



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

LESSON 4 - STUDY QUESTIONS LUKE 5:1-6:11

DAY ONE

1. Was there something you learned in Lesson 3 that you found particularly interesting or caused you to reflect?

NOTE: As today's lesson begins, we find Jesus by the lake of Gennesaret. The lake of Gennesaret is also known as the Sea of Galilee (as well as other names). Only Luke refers to it as a lake. Gennesaret is actually a beautiful plain on the west side of this body of water.

Read Luke 5:1-7

2. As Jesus stood by the lake of Gennesaret, the crowd pressed in on Him to hear the word of God. According to verse 2, what did he see?

3. Imagine a large crowd pressing and pushing closer and closer to Our Lord, whose back would have been to the water. According to verse 3, what did Jesus do in order to continue to teach the crowds?

4a. Verse 4 tells us that when Jesus had finished speaking, He told Simon to put out into the deep water and let down his nets. What was Simon's answer according to verse 5?

b. How would you describe the tone of Simon's answer?

5. In spite of his long and unsuccessful night of fishing, Simon obeyed Jesus' request and let down his nets. Verse 6 says that they caught so many fish that their nets began to break! What happened next according to verse 7?

6. CONNECTION: Amazing things happen when we obey God's commands and listen for His voice! Just like Simon, who thought he was too tired and exhausted to do any more fishing, and who "knew" there were no more fish in that part of the lake, we too sometimes think that we just have "had enough" for the day. When we try and fail, or find the road too long, or when we lack faith in our mission, it is far too easy for us to "put away our nets" and give up. Think of a time when you lacked the strength to carry on, yet found that Our Lord "filled your nets" with the necessary courage, faith or fortitude. Briefly describe what happened.

Read and record Psalm 28:7 and begin your prayer today thanking the Lord for the strength that He gives you for every task.

DAY TWO

Read Luke 5:8-11

7a. In today's lesson, we see that Simon was called a new name. What was his new name (verse 8), and what did he see that would have made him fall down to his knees in front of Jesus (verse 9)?

b. What did he say to Jesus, and what are some different emotions he could have been expressing?

8. Verse 9 simply tells us that all of the fishermen were amazed. According to verse 10, who else was with Simon Peter?

9a. When Jesus heard what Simon Peter said to him, he responded with a phrase that established Peter's future as an evangelizer and leader among the apostles. Record this phrase from verse 10. (Good memory verse)

b. In another familiar translation, Jesus called Peter and the apostles to be "fishers of men" ... what do you think this means?

10. In Nazareth Jesus preached in the synagogue and was rejected (Luke 4:29). Here at the Lake of Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee), He preached to the multitudes in the open air and from a boat. Later, the boat was so full of fish it almost sank! Can you think of what the boat might represent? (Remember, there are no "right answers!")

NOTE: Early Christian iconography often depicted the Church as a boatful of people. The fact that the Lord used Peter's boat is also considered symbolic of his importance to the Church.

11a. Record the ending of the calling of the first disciples in verse 11.

b. Luke is not the only Gospel in which Jesus asked Peter and the first apostles to leave everything behind to follow Him. Read the following and record the verse or phrase that says to you that they left behind their old lives:

Matthew 4:19-22:

Mark 1:17-20:

12. CONNECTION: When Jesus called the apostles, He asked them to make a great sacrifice ... He asked them to leave everything and follow Him, and they did so willingly. Jesus knew the level of commitment it would take to follow Him, even to a martyr's death. Their path was a difficult one. Our faith assures us that their path led them to everlasting joy, but to many, they appeared to have given up everything. Christians today are still challenged in different ways to leave everything for their faith. Think of a more recent example of Christians who are persecuted for their faith or, closer to home, examples of others who voluntarily leave behind their old lives to serve God. Share some thoughts with your small group.

Read (you do not have to record) Matthew 19:27-30 and write a prayer today asking that you set your sights on His Kingdom.

DAY THREE

Read Luke 5:12-26

13a. As today's lesson begins, Luke moves further into the public ministry of Jesus. He looks back at a time when Jesus was in "one of the cities" in which there was a man with leprosy. What did the man do when he saw Jesus (verse 12)?

b. What faith this leper must have had! As a leper, he was an outcast, unclean, and forbidden to be part of society or to participate in religious activities. Even to have spoken to Jesus required great courage. According to verse 13, what did Jesus do and what was the outcome?

14a. Not only did Jesus touch him, He chose to heal him, but told him to tell no one (verse 14). Jesus then told the leper to show himself to a priest as required under Mosaic law in order to be restored to society. News of the miracle spread abroad "more than ever." What did this incite (end of verse 15)?

b. Instead of relishing the crowds, Jesus would "withdraw to deserted places and pray" (verse 16). Comment on why you think it was important to Jesus to have quiet time alone.

15. In verse 17 Luke takes us again to "one day" while Jesus was teaching. Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting nearby (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem). What does Luke tell us about Jesus at the end of that verse?

16a. Just then some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. What were they trying to do (end of verse 18) and what prevented them from fulfilling their goal (beginning of verse 19)?

b. Finding no way through the crowd, what other route did they take?

17a. When Jesus saw their faith He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (verse 20). But the scribes and the Pharisees questioned whether Jesus was blaspheming, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone"? How did Jesus begin to answer them (verses 22 and 23)?

b. Jesus continued his discourse with the scribes and Pharisees saying "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - he said to the one who was paralyzed - 'I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home.'" What happened next (verse 25)?

NOTE: This is the first time in Luke that Jesus refers to Himself as the "Son of Man." This mysterious title refers to a messianic prophecy in [Daniel 7:13-14](#) (*As the visions during the night continued, I saw One like a man coming, on the clouds of heaven; When he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, He received dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.* NAB), and is used by Christ many times throughout the gospels.

(Vatican.va/holyfather/JohnPaulii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19870429en.html)

18. CONNECTION: Today's lesson describes two miracles – the first, Jesus healing a leper, and the second, His healing of a paralytic. In both cases, Jesus cured lifelong disabilities that had separated them from the religious and secular life of the community. Ignoring traditional boundaries, Jesus looked at their hearts, and miraculously overpowered disease and disfigurement by touching the leper and commanding the paralytic to walk. In verse 26 we read that "Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, 'We have seen strange things today.'" Today's lesson teaches us that not everything that happens can be explained away by science or the human mind. Describe a time when you, too, have been filled with awe and amazed at God's wondrous power to overcome disabilities, diseases, alienation or other limitations (please don't feel you are limited to miracles ... God's power to transcend physical and social boundary's amazes us in SO many ways!).

Read and record Psalm 77:13-14 and begin your prayer today praising God as an AWESOME God!

DAY FOUR

Read Luke 5:27-32

19a. Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi (also known as Matthew, to whom the Gospel of Matthew is attributed) sitting at the tax booth. According to verse 27, what did Jesus say to him and what was Levi's response in verse 28?

b. Read and record Matthew 9:9 in which Levi the tax collector is called Matthew.

20. First fishermen and now a tax collector! Jesus is calling His disciples from among the uneducated, insignificant, "common" people rather than from among the Pharisees and scribes. What are some reasons you think He chose the "little people"?

21a. Verse 29 tells us that Levi gave a great banquet for Jesus in his house. Who attended?

b. Banquets have special meaning in the Bible. Pick one of the following references to banquets and record it here.

Isaiah 25:6

Matthew 8:11

Revelation 19:7-9

22. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to Jesus' disciples, asking them why they ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners. Luke does not tell us if the Pharisees were actually there at the meal or if they simply know that Jesus and His apostles were eating with "sinners." In either event, we know that Jesus responded to their challenge. With what words did Jesus answer them (verse 31)?

THINK: Under the Old Covenant (as written in Leviticus 20:26), those who were "righteous" were to separate themselves from anything or anyone who was "unrighteous." This extended far past common laws regarding eating or drinking with Gentiles or sinners to the nation of Israel separating itself from its neighbors. Levi was changed by Jesus' love. We can all be changed for the better.

23. Today's lesson ends with a verse that reminds us that it is by the greatest love that God sent His Son to redeem all of us. Record verse 32. (Good memory verse)

24. **CONNECTION:** One Jewish metaphor for "heaven" was a lavish banquet where all peoples would sit down together on a holy mountain. In Revelation, we see that a Christian metaphor for heaven is the marriage banquet of the Lamb and the Church. In today's reading, Jesus accepts the hospitality of the "unrighteous" Levi at a banquet of saints and sinners, and in so doing, shows that there is kindness, mercy and the opportunity for redemption for all. Jesus' example of restoration and reconciliation at table presents a beautiful picture. Think about a banquet you would like to attend in heaven (hopefully there will be many!). Who would be at your table? Would it be your favorite great uncle and President Lincoln, those you have prayed for, those from whom you have been separated by death or conflict? Describe your heavenly banquet for your small group.

Read and record Isaiah 11:6-7 and begin your prayer today that the world will be reconciled at Jesus' Table of Plenty.

DAY FIVE

Read Luke 5:33-39

NOTE: Jewish tradition required that certain days be set aside for fasting, that is, abstaining from eating or drinking for spiritual purposes. Fasting was done as a sign of mourning, repentance, as an aid in prayer, and as part of public worship. (From: *Fasting in the Old Testament and Ancient Judaism*)

25. Today's lesson begins with a debate regarding the Jewish practice of fasting. John the Baptist's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fasted and prayed, but Jesus' disciples often ate and drank when others fasted (verse 33). How did Jesus begin to answer them (verse 34)?

26. Jesus often used parables as a form of "pictures" to make His points clear. Imagine asking guests celebrating a wedding to fast during the wedding feast! In verse 34, who do you think the wedding guests represent, and who does the bridegroom represent?

27a. Jesus continued His parable of the bridegroom in verse 35 by saying, "The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." To what do you think Jesus was referring in this verse?

b. Jesus used the image of a wedding feast in several scriptures. Consider the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), the Parable of the Great Dinner (Luke 14:15-24) and the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13). Describe one of these parables.

28. A wedding feast is a joyful time of celebrating a new beginning, not a time of mourning during which a person would fast. That would ruin the wedding. In the same manner, one wouldn't ruin a new garment by tearing it to patch something old, leaving the new garment torn and the piece from the new not matching the old (verse 36). If Jesus' message is the wedding feast and the new garment, then what do you think fasting and the old garment represent?

b. Note how Jesus continued the parable of the old and new with verse 37. (Also see what you can find out about old wineskins!) Record verse 37.

29. With what ironic statement does Jesus end His discourse in verse 39, recognizing that all of us are more comfortable with familiar things?

30. CONNECTION: This week's lesson began with criticism from the Pharisees that Jesus' disciples were not fasting as those of John the Baptist did. Jesus isn't saying fasting is bad; it just isn't the most important thing. This was a significant change from old forms of piety. Change is difficult for all of us, and change that Jesus brought with the New Covenant was shocking to many of the Jews. But just as new wine may ultimately become the good old wine, so too did the change from the "old" Jewish traditions. In these parables we learn to keep our minds open. Think of a time when you, too, found it difficult to accept a change, but through prayer moved ahead into "unfamiliar territory." When you looked back, what did you discern about the process and the outcome?

Read and record Revelation 21:5 and write a prayer today thanking Jesus for the great changes He has worked for all mankind.

DAY SIX

Read Luke 6:1-11

NOTE: We are including 11 verses of Luke Chapter 6 in the discussion of Chapter 5, because they continue to cover the clash between the old law and the new law of love brought by Christ.

31. In today's lesson Luke begins his description of Jesus' teaching with the words "One sabbath." In verse 1 what happened "One sabbath" while Jesus and the disciples were going through the grain fields?

32. Working on the Sabbath was considered a violation of the Fourth Commandment, to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy (Exodus 20:11). Plucking grain was traditionally interpreted as work. What did some of the Pharisees say according to verse 2?

33a. Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?", referring to a time when David, in his effort to get away from Saul, ate the sacred bread of the temple. Read and record 1 Samuel 21:6.

b. In verse 5 Jesus stated that the "Son of Man is lord of the sabbath" as his explanation for why the Jewish traditional rules did not apply to Him. As the second person of the Trinity, He truly is Lord of the Sabbath. Read and record John 1:1-3.

34. On another Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught, and saw a man there whose right hand was withered. What did the scribes and Pharisees do (verse 7)?

35a. Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to come and stand with Him, and then asked the scribes and Pharisees "... is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" After looking around at them, He answered His own question by performing a miracle. Describe what happened from verse 10.

b. Instead of awe, the scribes and Pharisees were "filled with fury." What did they discuss with one another (verse 11)?

NOTE: Jesus, though frequently accused (by the Pharisees) of disregarding the Sabbath, acts out the true meaning of the Sabbath by restoring and giving rest to suffering individuals on this day. (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, The Gospel of Luke, page 31).

36. CONNECTION: Today's lesson completes a sequence that began back in Chapter 5 with the question about the Jewish tradition of fasting. Jesus challenged the Jewish leaders to decide what is most important in serving God: His "new" way, to love and meet needs, or the old, strict interpretation of tradition and rules. The Scribes and Pharisees reacted badly to Jesus' challenge. Rather than opening their hearts to Him, already they are looking for reasons to "do something" to Jesus. We too often dig in once we have taken a stand. We find it difficult to change and do what someone else suggests, even if we know they are right. Has there been a time when an argument or a falling out has gone on far too long because it was just too difficult to apologize or admit you were wrong? How was it finally resolved? What would you do differently, if at all?

Read Matthew 5:21-24 and write a prayer today asking God to help you to keep an open mind and open heart!

After completing this lesson, read pages 34-43 in the *The Gospel According to Luke* by Michael F. Patella, O.S.B. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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