FAMILY BIBLE HOUR SERIES

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

GOOD NEWS &
GREAT JOY
for all people

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The Power to Cleanse and Forgive

Luke 5:12-35

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Luke 5:12-35

12 While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 13 And He reached out with His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And He ordered him to tell no one, saying, “But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” 15 But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

17 One day He was teaching, and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. 18 And some men were carrying a man on a stretcher who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. 19 But when they did not find any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. 20 And seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

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Luke 5:12-35

21 The scribes and the Pharisees began thinking of the implications, saying, “Who is this man who
speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, except God alone?” 22 But Jesus, aware of their thoughts,
responded and said to them, “Why are you thinking this way in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say:
‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 24 But so 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, get
up, and pick up your stretcher, and go home.” 25 And immediately he got up before them, and picked
up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. 26 And they were all struck with
astonishment and began glorifying God. They were also filled with fear, saying, “We have seen
remarkable things today!”
27 After that He went out and looked at a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office, and He said
to him, “Follow Me.” 28 And he left everything behind, and got up and began following Him.
29 And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and
other people who were reclining at the table with them. 30 The Pharisees and their scribes began
grumbling to His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” 31
And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but
those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.”
33 And they said to Him, “The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the
Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.” 34 And Jesus said to them, “You cannot make the
attendants of the groom fast while the groom is with them, can you? 35 But the days will come; and
when the groom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.”

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The Leper - Leprosy

- Leprosy was often a life sentence, as the disease had no known cure.
- Leviticus 13:45-46 - 45 “As for the person who has the leprous infection, his clothes shall be torn and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and call out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ 46 He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; he shall live outside the camp.
- Leviticus 5:3 “If he touches human uncleanness… he shall be guilty.”
- Leprosy separated you from your people *and* your God
- It was often seen as judgment for sin (John 9:2, Numbers 12:10, 2 Kings 5, 2 Chronicles 26:19–21)

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The Leper - Humble Faith

- The two key components of faith
  - Ability - That God *can* do what He says
    - Luke 7:6,7 - “Lord, do not trouble Yourself further… but just say the word, and my servant shall be healed.
  - Will - That God *will* do what He says
    - Heb 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.
- Evidence of faith
  - Begging (v 12) - he fell on his face and begged Him
  - Confession (v 12) - “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

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The Leper - Cleansing

- (v 13) [Jesus] reached out with His hand and touched him.
- (v13) immediately the leprosy left him
- (v 14) He ordered him to tell no one
- (v 14) “But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded…”
  - Jesus fulfilled the Law
    - Matt 5:17, “Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

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Jesus: Popularity, Prayer, and Power

- (v15-16) 15 But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray. 17 One day He was teaching, and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.
- Jesus was drawing increased attention, from both the crowds and the Pharisees
- Prayer
  - Often - A habit that characterized Him.
  - Away - He left behind the duties and pressures of His ministry, this wasn't for show
  - Wilderness - He went to a place where He would not be found or interrupted

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Jesus: Popularity, Prayer, and Power

- (v16) …and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.
- It demonstrates his dependance on the Father
  - Hebrews 2:7 and John 5:19
- It does not negate who He is (Matthew 28:18)
- Contrast to Mark 6:5,6 5 And He could not do any miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He was amazed at their unbelief.
- Jesus is not limited by our belief or unbelief, but he does act according to it. (James 1:6)

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The Paralytic - Paralysis

- No greater illustration of complete helplessness, without constant help death is assured.
- It did not carry the same stigma of leprosy, or cut him off from either his culture or religion.
- It hid a far more subtle and deadly injury: sin

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The Paralytic - Active Faith

- (v 18) they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him.
- The persevered past frustration and obstacles (v 18)
  - They did not let their emotions of frustration overthrow their faith that Jesus could heal their friend.
- They took radical, dramatic action (v19)
- Jesus “saw” their faith (v20)
  - Both the friends and the paralytic man are included in the attribution of faith

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It is not reason that is taking away my faith: on the contrary, my faith is based on reason. It is my imagination and emotions. The battle is between faith and reason on one side and emotion and imagination on the other.

When you think of it you will see lots of instances of this. A man knows, on perfectly good evidence, that a pretty girl of his acquaintance is a liar and cannot keep a secret and ought not to be trusted; but when he finds himself with her his mind loses its faith in that bit of knowledge and he starts thinking, “Perhaps she’ll be different this time,” and once more makes a fool of himself and tells her something he ought not to have told her. His senses and emotions have destroyed his faith in what he really knows to be true.

~ C.S Lewis

The Paralytic - Active Faith

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The Paralytic - Forgiveness and Healing

- Jesus forgives him (v 20)
  - Jesus deals with the deepest issue first.
- Jesus uses the moment to reach out to many more than just the paralytic
  - Jesus is doing something bigger than just healing the man
  - He is using the opportunity to prove his divine authority (v24)
  - He is using the opportunity to glorify God more than just an immediate healing (v26)
- Only then does the man receive healing (v24)
- He leaves obeying Jesus and glorifying God (v 25)

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The Tax Collector - The Hidden Illness

- At first glance, Levi (Matthew) has nothing wrong with him
  - He's rich
  - He has “friends” (v 29)
  - He isn’t ill or lame or suffering any visible ailment
- He was just as much an outcast as the leper, but spiritually instead of legally
  - He had turned his back on his people and thrown in his lot with the Romans
  - He was seen as a traitor by other jews
- His issue was that his allegiance was to the wrong kingdom.

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The Tax Collector - Following Faith

- Jesus calls him (v27) “Follow Me.”
- (v 28) he left everything behind, and got up and began following Him.
  - Matthew 13:44-46 44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it.
  - Contrast Luke 9:59, 62 59 And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” … But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

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The Tax Collector - Called into fellowship

- The man who was considered a traitor to the kingdom is made an attendant and friend of the true King.
- Levi immediately shares the news with everyone he has influence with (v29)
  - Those at the banquet include many “tax collectors and sinners”
  - Again Jesus “touches” the unclean, without himself being defiled, but instead purifying what he touches
- Jesus uses the opportunity again to show the pharisees their own hypocrisy and God’s true heart
  - (v 31, 32) 31 And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.”
- Jesus uses the occasion of a feast to reveal his true nature a bit more, (v 34) the bridegroom of God

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That is why Faith is such a necessary virtue: unless you teach your moods “where they get off,” you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith.

The first step is to recognise the fact that your moods change. The next is to make sure that, if you have once accepted Christianity, then some of its main doctrines shall be deliberately held before your mind for some time every day. That is why daily prayers and religious reading and church going are necessary parts of the Christian life. We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed.

And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?” ~ C. S. Lewis