

In the last lesson, we saw the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. We read about His ability to teach, heal and expel demons. The first apostles were called; Simon Peter, James and John. *In this lesson* we see another theme or motif that Luke uses frequently in his Gospel. **Luke has an unusual emphasis on food and gathering together around meals and banquets.** The Gospel of Luke mentions **19 meals**. In addition to those meals, Jesus uses banquets in his parables and he is criticized for eating too much and with the wrong people.

1. When did you feel closest to God this week?

2. Reflection: Read Luke 5:17-26. Reflect on the actions of the men carrying the man on the stretcher. How difficult would it be to lift the man to the roof?

What was it that compelled them to go to such lengths for their companion?

Luke 5:17-26 One day as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was with him for healing. ¹⁸ And some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; they were trying to bring him in and set [him] in his presence. ¹⁹ But not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When he saw their faith, he said, "As for you, your sins are forgiven." ²¹ Then the scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who but God alone can forgive sins?" ²² Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply, "What are you thinking in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? ²⁴ But 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, pick up your stretcher, and go home." ²⁵ He stood up immediately before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶ Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God, and, struck with awe, they said, "We have seen incredible things today."

3. Read footnotes for Luke 5:17-26 and share any information you have found about this healing miracle. What is the connection between the man's paralysis and forgiveness of sins?

4. Read Luke 5:27-32.

Reflection: Why did Levi feel compelled to give a great banquet?

How does this story help to define the mission of Jesus? (See verses 31-32)

Luke 5:27-32 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸ And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹ Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. ³² I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

5. Read Luke 5:33-38. Which of these verses provides a foreshadowing of future events?

Luke 5:33-38 And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same; but yours eat and drink.” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But the days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.” ³⁶ And he also told them a parable. “No one tears a piece from a new cloak to patch an old one. Otherwise, he will tear the new and the piece from it will not match the old cloak. ³⁷ Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. ³⁸ Rather, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins. ³⁹ [And] no one who has been drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’”

6. In the Jewish tradition, fasting was done in connection to expiation of sins (on the Day of Atonement) for penitence, and for mourning. Read again 5:33-38. Is Jesus rejecting the practice of fasting? Why are the disciples of Jesus not fasting at this time?

7. In Luke 6:1-12 we have two stories about the Sabbath. All types of work were forbidden on the Sabbath. Read these verses and footnotes as well. Why are the actions of Jesus and the Apostles exceptions to the rule about “work” on the Sabbath?

Luke 6:1-12 ¹ While he was going through a field of grain on a sabbath, his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. ² Some Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?” ³ Jesus said to them in reply, “Have you not read what David did when he and those [who were] with him were hungry? ⁴ [How] he went into the house of God, took the bread of offering, which only the priests could lawfully eat, ate of it, and shared it with his companions.” ⁵ Then he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”

⁶ On another sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. ⁷ The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him. ⁸ But he realized their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, “Come up and stand before us.” And he rose and stood there. ⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, *is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?*” ¹⁰ Looking around at them all, he then said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

8. Read again Luke 6:6-11. How do you think the man with the withered hand feels about being healed in the synagogue on the Sabbath? Why were the Pharisees and Scribes enraged?

9. Looking back at the readings in this lesson. Which verses were the most memorable or meaningful to you?