

6

JESUS: LORD AND SAVIOR *LUKE 5:1-39*

In Luke 5 we see Jesus as Lord and Savior. His lordship over nature was shown in the miraculous catch of fish. His cleansing of the leper and healing of the paralyzed man demonstrated His mastery over disease. His lordship over lives was evident in His calling of the fishermen and Levi.

Jesus invited the fishermen to be fishers of men bringing lost people to Him as Savior. Jesus told the paralyzed man his sins were forgiven. He declared His mission was to call sinners to repentance.

The Miraculous Catch of Fish — Luke 5:1-11

Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20) recorded the calling of the four fishermen by Jesus. Luke's account differs from Matthew and Mark in that he alone mentioned the miraculous catch of fish and the statement in 5:11. It is possible that Luke described a separate, later incident or it may be that the accounts manifest the normal differences of independent accounts of the same event.

The story of a large catch of fish in Luke's account (5:1-11) has similarities with John's record of a large catch of fish after Jesus'

resurrection (21:1-14). The differences in these two accounts are too marked for them to be descriptions of the same event. Plummer said, "There is nothing improbable in two miracles of a similar kind, one granted to emphasize and illustrate the call, the other the re-call, of the chief Apostle" (p. 147).

5 While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. ²And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish, and as their nets were breaking, ⁷they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at 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 be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." ¹¹And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

5:1-3. Luke is the only New Testament writer of refer to the Sea of Galilee as a lake. The lake is shaped like an upside-down pear. It is twelve or thirteen miles long and about seven miles wide. Gennesaret is the fertile plain just southwest of Capernaum on the northwest corner of the lake. Jesus was standing on this plain by the edge of the water speaking to large crowds. Even though His voice carried well in that particular setting the people were eager to hear Him speak the Word of God. They kept pressing closer and closer. Jesus saw two empty boats nearby. A fishing boat was usually about 20-30 feet long. Jesus entered one of Peter's boats and used it for His pulpit. The large crowd could see and hear Him as He spoke from the boat. He sat as He taught which was His customary position for teaching.

5:4-5. After Jesus stopped teaching He said to Peter to move the boat out to deep water and let down the nets to catch fish. Jesus ad-

dressed Peter who apparently was steering the boat. Peter felt they had exhausted all possibilities for catching fish at that time. This kind of fishing was usually done at night. The morning was not the best time because of the sun shining on the lake. The exhausted disciples had spent a sleepless night in fruitless fishing. It seemed strange, "A carpenter telling an experienced fisherman how to fish!" (Hendriksen, p. 281).

Peter addressed Jesus as Master. The word used here is not the usual word for teacher (rabbi). This word refers to any authority who has a right to give orders. Peter said they worked hard and with much effort. The *nevertheless* of the *King James Version* may overstate what is stated in the original text. Perhaps Peter meant that humanly speaking what was asked seemed useless but on the basis of what Jesus said as His authority he would obey and put down the net. The obedience of faith does not require that we know all the reasons for a command given by the Master.

5:6-7. The casting of the large net was not a one man operation. *They* may indicate that Andrew was also in the boat. The net enclosed such a large number of fish that the weight caused some of the cords to begin to snap. The fishermen signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to their assistance. It may be that the other boat was too far for the voice to carry or as fishermen they may have been used to silent communication while fishing. The weight of the catch of fish was so great that the boats sat so low in the water and began to take on water.

5:8-9. Peter was so overwhelmed at this awesome display of supernatural power that he felt unworthy to be in the presence of Jesus. He did not want Jesus to literally go away from him. He was not confessing to have lived an exceptionally wicked life. When he was face-to-face with the glory, holiness and power of God, he saw acutely his own sinfulness and unworthiness. See Genesis 18:27; Job 42:6; Isaiah 6:5 for examples where persons realized their own sinfulness in the presence of God. Perhaps it was because the miracle was in the area of Peter's expertise that he was so impressed. It is possible to study this passage with a bored yawn or we can be overwhelmed as was Peter at the lordship of Jesus. One of the reasons for so much disobedience in today's church is that there is too little awe and reverence for God. If Jesus was God in flesh as His miracles indicated then He has every right to be our Lord and King. Proud human beings need to bow before the Lord and beg, "Be merciful to us for our arrogance, indifference and disobedience."

5:10-11. Simon Peter was not the only one overwhelmed, the other fishermen shared his awe. Jesus had reassuring words for Simon. Fear is the natural response to the demonstration of divine power. Jesus said, "Stop being afraid, in the future you will begin a new practice of catching men." It would become a continual habit. Even though Simon is said to be addressed, the others were included in this commission. The word for catch literally means "catch alive." Instead of catching fish to die so they could be food, now they would catch men alive saving them from spiritual death and giving them new life through Christ (Hendriksen, p. 284).

A good evangelist is like a good fisherman in several respects. Both must patiently wait for results and not be quickly discouraged. Both the fisherman and the evangelist must seek the right time and the right approach. In both endeavors one must not call undue attention to oneself. Jesus recruited special leaders to be fishers of men. They in turn taught all followers of Christ that it was the responsibility of each Christian to introduce others to the Savior (e.g. Acts 8:4).

Jesus had called Peter to be His follower when John the Baptist had identified Jesus as the Son of God months before (John 1:35-42). Jesus had been in Peter's home and healed his mother-in-law (Luke 4:38,39). This call in this text was more permanent than the first. Peter and the others were being called to a relationship as Jesus' special disciples. Some have suggested that the catch of fish helped to provide for the families of the men while the men traveled with Jesus. This day marked a change in their main vocation in life. They left their occupations and became companions, learners and followers of Jesus. Questions about their future and financial security were left in the hands of Jesus. "They left everything and followed him."

A Leper Is Cleansed — Luke 5:12-16

Read the parallel accounts in Matthew 8:1-4 and Mark 1:40-45 while studying this text.

¹²While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." ¹³And he stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he charged him to tell no one; but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to the people."

¹⁵But so much the more the report went abroad concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities.

¹⁶But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

5:12. The name of the city where the leper was cleansed is not given. Did the leper disobey the Old Testament law by coming to Jesus and to the crowd? The law did forbid a leper to come into a city (Leviticus 13:46). The law required a leper to keep his distance from healthy people, crying "Unclean" in case of incidental contact (Lev. 13:45). The leper's desperation and faith may have led him to have the boldness to disregard the law in coming to Jesus. The Biblical term, *leprosy*, covered a variety of skin disorders. The worst form was a disease that was disfiguring and deadly. Biblical leprosy was a different disease from what is called leprosy today. Several instances of leprosy and information concerning leprosy can be found in these passages: Exodus 4:6; Numbers 5:2-4; 12:10-15; Leviticus 13,14; Deuteronomy 24:8; II Kings 5:1,27; 7:3; 15:5; II Chronicles 26:23; Luke 17:12.

Luke's graphic description, "full of leprosy," indicated the disease was in the advanced stages. The leper humbly fell on his knees (Matt. 8:1; Mark 1:40) and then on his face before Jesus. He had heard of or seen Jesus' healing miracles and believed in the divine power of Jesus to heal even a humanly incurable disease. In the context his addressing Jesus as Lord indicated trusting His divine nature. Rather than showing doubt of Jesus' willingness, "If you will" may display a humility and submission rather than an arrogant demand on the man's part. Since leprosy brought ceremonial defilement, usually its cure was called cleansing rather than healing. See Luke 17:15 for an exception to this.

5:13. Some hold that Jesus broke the law by touching a leper. However Jesus' authority transcended the Mosaic law, since He was the author and the fulfillment of it. Jesus was in no danger of contracting or spreading the disease which may have been the intention of the law. The regulations in the Mosaic law did not cover procedures for a miraculous cure of leprosy. The higher principle of love and mercy took precedence.

Jesus could have cured the leprosy without touching the man but for some reason He chose to perform the miracle in this manner. Perhaps He used touch to convey His personal love and sympathy to the man. No doubt the leper had not been touched by a non-leper for years. Plummer observed: "Jesus touched the leper on the same prin-

ciple as that on which He healed on the Sabbath: the ceremonial law gives place to the law of charity when the two came into collision. His touch aided the leper's faith" (p. 149). For other examples of Jesus' healing touch see Matthew 8:3,15; 9:29; 17:7; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 7:33; Luke 7:14; 22:51.

Jesus was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15). "Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him" (Mark 1:41). Frequently Jesus showed His compassion by healing people's diseased and broken bodies. Matthew described our Lord, "He saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick" (14:14). "The leper's need and faith found an immediate response in the Savior's eagerness to help. And in this readiness his power and his love embraced each other" (Hendriksen, p. 290).

Before Jesus spoke, the man was full of leprosy. After Jesus said, "I will; be clean," not one trace of the leprosy was left. The cure was immediate and total. For other examples of complete instantaneous healing see Luke 4:38-39; 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 8:43-48.

5:14. Jesus "sternly charged him and sent him away at once" (Mark 1:43). Two instructions were given: "tell no one" and "go show yourself to the priest." Why forbid the man to speak of the miracle? Galilee was aflame with the idea of a messianic deliverer who would lead them in political revolt against the bondage of Rome. Jesus did not want the crowds to become so excited and enthusiastic about a messianic king that they would fail to understand His teaching concerning the spiritual nature of His kingdom.

Jesus did not want the people to see only the spectacular miracles. He wanted to teach the spiritual nature of His rule, rather than to excite the mob-like passions of the people. Avoiding undue excitement would also make it easier for the man to go to the priest and to return to his place in society.

Jesus meant to prohibit publishing the report of the miracle to the general public. It would have been impossible to hide it from family and close friends as he moved back into the community. Obedience to this command would keep the man from interchanges with people in society before being pronounced clean by the priest (Plummer, p. 149).

Why did Jesus send him to the priest? This obeyed the law of Moses (Lev. 14:1-32). The priest functioned as a community health officer. If he were satisfied a person no longer had leprosy, then the person was to offer two birds. After the sacrifice the priest then pronounced the person clean so he could return and be reinstated in

society.

Not only was the command for the benefit of the man, it was "for a proof to the people." Literally the text says "for a testimony to them." Some hold *them* refers to the priest and fellow priests. The priests needed to be confronted with the evidence of Jesus' miraculous power as a testimony to them because of their unbelief. Cleansing lepers was one of the evidences of the Messiah (Luke 7:18-22).

The *Revised Standard Version* translates *them* as people. It would have been a testimony to both the priests and to the people. Leon Morris said: "People would know that he had been a leper and would be slow to accept him. But if a priest had inspected him and accepted his offering, there was proof that he had been healed. It would also show that Jesus upheld the law. And it would be a testimony to people in general that the power of God was at work in Jesus" (Morris, p. 115).

5:15-16. Luke does not mention that the problem was due in part to the man's disregard of Jesus' instruction. Mark said, "But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter" (Mark 1:45). No doubt the cleansed leper could not contain his excitement and did it out of gratitude to Jesus. But the results were not helpful to Jesus' program. Geldenhuys said, "In other circumstances, where there was no danger that the masses would develop a dangerous form of enthusiasm, Jesus did in fact command persons whom He had healed to proclaim publicly that He had done so (cf. viii. 39)" (p. 186).

More than ever all the more people wanted to hear Jesus and be healed by Him. "But He" indicated contrast of His behavior with that of the crowds seeking Him. Jesus withdrew to the wilderness for peace and quiet and prayer.

A Paralyzed Man Is Healed — Luke 5:17-26

The dramatic incident of a man let down through the roof is recorded by Matthew (9:1-8) and Mark (2:1-12) as well as Luke. Jesus performed a miracle of healing and answers the criticism of the Pharisees.

¹⁷On one of those days, as he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of

Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. ¹⁸And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; ¹⁹but 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. ²⁰And when he saw their faith he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" ²²When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?" ²⁴But 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, take up your bed and go home." ²⁵And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

5:17. Mark locates the incident in Capernaum. This is Luke's first mention of the Pharisees and the first clash in Galilee between Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities. Soon in Jerusalem the conflict was so sharp that they had wanted to kill Jesus (John 5:16-18).

The Pharisees, whose name means "separated ones" were Jewish religious teachers. They numbered about six thousand. They built a hedge around the law by their oral traditions which they placed as equal in authority with the Word of God. They did this to try to keep people from breaking the law. The real law of God was often buried beneath their tradition (Matthew 15:6). They considered themselves righteous because of the obedience to ceremonial rules and avoidance of outward evil acts. The teachers of the law were scholars who studied and taught the law and the teachings of the rabbis. They were also called scribes (Luke 5:21) and law experts (Luke 10:25). Most of the scribes were Pharisees but some were Sadducees. Luke links the scribes with the Pharisees five times and with the chief priests six times (Morris, p. 117). These Jewish leaders came from all over Palestine to observe Jesus.

"The power of the Lord was with him to heal." When the Greek word for Lord is used without an article it refers to Jehovah (Luke 1:11; 2:9; 4:18; Acts 5:19; 8:26,39; 12:7) (Plummer, p. 152). Because miracles involved the direct exercise of the power of God they were

often called powers.

5:18-19. Four men (according to Mark) brought a paralyzed man on his bed or stretcher to be healed by Jesus. The *King James Version* has *palsy* which is misleading. The Greek word means paralyzed. Luke used the term in the same way the ancient medical authorities did. The men were unable to enter the house where Jesus was teaching because of the crowd. Being resourceful and not easily deterred they carried the man up an outside stairway and on to the roof. They took up some tile in the roof above where Jesus taught. They gradually lowered the man on his stretcher down into the middle of the crowd directly in front of Jesus.

Our imaginations wonder if the crowd was not somewhat irritated by the dust and dirt from the excavation of the ceiling falling on their heads and by this bizarre interruption. Jesus registered no disapproval.

5:20-21. Jesus saw the faith of the four and no doubt also the man himself in their actions. That they believed Jesus could heal the man is evident in measures they took to get the man to Jesus. As James taught, our faith is seen by our works (James 2:18).

Jesus addressed the man and announced that his sins were forgiven. Jesus does not imply that the man's condition is a direct result of his sins. This statement was an exercise of His divine authority. We can forgive the sins another person commits against us. But no human has the authority to forgive all the sins another person has committed. Jesus' statement is a bold claim to deity.

The challenge did not go unnoticed by the Jewish leaders. They were right in saying that only God can forgive sins, but they were wrong in concluding that Jesus could not forgive sin and hence was guilty of blasphemy. They meant blasphemy in the sense of claiming to be able to do what is a prerogative of God alone. They failed to recognize that Jesus was God in flesh.

5:22-24. The Pharisees and teachers were questioning Jesus in their minds. Jesus "knew what was in man" (John 2:25). Inner thoughts were not hidden from Him (Matt. 17:25; John 1:45,48; John 21:17). Jesus "perceived their questionings" indicating thorough and accurate knowledge. He read their thoughts and answered them publicly.

Jesus challenged their reasoning by asking "Which is easier?" to forgive sins or instantly heal the man. "It is easier to *say*, 'thy sins are forgiven,' because no one can prove that they are not forgiven. But the claim to heal with a word can be easily and quickly tested" (Plum-

mer, p. 155). Forgiving the man's sins was a divine act but it was invisible. The man did not suddenly turn chalk white as an evidence his sins were forgiven. He still looked the same. The Jewish leaders were unconvinced.

Jesus gave the reason for the miracle, "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Jesus performed a miracle in the physical world, addressed to human senses, to demonstrate His divine authority. If Jesus could work this miracle of healing, then He had the right to forgive sins.

Jesus refers to Himself as "Son of man," which is His favorite title for Himself. Jesus uses this title about 80 times in the Gospels. In the Gospels no one else addressed Jesus with this title. It is a messianic title. Daniel predicted a coming Son of man (Dan. 7:13,14). It was not a common title for the Messiah perhaps because it stressed his humanity. It did not have the explosive emotional overtones that the title *Messiah* carried in Palestine of Jesus' day.

5:25-26. The healing of this humanly hopeless case was instantaneous. The healed man immediately stood up and gathered up his pallet and headed home, giving glory to God. Many of those who witnessed this display of supernatural power were filled with awe and amazement and also gave glory to God. What they had seen was incredible and beyond human explanation. They had witnessed God become man, demonstrating His power.

The Calling of Levi — Luke 5:27-32

The call of Levi (Matthew) followed the healing of the paralytic.

²⁷After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸And he left everything, and rose and followed him.

²⁹And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them.

³⁰And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

³¹And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

5:27-28. Tax collectors, *publicans* of the *King James Version*, collected taxes for the Roman government. Their fellow Jews hated them

and viewed them as traitors. Barred from the synagogue, they were classed with the lowest of sinners. One type of tax gatherer collected the fixed taxes such as the poll tax on each man and woman for just existing, an income tax of a percent of one's income and a ground tax which was a set percent on grain and produce. The other kind of tax collector, of which Levi was one, was the customs house officer. They had abundant opportunity for oppressing the people, for they agreed to collect a certain amount of money in taxes from a certain district, and anything they could collect above that was their own profit. They could charge as much as they chose on the import and export duties, highway use taxes and other taxes. They often extracted more than their share.

After Jesus left the place where He healed the paralyzed man, He looked intently at the tax collector named Levi, also called Matthew. Levi was seated at his customs office on the great trade route highway that passed near Capernaum. He collected taxes for Herod Antipas. Jesus invited him to be a constant follower of Him. No doubt Levi had seen and heard Jesus preach and heal. His response to the call of Jesus was immediate. Mark used an expression which indicated his was a once-for-all decision to follow Jesus (Mark 2:14). Luke's expression suggests the following was continual. The completeness of his commitment is evident in his forsaking his former manner of life and lucrative business. At this crossroads in life he chose the high road.

5:29-30. Levi had a large banquet in his own home probably for the purpose of introducing his fellow tax collectors and their outcast friends to Christ. The fact that he held the feast in his own home shows his affluence. Jesus fearlessly ignored public opinion and attended the dinner because He loved all men.

This raised the ire of the Pharisees and the scholars and teachers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. They did not approve of Jesus' participation in the dinner and had come in perhaps uninvited to watch Jesus' conduct. They eyed Him like turkey vultures seeking to find some fault in Him. Rather than direct their objection to Him, they criticized His disciples for eating with sinners. Jewish tradition did forbid an orthodox Jew from eating with those who did not keep the law (Geldenhuys, p. 193). They inferred that eating a meal with sinners meant approval of their sins. Their charge was one of guilt by association. They made the mistake many make today that friendship and fellowship means endorsement or total approval.

5:31-32. Jesus ignored their question about the disciples and answered for Himself. He was responsible for their being present. The

scribes felt righteous because they separated themselves from sinners. Jesus justified His association with sinners on the basis of His desire to save them.

If one were really righteous, repentance would be unnecessary. Who can really claim to be righteous? "All have sinned" — including the Pharisees. Those who will not admit their sickness will not go to a doctor. Those who are blind to their own sin do not seek the Savior. Self-righteousness is a dangerous delusion because it makes one feel safe in his own sin. Paul reminded us, "None is righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Confessing one's sin before God is a necessary condition of salvation by God. The Jewish leaders did not seek out sinners to bring them to repentance. This was the very purpose for which Jesus came to earth from the presence of God — "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus had compassion for sinners. He did not shun, scorn, nor separate Himself from sinners. He did not share with the sinner in his sin. Yet He sought to show concern for the personal and spiritual welfare of the sinner. Even in contacts involving immoral persons He was not a prude, nor an unreal goody-goody, nor a soiled compromiser, but His purity and integrity of character were evident and genuine. If we are faithful to our Lord we will follow His example by reaching out to lost men and women with compassion but without compromising our moral integrity.

Questions About Fasting — Luke 5:33-39

³³And 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." ³⁴And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." ³⁶He told them a parable also: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it upon an old garment; if he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And 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. ³⁸But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good.'"

5:33-35. Matthew identified the questioners as disciples of John (Matt. 9:14). Mark said that both the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting and the people questioned Jesus about why His

disciples did not fast. In fasting one abstains from food for a period of time for spiritual reasons. The Jews had one required fast — the Day of Atonement, once each year (Lev. 16:29-31). But tradition had established Mondays and Thursdays as fast days. Many Jews followed the practice of fasting twice a week (Luke 18:12). Other days were also designated as fast days. The question concerned the prayers at set times each day. The questioners wanted to know why Jesus' disciples did not conform to the widespread practice. Jesus' disciples prayed often but at that time they did not fast.

“ ‘Wedding guests don't fast' is the gist of Jesus' answer. His presence brings joy like that of a wedding party” (Morris, p. 120). In the analogy Jesus is the bridegroom and His disciples are the guests or friends of the bridegroom. In such happy circumstances there is no need to fast. When Jesus is taken away from them — through the cross — then there will be times when Jesus' disciples will fast. After this, voluntary fasting will be appropriate.

In the Old Testament, fasting was used “voluntarily as a sign of mourning (II Sam. 1:12), at times of disaster and national calamities (Neh. 1:4), as a sign of repentance for sin (I Kgs. 21:27), and the like” (Geldenhuis, p. 198). The practice degenerated into a fixed and formal practice which was a source of display and hypocrisy (Matt. 6:16; 9:14). Geldenhuis summarized Jesus' attitude toward fasting, “He rejects it as a religiously meritorious ceremony bearing a compulsory, ceremonial character; but He practised it Himself at times and permits it as a voluntary form of spiritual discipline (Matt. 4:2; 6:16-18)” (p. 198). For fasting in the early church, see Acts 9:9; 13:2-3; 14:23; 27:9.

5:36-39. A parable is a true-to-life illustration used to teach a lesson. It may be a saying or story but it involves a comparison of something from everyday life to make a point. No one would tear a piece of cloth from a new-garment in order to patch an old garment. It would ruin the new garment and the patch will disfigure the old garment when the patch shrinks. Jesus' point is that His teaching is not just a minor adjustment to Judaism. He does not just bring a patch for the old ways. He brought a new relationship with God.

Wineskins were bottles or containers for liquids made from the skin of goats. The skin was removed intact. The legs were tied off and the neck became the neck of the bottle. When new wine is put into an old wineskin, the fully stretched wineskin will break open and be ruined due to the pressure of the wine expanding in fermentation. People have a natural tendency to prefer the old to which they are accustomed rather than to accept the new. Inflexible traditionalism kept

people from accepting Jesus in His day. Sadly many reject the new life offered by Jesus today because they say, "The old is better."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What other name does Luke use for the Sea of Galilee?
2. Why did Jesus' instruction about where and when to fish seem strange?
3. If Peter did not want Jesus to literally leave him, what did he mean by "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man"?
4. Name the father of James and John.
5. Instead of 'healing' what word is used describing the cure of the leper?
6. After the miracle the leper was to show himself to whom? Why?
7. After Jesus spoke to the paralytic, why did the Pharisees consider Jesus to be a blasphemer?
8. What reason did Jesus give for healing the paralytic?
9. What was Levi's occupation? Be specific.
10. What was Levi's other name?
11. While at Levi's banquet, what reason did Jesus give for coming to earth?
12. What was the basic answer Jesus gave as to why His disciples were not fasting?