

Taking Risks . . . Just Like Jesus – Luke 5

Ever heard the expression – Nothing ventured, nothing gained? No risk, no reward
In the trading world of the CBOT (11 years out of college), that was especially true

We had mock trading sessions once a week for our clerks –

Teach them to take risks, prepare them to manage it, observe them doing it

Trading was all about taking risks – no risk, no reward; nothing ventured/gained

Every now and then, a clerk would be great in the mock sessions – clean up on others

But when it came to the real thing, they couldn't open their mouth to save their life

They were paralyzed with fear – scared to death to take a risk; and scared to death of what others thought

They became stagnate and ineffective

Describes us as believers often times

We're scared to death to open our mouth for the cause of Christ; To share our faith

To speak truth; To challenge others; To do the right the thing

We're paralyzed with fear

Avoid taking risks altogether, making little to no impact in the lives of those around us

We cannot escape the fact that life in Christ requires taking risks

Luke 5 – 5 examples of the risks Jesus took to impact lives and advance the K of G

We would do well to set aside our fears and take risks just like he did – starting with a starting a challenge to grow

DON'T BE AFRAID TO . . .

Challenge others to grow (v1-11)

3 – Jesus wasn't afraid to challenge Simon to grow in his *service*

Don't be afraid to ask people to serve along side of you

4-5 – This was an obedience thing for Simon

Jesus challenged him to obey, even though didn't make sense

Don't be afraid to challenge people to grow in their *obedience*

7 – obedience always brings blessing

Sometimes I'm hesitant to challenge people to grow in their obedience to the Lord and his word because I'm afraid God won't meet them in it

You can be confident that God will bless it in one way or another

8-10a – *But* – instead of jumping up and down, or bailing water, Peter was broken

He fell down at Jesus' knees – posture of humility and worship

Can't believe I doubted you; You *are* someone special; Not *worthy* to be in yr presence

10b-11 – Don't be afraid to challenge others to grow in their *faith*

Do not be afraid – sinful as you are I have something more important than catching fish

It's called *catching men*; But you need to leave everything and follow me to do so

That'll stretch/grow your faith

But it wasn't a duty or drudgery – Gr word for *followed* means “to follow with the deepest inward attachment”

When you challenge others to grow in their faith, a deep inward attachment awaits them

Don't be afraid to challenge others to grow – in their service, obedience, faith

Take the risk, just like Jesus – and watch God do a work in their life

Touch the untouchable (v12-16)

12 – *there came a man full of leprosy*

Need to understand how *untouchable* this man was

How risky this was for Jesus – physically, culturally, and religiously

Leprosy deteriorates your ability to feel pain; Wear your appendages down to stubs

Flesh begins to rot and smell

If he lived according to the Law in Lev 13 (probably forced to) –

He would have lived completely alone or isolated with other lepers

Had to wear torn/ragged clothes; hair uncut; face unshaven

Everywhere he went he had to cover his mouth and cry out “Unclean!”

Not only was he considered *physically* unclean, but *spiritually* unclean as well

People believed at that time that a person had leprosy due to some heinous sin

To make matters worse (Hughes, 167) –

“By Jesus' time, rabbinical teaching, with its minute restrictions, [taught that] if a leper even stuck his head inside a house, the house was pronounced unclean. It was illegal to greet a leper. Lepers had to remain at least 160 feet away if they were upwind, and 7 feet if downwind. Josephus, the Jewish historian, summed it up by saying that lepers were treated ‘as if they were, in effect, dead men.’”

All of this resulted in a life of humiliation and isolation – absent of touch, which they couldn't feel anyway

13 – don't be afraid to touch the untouchable; literally

14 – this offering was an elaborate and extensive cleansing process over 8 days (Lev 14)

Designed to restore the healed leper to the community and a right relationship with God, through the sacrifice of animals

That's the same thing Jesus does for us – he restores us to a right relationship with the Father, forgives our sins through *his* sacrifice on the cross, and knits us together as a community of believers

14 – go and do those things *for a proof to them*

That you're healed and whole and able to rejoin the community

More importantly, as a proof/sign that the messianic age had come

The Jews expected that the ravages of sin would be removed when the Messiah/Christ/Deliverer came

What better example of it than a healed leper; equivalent to raising someone fr dead

16 – Even Jesus said no to ministry on occasion and withdrew to refuel and be alone with the Father

Jesus wasn't afraid to touch the untouchable

He saw past the disfigurement on the *outside*, to the ache on the *inside* . . .

Reached out to him with *compassion* – that's risky!

Don't be afraid to do it; To get involved in people's lives who are *untouchable* –

Isolated because of their race, sickness, age, disability, social stigma

Take the risk to touch them with your presence, your kindness, your attention

Never underestimate the power of Christ's love in/through you to *touch* the untouchable

Buck the status quo (v17-26)

Status quo refers to the way things are now

Not talking about bucking the status quo to do the *wrong* thing

Or swimming against the current when the status quo is doing the *right* thing

I'm talking about doing the right thing even if it runs contrary to the crowd
Don't be afraid to do that

- 17 – he was in the presence of the mucky-mucks; cut the tension with a knife
The pressure was on – don't rock the boat; just leave things the way they are
21 – *blasphemies* – things that disrespect God
23 – obviously, your sins are forgiven you is easier to say because it's not outwardly verifiable; *anybody* can say that
24 – Jesus verified his *spiritual* miracle of forgiveness with a *physical* miracle of healing
In so doing, he substantiated his authority to forgive sins – reserved only for God
And his claim to be *from* God (referring to himself as the *Son of Man* – Messianic title)
26 – that could be our theme verse for the year

Don't be afraid to buck the status quo when the status quo is wrong
Jesus was more concerned with meeting the spiritual needs of soft-hearts, than the expectations of hard ones
He was more concerned with meeting needs than meeting expectations
He was more concerned with doing the *right* thing than doing the *acceptable* thing
The religious leaders didn't approve, and Jesus didn't care!

God help us to rid our hearts of the desire to meet the expectations of the status quo!
To meet the expectations of man instead of God
Whether it's the herd mentality of your friends, the standards of your family, your religious upbringing, your previous church, whatever
If what they're doing and what they're about and what they teach is not in line with *God's* word – don't be afraid to buck the status quo and do the right thing

Associate with sinners (v27-32)

- 27 – religious no-no to associate with tax collectors; it defiled you because unclean
Couldn't call him as a disciple (follower, learner) – he was a *sinner*
28 – followed him – Jesus has that effect on people
29 – If you don't associate with sinners, how can you have an impact on their lives?
Find those people with whom you can rub shoulders, without sacrificing your testimony on the altar of raunchy places
Be creative if necessary – invite them over for a meal; go to a game together; have a block party; join a bowling league
Do it for the right reasons – not because you want to keep one foot in the world and the pleasures of sin . . . but to love them to Christ; influence them for eternity
Get your motive right, and then associate with as many sinners as you can

- 32 – *I have not come to call the righteous* – the self-righteous
Those who think they're well; Who think they're all good in their self-sufficiency
But those who *recognize* their need for help, just like the sick
Wouldn't you rather be a sinner called home, than a saint never called?

God's calling the broken and humble – don't be afraid to associate with them
Take the risk . . . just like Jesus

Confront religious baggage (v33-39)

- 35 – we're in those days, longing for Christ's return, so we can fully celebrate

Then he confronts their religious baggage with 3 illustrations . . .

- 36 – you can't piece together the old covenant (law) with the new covenant (gospel) and expect to have a workable framework within which to live
Sometimes true in ministry – former ways of doing things don't mesh w/ new ways

- 37-38 – wine releases a gas as it ferments and ages, causing the wineskin to expand
But if the wineskin is old and already stretched, it won't have any more room to expand, and it will break, causing a mess
The new work of Christ cannot be contained by the old religious structures of the law
Just like a new work of Christ in *you* doesn't *fit* into your old ways of thinking/acting
Or like the new work in our church can't be forced into old ways of doing things

- 39 – Unfortunately, many people were so set on the law and the way of the *old* covenant, that they refused to even consider the new way (the new wine) of life in Christ
That's like some guy eating the same sandwich for 25 years because he's convinced there's nothing better out there, even though he's never tried it
Unfortunately, that kind of baggage (the way I've always done it is just fine) prevents people from ever walking through these doors and experiencing life to the full

Equally as bad is the **baggage** that many of you *do* walk in with

Church tradition – “My old church did it this way, how come you don't?”

Less of a question than it is a command; Religious baggage

Personal convictions – personal practices/beliefs that you think *everybody* should have
Halloween, Christmas, Harry Potter, Drinking

There are *biblical principles* that apply to every single one of us – be holy as I am
holy; live above reproach; avoid all appearances of evil . . .

How the HS applies them in our lives may look different in each of us – those are *personal convictions*

Personal convictions are for you; Biblical principles are for everyone

Litmus tests – Do you give an invitation every Sunday? What about hymns?

How about a kid's choir? Do you have AWANA? What's your % for missions?

If we test positive, you're in; If not, you either don't come back or you make it your personal goal to change things; Religious baggage

Damaged goods – you've been hurt at a previous church; burnt out; spiritually abused; misled by the leadership; on and on

And you load that one up as well and carry it in here with all the skepticism and mistrust that goes with it

Church tradition, personal convictions, litmus tests, and damaged goods – some of you have so much baggage, you can hardly fit through the door

If you do, the tendency is to off-load, unpack, and superimpose it on this new work
Don't do it – *Leave your bags at the door*

Come – all who may, all who want . . . but don't force your old wine/practices/grievances, onto this new work

Do it for your sake – because you're weary and heavy laden with so much baggage
And for our sake – in order to preserve *untainted*, the work that God has begun

Don't be afraid to – Associate with sinners; Buck the status quo; Touch the untouchable;
Challenge others to grow; Confront religious baggage
Take those risks . . . Just like Jesus – Pray

