment I believe refers to the religious traditions of that day that embodied their faith. There are tears in their garment; it's old and no longer serves the purposes for which it was fashioned. Jesus' correction of their tradition represents new garment material which will not work as a patch as it will tear and will not match with the old.
2. New Wineskins - The first parable helps them understand the second. Jesus is going to give them a new wineskin (new understanding and expression of their faith) in order to hold the new wine (Holy Spirit filled new hearts with supernatural giftings that make one body). The old wineskin (understanding and expression of their faith) will not be able to contain the new wine and will break because it is too brittle. They will need to embrace His teachings and His expression (new wineskin) in order to be able to receive and preserve the new wine (new covenant expression and understanding).
 - No One Immediately Embraces Change - Jesus ends his parable by talking about the normal human response to anything new. The truth is we don't like change and we feel most comfortable in our traditional expressions and understandings. Even as new things are being instituted by God, we generally resist it and desire the old. What He wants us to understand is that He brings new seasons and

new understandings that are “better” and we need to trust Him rather than think the old is “better”.