

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"CONFLICT REVELATION" | LUKE 5: 17-39 | PASTOR ANDREW PAULSEN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What show, movie or story has a character that handles conflict in a cool or unique way?

"Jesus Pardons" (Luke 5: 17-26)

Jesus shows he can forgive through the miraculous healing of the paralytic, which caused rejoicing in some and criticism in others.

What is so powerful about forgiveness? How does it create different reactions in different people?

"Jesus Pursues" (Luke 5: 27-32)

Jesus is criticized for pursuing sinners and He answers that He is here to bring the lost to repentance. **What does that reveal about who Jesus is? How should that impact how people view themselves and others?**

"Jesus Partners and Pours Himself into Us" (Luke 5: 33-39)

Jesus tells the Pharisees that new wineskins are needed to receive his wine, representing his love and joy, which means each of us must be made new to receive his blessing. **What are ways to let Jesus make us new? What causes us to be "old wineskins"?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus is able to continue to love others through pardoning of sins, pursuing of the lost and partnering and pouring himself into his followers all while he is in conflict with the Pharisees, which makes these religious teachers look worse. **How have you been handling conflict in your life lately? Are you letting Jesus partner and pour into you?**

Conflict Revelation (Luke 5: 17-39)

Thanks Larry. I'm Andrew Paulsen and it's so good to be here today. I oversee Community Groups and can I brag a little? I've been so proud of how so many of these groups have been seeking to demonstrate up close and personal what it's like to love God completely and love people authentically. My team has been telling me about how people who have shared their faith journey out loud for the first time, people who are vulnerable and ask for help as they are working in a tough spot in their marriage, how groups have rallied to pray and provide help as health issues hit, and how they just enjoy laughing and playing a silly game together. I got to visit and take part in a few groups just this past week and I was so encouraged to hear answers to prayer and to learn how people are trying to live out their faith at work. So to all my CG team thank you and I'm proud of you.

So let's pray before we get into God's word.

Luke 5: 17-39

Recap

Pastor Brian has pointed out that a theme for Luke's Gospel is Lost and Found: how a lost world is pursued by God through his Son Jesus so that they might be saved. Last week we read Jesus recruiting some of his first students, disciples who will be trained to be part of this effort to seek out the lost. Jesus uses his power to show he's serious, bringing an amazing haul of fish and also healing a leper. This has grabbed a lot of people's attention. Some are coming to be healed, others to see these miracles and be entertained, some to learn, and some to see if he's a problem. You see this section of Luke is the first time the writer mentions the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Luke is going to show 5 interactions between Jesus and the Pharisees in this part of his gospel, and we'll cover 3. Thankfully, Brian will be back next week and will be in Luke 6 and cover some other ones, so he can clean up any mistakes I make today. But just so we understand the dynamic here, a simple way to look at this is that a Pharisee was a religious group, a sect of Judaism. It would be like calling someone a Baptist or Methodist or Catholic or Presbyterian today. A teacher of the law was a job, a title. They would study, interpret and explain the law. The reason these go together so much is the Pharisee sect focused on a strict interpretation of the law and encouraged people to know it well and follow it very closely. Obviously, with that much attention given to the law, they would naturally be drawn to the job title teacher of the law. During this time period, the culture of the Jews had given this title a special status and Pharisees enjoyed privileges and honor above many others in society.

Jesus however is getting a lot of attention and honor and is teaching about God. And that makes them curious about who this Jesus guy is. Now I believe most of the Pharisees truly thought they were serving God and defending Him as they corrected and even punished people in society who didn't live up to their standards. They saw it as their calling to battle for the Lord's law.

And here's the lens I want to look at this passage with today: what someone battles for says something about them. How someone battles says something about them. In a society today where everyone is encouraged to take a stand, raise their voice, fight back on

everything from climate change to terrorism, from racism to vaccines and masks, from Russia to CRT, we have plenty of causes to join. But what we join says something about us, and how we battle reveals our character. I'm not here to tell you what battles to fight, that's God's job. And there's many different examples of how to take a stand in the Bible. But I will say this: you should pray, take time, and remember in the end, God always wins and the battle is the Lord's. Because we don't want to be in the horrible situation that these legalists were in: they thought they were fighting for the Lord when in reality they were fighting against God Himself. And when you find yourself battling against God, remember, God always wins in the end. And thank God for all of us that while we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us. A former Pharisee wrote that, the apostle Paul. Jesus uses these confrontations with the Pharisees to show who He is and how he loves, even them.

Luke 5: 17-26

"On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you.' And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today.""

Jesus Pardons

Many of us have heard this story. We may have even acted it out in Sunday School. And we love the visual of friends helping someone come to Jesus to not only have their physical needs met but their spiritual ones too. And it's cool to point out that Jesus forgives sins first, that was more important to him than healing. But Jesus heals to prove to these religious critics that he isn't just anybody. Because let's be honest, if Jesus was just a man, these guys are right: only God can forgive sins. Jesus shouldn't say that. But Jesus uses the miracle to show he isn't just anybody. And he uses a special title: the son of man.

There are two main places the title son of man is used by the prophets in the Old Testament. One is in Daniel 7:13-14 which says

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

By Jesus calling himself the son of man, of course he's letting them know he's THAT son of man, the one with all authority, glory, and sovereign power. Jesus is saying my authority extends to forgiving sins because that's what the Ancient of Days has given me.

Another reference is in Ezekiel 2:3-4 which says *"Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. ⁴ The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn."*

Now of course, this is a reference to what Ezekiel heard as he was being told what to say as God's prophet, but Jesus could also be using the title of Son of Man to show what these Pharisees are doing: being stubborn, obstinate, rebellious. The title son of man says who Jesus is as the one with authority, but it also hints at who these guys are, of being a pain in the butt. When God shows how great He is, He often also shows how small we are.

So Jesus isn't hiding who he is, he's announcing it to these guys He is God and proving it through a miracle, of forgiving a man and giving his dead legs life: foreshadowing what the cross would be all about: forgiving all sins and giving all people new life. Even these stubborn critics. They could truly listen and get excited, realizing Messiah was finally here! Yet instead, the battles continue.

Luke 5:27-32

"After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.""

Many years ago a pastor was on his deathbed and he requested for a tax collector and a lawyer to come to his side, at the same time. His family found 2 men willing to come and they arrived the next day and went into the pastor's room. The pastor motioned each of them to take a chair on either side of his bed and the pastor closed his eyes. The silence grew really awkward until finally the lawyer spoke up, um, reverend, what are we exactly doing here? The pastor replied, "Jesus died between two thieves, and I want to do the same."

Jesus Pursues

In this next confrontation, Jesus is questioned about who he pursues. He is going after the wrong people, spending time with the wrong crowd. Levi, a tax collector, someone helping the hated Romans?! And then he goes to a party with all the wrong people there, more tax collectors and other sinners! Which by the way, is a great example of the simple principles that Brian went over last week about sharing our faith: having passion, befriending people who need Jesus, praying for them, be part of a community that loves God completely and loves people authentically, and persevere in your witness. Levi shows passion by leaving behind his old life and then invites all his lost friends to a party and talks to Jesus, which is

prayer right?, and these friends get to experience a little of the community that Jesus and his disciples have at this party. It is just so natural and genuine in the way Levi does this, and we can do the same, it just takes being a little intentional and to persevere with the people God has placed in your life.

But to the Pharisees, these are the wrong people to hang out with, let alone recruit. These people are sinners! Jesus agrees, he deflects their criticism and says you're right, they are sinners. Which by the way, is a great way to handle a difficult conversation because it throws your attacker off. Agree with them when they are expecting debate. It may open them up to listening to you when you later drop some wisdom. Jesus agrees and then gives them some wisdom. Doctors help the sick, not the healthy. That's why I'm here, to bring them to repentance. I believe one of the things that bothered the Pharisees was that Jesus wasn't pursuing them. He wasn't trying to be at their dinners and meet their friends. And he gives them a compliment: you don't need me, you're well. But the underlying challenge he gives: if you truly loved God's law, you would be trying to help them too. If you were really that righteous, time with a sinner wouldn't harm your reputation. Jesus is seen as a great teacher, some kind of miracle worker or man of God, but his lifestyle is so different than the Pharisees in some key ways. And that would naturally cause some people and the Pharisees themselves to wonder if they were doing life wrong, that they weren't as great as everyone thought.

And again, if Jesus was someone else, being the wrong crowd is risky, normal men don't change people's hearts. But this is someone who can't be defiled, can't be corrupted. Jesus is the Son of Man, He is different, as we further see.

Luke 5: 33-35

³³ And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."

So a few years ago my wife Charlotte was struggling with her health and she decided it would be good to try the whole 30 diet where you have very little sugar and carbs for a month. I figured I should be a good husband and join her in the diet, but she said she had to figure out the groceries and details before we could start. So some days went by and I forgot about it. Then, one Sunday I came home after leading the high school ministry and I hadn't eaten anything all morning like I usually do, I come in the house and Charlotte says, babe, we're starting today. We're what? What are you talking about? We're starting the whole 30 today! I went to the store, got all the ingredients for our food this week, and I made you this beautiful salad! A what!? She was like, what's wrong, I thought you wanted to do this. Yeah, but today? Sundays are the worst to start something like this! Timing is everything, isn't it?

Jesus Partners With Us

And now Jesus is challenged for having the wrong habits. Jesus isn't modeling to his disciples the right disciplines. They don't fast, they aren't disciplined or serious enough. They even bring up Jesus' cousin and say he has followers who fast, which is kind of crazy if they all eat what John eats, the bugs and honey. If a teacher, a rabbi, is ultimately judged

by how their students perform, Jesus is a poor teacher. His followers aren't showing much spirituality.

And Jesus says, they will, it's just not time. And uses a special title of God, the bridegroom. The Pharisees knew this, in Isaiah God describes Israel as his bride and he is the bridegroom. Jesus had announced his ministry with Isaiah 61, where God talks of a renewed covenant as he sends the Messiah to seek and save the lost. Covenant is of course is a special contract, a sacred agreement that is usually used to describe a marriage. In the next chapter, Isaiah goes further to show that is exactly how God sees His relationship with His people.

In Isaiah 62:5 it says *As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.*

Story of Shane and Mackenzie

That's the kind of love God has for his people: a passionate, romantic, sacrificial love. God's love causes Him to celebrate, to rejoice, to party. And when someone is celebrating, isn't it wrong to be the buzzkill, the party pooper, the stick in the mud?

Fasting during a Christmas is wrong, taking a vow of silence at a concert is lame, and promising to be celibate during your honeymoon is just not right! A bridegroom wants to celebrate with his friend and family, and the best way to show him love is to celebrate with him. Jesus wants his followers to enjoy him.

In John there's the story of two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha is running around, trying to do all these things and please all these people while Jesus and his crew are there, but Mary is just sitting, spending time with Jesus. At one point Martha is so frustrated she says Jesus, tell my sister to get moving. Jesus says to her, Martha, Martha (using a name twice is never good in ancient Israel, its like when my mom used my middle name and added a few extra names in there for good measure) slow your roll, calm down, stop buggin. Mary has chosen the better thing and it won't be taken from her.

Notice, Martha's demand for performance and busyness is seen as taking away from Mary's relationship with Jesus, not adding to it. Ouch! For someone like me who is task oriented and driven, that's tough to hear. The Pharisees thought they were helping people by setting super high standards and criticizing people for not making them, but like Martha, they were taking people away from God instead of towards them. They need to change as Jesus points out in this parable in our last section.

Luke 5:36-39

³⁶ He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"

Jesus Pours Himself Into Us

Jesus shares a word picture of how just like new cloth or new wine will not work well with old garments and old wineskins, so he won't work with old mindsets. People like their traditions, they like their worldviews that helped them make sense of the world, no matter how imperfect they are. But Jesus' Word and Holy Spirit will break that wide open. And the crazy thought I had, maybe that's what needs to happen. Maybe Jesus isn't saying, you're too old, sorry Pharisees, you can't taste and see that I'm good. If I partner with you you'll be destroyed. He's saying, you need to be made new so I can pour myself into you, as he told the Pharisee Nicodemus, you need to be born again. And that may mean God needs to break people first before He can fill them. Like a crooked bone that needs to be cracked and then set straight so it can truly heal. And thankfully, God's word says "Behold I make all things new" it also says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" And over and over again, God can make us new. Even people addicted to their self-righteous, critical attitudes like these Pharisees.

So people, Jesus is like a judge who can pardon your wrong and declare your debt paid in full. But he's not a judge who then just sends you on your way, but says can we hang out, can we grab dinner together? And then, it's not just one time meal, but he says, I want be with you always, I love you, and I can fill you, complete you like no other. Through this conflict with these religious legalists and critics who challenged him on what he said and who he was with and how he lived, Jesus reveals a lot about who he is and how he loves. He pardons us fully, He pursues us compassionately, and he partners with us intimately, pouring himself into us.

Some of you need to know God truly pardons you, some of you need to know God truly pursues you, some of you need to know God partners with you, and some of you need to let Him pour His Holy Spirit into you.