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**Jesus Calls Fishermen to Follow Him (5:1-11)**

*1 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.*

- Jesus needs space to teach without getting trampled. He sits to teach again.
- These are “trammel nets,” triple nets with a weight on the bottom and something to make it float on the top. Fish got trapped in a narrow mesh in the middle.

*4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled 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. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”*

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9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

- Peter had faith in Jesus! Although he was an expert fisherman, He had already seen Jesus heal his mother-in-law. Faith isn't irrational, **but**... it means trusting Jesus' word more than our own human reasoning.
- Jesus can sink your boat with blessings!
- The presence of Jesus causes the awareness of sin and the conviction of sin.
- Jesus says that from now on, Peter will catch men. The Lord used a word that means catching an animal alive. Jesus would be training them to catch people. "He that wins souls is wise!"
- James and John joined the group of disciples at this time, along with Andrew.

### **A Man Full of Leprosy (5:12-16)**

12 And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 13 Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded." →

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*15 However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 16 So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*

- We now know that true leprosy (Hansen’s Disease) is caused by bacteria, but leprosy in the ancient world was a name given to many different skin diseases.
- Lepers could not participate in worship or in public life: “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp” (Leviticus 13:45-46 ESV).
- Jesus broke protocol, and the man broke protocol also. In this case, contagion worked the other way around: the leper didn’t contaminate Jesus, but life from Jesus flowed into the leper!
- The leper had faith. He just wasn’t sure whether Jesus **wanted** to heal him.
- The Lord often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Why do we expect good results from always working harder and harder in our own strength?

**Who is this Jesus? (5:17-26)**

*17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. 18 Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and →*

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lay before Him. 19 And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. 20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” 25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

- The teachers of the Law are also known as **the scribes**. They were very influential. The Pharisees were devoted to keeping the Law very strictly.
- News of Jesus is spreading; people are coming from all the main regions of Israel, except for Samaria.
- We shouldn’t think of the power of God as something that was independent from Jesus; however, there are times in the Gospels when God’s power is conceived of as a power that can be felt and discerned.
- In the Greek of the New Testament, what we call *miracles* are “workings of power.” The Greek word for this power is *dunamis*. It’s the active power of God.

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- Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness startles the crowd and the religious people because, as they well knew, only God can forgive sins. They realized instantly that Jesus was claiming the power to do something that only God could do.
- Jesus demonstrated that He had such authority by then healing the man.

### **The Son of Man**

This is the first time the Lord calls Himself *Son of Man*. Why does Jesus favor this title? Titles like *Son of God* and *Messiah* had a very military meaning for first-century Jews. The Jews longed for Messiah to crush the wicked Gentiles. If Jesus favored the title *Messiah*, He risked playing into this. People would have misunderstood His message.

His *Son of Man* language pointed to something more meaningful for His message. Jesus was pointing us to the vision of the Son of Man in Daniel 7. In that chapter, Daniel sees a Heavenly Man receiving His kingdom:

I was watching in the night visions, and behold,  
One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.  
Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away,  
And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.  
(Daniel 7:13-14)

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By claiming to be the Son of Man, Jesus was claiming to be this Divine Man and claiming to be Divine, but perhaps very few people understood that.

**The Calling of Matthew (5:27-32)**

*27 After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." 28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. 29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

- Tax collectors were seen as traitors and collaborators with Rome. Even ordinary people who didn't know the Law of Moses were often looked down upon.
- Grace is never about merit, otherwise it wouldn't be grace!
- Leaving a tax collecting job meant it would be hard to get it back again, so Levi is walking away from his life and his livelihood.
- In Luke's Gospel, there's a lot of feasting! Salvation comes, and then rejoicing and feasting follow!
- If you've already put yourself into the category of the righteous, then Jesus' message isn't for you. If we think He has nothing to say to us, then His words will never penetrate our hearts.

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### **The Need for New Wineskins (5:33-39)**

*33 Then they said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?” 34 And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.”*

*36 Then He spoke a parable to them: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. 39 And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’”*

- These short parables are more revolutionary and challenging than we think.
- First, Jesus refers to Himself as the bridegroom. Israel was considered to be married to God, so this was another claim to be Israel’s God.
- Jesus also knows that He is going to be taken away from His disciples.
- The work of the Spirit cannot be received by old structures. But people who are accustomed to the old wine always prefer what they know.

### **Lord of the Sabbath (6:1-5)**

*1 Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them →*

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*in their hands. 2 And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” 3 But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?” 5 And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”*

- Jesus wasn't stealing. Farmers left the corners of their fields unharvested, so that the poor could glean. (Remember the Book of Ruth.)
- It's hard for us to grasp just how integral the Sabbath was (and is) to Jewish life. There were 39 different categories of work that were forbidden on the Sabbath.
- Jesus argues that human need should come before man-made restrictions. David had once eaten the sacred bread which was only for the priests.
- Shockingly, Jesus claims to have authority over the Sabbath itself. Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath – pointing to His superiority and His Deity.

### **Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (6:6-11)**

*6 Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. 8 But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood. →*

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9 Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" 10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. 11 But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

- Healing was forbidden on the Sabbath.
- Notice that the scribes and Pharisees were watching Jesus closely. A religious spirit watches you closely to see if you will break the rules.
- The Lord looked around at all of them. And God will search all our hearts, too!
- The religious people lacked concern for the man who had a withered hand. And we see the beginning of plotting against Jesus.

In these stories, Jesus opposes religion that is wrongly used. He stands against attitudes that value rules and propriety more than helping people and meeting their needs. He also makes claims about Himself that these guardians consider alarming.

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