

The Forgiver of Sins Luke 5:17-26

Intro: At the end of Luke's Gospel, two disciples are walking with a man whom they have yet to identify as Jesus and note that he was *"a man, a prophet powerful in deed and word before God and all the people"* (24:19). This, and more, is Luke's aim in writing to Theophilus; to present Jesus as the man-God through the stories he tells about Jesus.

That Jesus is God's Son is clear from Luke's opening scenes:

1 – 1:32-33 - *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

2 – 1:35 – *...the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God*

3 – 3:22 – *You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased* (A reference to Gen 22 and Is 42:1).

4 – Jesus's command over the physical, spiritual, and natural world only further Luke's claims about Jesus's uniqueness.

Notice how naturally Jesus goes about his business of reclaiming what Adam lost

5:1 – *"On one occasion..."*

5:12 – *"While he was in one of the cities..."*

5:17 – *"On one of those days..."*

It's as though Jesus is both casual and intentional. He is unassailed while he assails sin.

First: Let's Set the Stage. 17-19

Show Map of Galilee (All maps/pictures are at the end of the sermon notes)

- a. Capernaum, according to Mark 2 (See map at end of notes)
 - 5:1 – *Gennesaret*
 - 5:12 – *"in one of the cities..."* – Chorazin
- b. *"He was teaching"* – This was Jesus's primary ministry
- c. He's in a house – v 18

d. He's surrounded by "*Pharisees and teachers of the law*"

Luke hasn't yet told us anything about the Pharisees. He assumes his reader knows something about them. They are religious leaders who originated in the intertestamental period opposed to Hellenization (the Greek takeover of Judaism). They were middle class, meticulous law-keepers (Matt 23:23) who numbered about 6,000 during Jesus's lifetime.

- Teachers of the law = Pharisees's scribes - lawyers/scholars of biblical interpretation

e. "*who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem*"

In spite of Jesus's attempts to keep his ministry out of Jerusalem's sight, the Jewish leaders were already concerned about his popularity. Why?

One reason Pilate tried to release Jesus was because "*For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up*" (Matt 27:18).

After Jesus resurrected Lazarus, "*...the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, 'What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation*" (John 11:47-48).

f. 17 - "*And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.*"

Jesus recognized the potential threat but wasn't intimidated.

Remember that when Jesus healed the leper, he didn't appeal to God. He simply said, "*I will,*" (5:13) making himself God.

g. 18 – Some men try to get a paralyzed man to Jesus

Unlike lepers, infirmed people weren't ostracized although they were stigmatized – John 9:2 – "*Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" Yet Job's life and even that of Jesus, teach us that God often orchestrates our illnesses/heartaches for our good and His glory – "*It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him*" (John 9:3).

h. 19 – Mark 2:2 – “so that there was no room, not even at the door..”

Sometimes we think we have a hard time getting our friends to Jesus. The overflow crowd forced the undaunted men to the roof to get the man to Jesus.

Mark 2:4 - *And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.*

19 – “tiles” implies a Greek roof and not a normal thatch Hebrew roof.

Sometimes God opens the door. Sometimes you open the roof. Discernment is the key.

Picture of a Capernaum House

Great article on Capernaum and Peter’s house - <https://rsc.byu.edu/ministry-peter-chief-apostle/simon-peter-capernaum-archaeological-survey-first-century-village>

Picture of Peter’s House

Picture of Church on Peter’s House

That sets the stage:

- 1 – Jesus is in Capernaum teaching in a house.
- 2 – Pharisees and lawyers from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem are there.
- 3 – Some guys are trying to get a paralyzed friend in to see Jesus and have to tear the roof up to get him there.

Second: Let’s Hear Jesus’s Claim 20 – “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

Can you imagine it? As Jesus is teaching, roof tiles start flying. When the daylight is large enough to stream in, they all look up to see this man on a stretcher being lowered down right in front of Jesus.

There’s no record of any explanation. His condition is self-evident. But, instead of healing the guy of his apparent problem, Jesus says, “Son, [teknon] your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5)

Okay. Time out. That's not why the friends brought him. Is that why the man came? We don't know. But it looks like the pizza guy just delivered an Amazon package or the mailman just delivered pizza. It appears something is a little off.

What we do know is that Jesus, as was his custom, rocks the socks off of everyone there, (kids today say, "He broke their ankles") by not addressing the elephant in the room – the man's paralysis – and instead, claiming to forgive this man of his sins. If Jesus didn't want a confrontation with the Jewish leadership, this will guarantee it.

Question: Do you like the right or the left Twix best? Would you prefer your broken leg healed or your sins forgiven? Your sins forgiven, of course!

"We see many people trying to raise awareness, joining forces in rallies and marches, seeking donations, and obeying legislators to find cures for various diseases, with remarkable success. But few pay any attention to the sinful human condition whose only solution [and the solution to everything else] is the forgiveness of sin offered by God through Jesus."

- David E. Garland in *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*

Note: Heritage is the hope of the world because we live out of a biblical worldview of the world.

- 1 – So, Jesus does what this man needs most.
- 2 – Jesus does what only God can do.

There's no more, not appealing to God to heal people but just doing it, intimating that he is God. Oh no. Now, he claims to do forgive sins, something only God can do.

Stop for several moments and think about the significance of this moment. Ever since God killed an animal in Gen 3:20b, humanity has been looking for a way back into Eden. The Temple door led that way. Jerusalem's Eastern gate faced that way. Millions of slain animals pointed that way.

When God showed Moses the backside of his glory, he identified himself as - *"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..." (Exodus 34:6-7)*

Psalm 65:3 - *When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.*

Micah 7:18 - *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression...*

Every Jew knew that sin separated humanity from God and only God could forgive sin –

Luke 18:13 – *“...the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’”*

The point is that this man’s paralysis isn’t his greatest need. Our sin often lies hidden under our perceived predicament. This takes us to the heart of the gospel – the forgiveness of sins.

Gospel: Luke is a Gentile writing to a Gentile. He’s already demonstrated how Jews respond to Jesus –

4:8 - *...Simon Peter... ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’*

4:12 – *“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”*

- **Luke 7:1-10** – The centurion’s faith
- Luke 17 – Ten lepers - :15 - *Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.*
- Luke 24:47 - *Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!”*

This is the conclusion Luke wants you to reach! Jesus can forgive your sins!

Third: Let’s Hear the Pharisees Complain 21-24

(Mark tells us that Jesus faced three kinds of criticism: 5:18-26 – Silent criticism.

5:27-6:5 – Spoken criticism.

6:6-11 – Subversive criticism).

- a. The Pharisees don’t have the courage to say what they are thinking – 22a

John 2:25 - *... he himself knew what was in man.*

Three of Simon’s prophecies are fulfilled in this event -

Luke 2:34-35 – Simon to Mary – “Behold,

1 - this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,

2 - and for a sign that is opposed...

3 - so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

b. They are correct and wrong – 21

This demonstrates we can be right theologically but wrong relationally.

- Only God can forgive sin.
- Jesus isn't blaspheming.

Fourth: Let's Watch Jesus Prove He is God. 22-25

a) V 23 is a rhetorical question. We know this because Jesus doesn't give them time to answer. But he knows they know –

Psalm 103:2-3 - *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,*

This is why Jesus responds in verse 24 – “*But that you may know....*” (that he is God)

b) V 24 – the Son of Man

- Jesus calls himself “the Son of Man” 80 times. It's his favorite self-designation.

It occurs 25 times in Luke, always by Jesus.

Daniel 7:9-14 – T

- He is claiming to be the second/last Adam but the obedient Son.
- He is claiming to be God in the flesh.

Basically, by quoting Psalm 103, Jesus is acknowledging,

Deuteronomy 18:15-22 - *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me [Moses] from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken.¹⁸ I will raise*

up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. ²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' And if you say in your heart, [which the Pharisees were] 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'— when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him." [see v 26]

c) V 25 – "*immediately*," is becoming one of Luke's favorite words – 12t

d) From there to home, the man was glorifying God.

- What did that look like?
- What would that look like for you?
- Do that every day.

Fifth: Let's Watch to the Crowd. 26 (So we can learn how to properly respond to Jesus as God).

a) *Amazement seized them all...*

Are you critically amazed or are you moved to faith?

Matthew 9:9 - *When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.* In other words, they refused to acknowledge Jesus was God but claimed he was a vessel of God.

b) *They glorified God...*

If they truly glorified God, they were glorifying Jesus.

Just like the man came down through the roof, their hearts are now, 'through the roof.'

1 Thessalonians 3:1 – "Therefore, *when we could endure it no longer...*" = *stegontes* from *stego*, same word for "roof" in this passage / "*I couldn't keep the roof on my feelings...*"

Jesus is doing so much of this – supernatural things – that it runs the risk of becoming normal to us. It shouldn't. It should always amaze us to the point we are glorifying God.

c) And were filled with awe / phobos = fear

We've seen this kind of fear before...in Peter when Jesus brought in the haul of fish...in the disciples when Jesus calmed the storm.

Mark 4:41 - And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

(Proverbs 1:7 says that until you fear God, you don't know how to live well).

Conclusion:

This sermon began in Luke 24 with two disciples saying that Jesus was

"a man, a prophet powerful in deed and word before God and all the people" (24:19).

And yet, they were disappointed because

"our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." (24:20-21).

And so Jesus,

"beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:27), i.e., He is the "Son of Man."

Like those two disciples, Luke, via Jesus's words and actions, has intentionally left us with no choice except to accept or reject Him as God.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and

God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

We are faced, then, with a frightening alternative. This man we are talking about either was (and is) just what He said or else a lunatic, or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, how-ever strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the views that He was and is God. God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form.

C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity

Community Groups

- 1 – Read the text.
- 2 - How has Luke promised/prophesied that Jesus is God?
- 3 – What miracles so far in the book demonstrate his claim?
- 4 – Discuss the circumstance of this text and why it's important.
- 5 – Who are the Pharisees and why are they important?
- 6 – Why don't the Pharisees like Jesus?
- 7 – What might this tell us about why modern people don't like him?

Would this quote by C.S. Lewis illustrate the hearts of people you know?

"... But, of course, what mattered most of all was my deep-seated hatred of authority, my monstrous individualism, my lawlessness. No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word INTERFERENCE. But Christianity placed at the centre what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer. If its picture were true, then no sort of 'treaty with reality' could ever be possible. There was no region, even in the innermost depth of one's soul (nay, there least of all) which one could surround with a barbed wire fence and guard with a notice No Admittance. And that was what I wanted; some area, however small, of which I could say to all other beings, 'This is my business and mine only'."

- 8 – How is this man's friends a good example of evangelism and/or intercession?
- 9 – Why does Jesus forgive the man of his sins before healing him?
- 10 – How are the Pharisees right and wrong in their assessment of Jesus?
- 11 – How does Jesus prove he can forgive this man's sin?
- 12 – To what OT text is he appealing? Psalm 103:2-3.
- 13 – Why does Jesus refer to himself as the Son of Man (Daniel 7:9-14).
- 14 – How does the crowd respond to Jesus?
- 15 – What might these three responses look like in our lives?

Daily Devotion

Monday, April 22nd. Read Lk 5:17-26 & Hb 12:15-17. Luke opens this passage very casually, as though it's just another day in Jesus's life, which it is. At the same time, v 26 tells us it is a unique day in the life of the crowd. Unlike the crowd after Jesus healed this man, Esau wasn't in "awe" of God and didn't perceive his birthright to be "extraordinary." How are you keeping God "holy" in your sight and living in "awe" of him? Or has the "extraordinariness" of God dissipated?

Tuesday, April 23rd. Read Lk 5:17-26 & Hb 11:1. Did you notice that Jesus commends "*their faith*," the faith of the paralytic's friends and not his faith? For whom are you having faith even though it may be hard to get that person to Jesus? Are you discouraged? Don't be. Look for unique ways to pray and intervene in the lives of your unsaved friends or family. If you're not already, start a prayer journal and take one day a week (at least) to pray for the lost. After all, Jesus has come "*to seek and to save*" (Lk 19:10) people just like them.

Wednesday, April 24th. Read Lk 5:17-26 & Ex 34:6-7. Life's ailments sometimes hide our real problem, sin. Sin can cause us mental, emotional, and physical sorrow. Jesus could have healed this man physically and sent him on his way but he knew the man's greater need, forgiveness. Take a moment to think about what ails you. Could 'sin' lurk behind your anxiety, weariness, depression, etc? If you wonder, call the church office (423-926-2139) and set up a time to speak to one of Heritage's burgeoning counselors. You'll be glad you did.

Thursday, April 25th. Read Luke 5:17-26 & Dan 7:9-14. Jesus calls himself the "Son of Man" 80 times, intentionally linking himself to the Daniel, "dominion" passage. Basically, He's claiming to be God. How does Jesus as God change your life? Really? Apply "Jesus is God" to your life today. Think it. Thank God he is. Ask the Lord to help you live in the light of that truth. How does it change your thoughts, emotions, behavior? After all, he is a life-changing Savior!

Friday, April 26th. Luke 5:17-26 & Mark 4:35-41. In what three ways did the crowd respond to Jesus? What does amazement look like for you? Glorifying God? Awe? Take those three terms and apply them to your daily living. Live amazed that Jesus is God, and that God is your Savior. Respond to that awesome truth by glorifying the Lord – talk to him, sing to/about him, live reverently before him. Basically, think, emote, and behave like Jesus is God! After all, that's the difference between you and a Pharisee!





