



**CALVARY**  
TUSCALOOSA

**TEACHING PLAN**  
JANUARY 20, 2019



## RESTORING OTHERS IN GOD'S IMAGE

LUKE 5:17-26

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### PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying Luke 5:17-26. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus' divine authority and goodness were proven in His healing of the paralytic. Jesus spent much of his time restoring broken things, according to the will of God.

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**WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:** Jesus is trustworthy to heal our sin-sickness. The brokenness that is caused by sin will be used for his glory no matter the outcome of it. Further, we can be assured that there will be no brokenness in eternity spent with Him.

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**GOSPEL CONNECTION:** The mission of God is to restore the broken ones and not just provide a comfortable place for the blessed ones (see John 9:1-5).

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## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

- 1 Have you ever been in a situation where you felt completely helpless? A situation in which you felt as though you had absolutely no control?
- 2 What did you do? What happened?

In the passage we will study today, we read about just such a person: a paralytic to be exact. We don't have any information on his background, but we do know that his situation was desperate. First-century Palestinians did not have the social safety nets that we may enjoy today. If a man was unable to work, he had to depend on the compassion and kindness of his family and community. There was very little medical recourse that he could take. He had no control over his situation other than somehow seeking a hearing with Jesus. Maybe Jesus would make him able to walk again?

However, when the man finally made it to Jesus, he learned that his paralysis wasn't the malady that concerned Jesus first. Let's look at this story more closely and see what we learn about God's mission and our role in it.

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

This account marks that second emphasis of one of Luke's themes, opposition to Jesus. This narrative and the 4 following all center around the controversy that Jesus' ministry induced that led to clashes between Him and the religious leaders.

### ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

**Has anyone ever done something for you so sacrificial that it shocked you? What was it?**

**Why did they do it? How did you respond? How do you feel about it now?**

We don't know much about the men who carried the paralytic man to Jesus other than the fact that they were willing to sacrifice in order to help this man. Not only would it have been physically taxing to carry the man, but also they risked the anger of the homeowner, and possibly the rebuke of Jesus, for their imprudence.

Once they brought the man to Jesus, these men may have been surprised by what Jesus said. They brought the man there so that he might be able to walk again. Then, he would be able to work, take care of his family, etc. These things, however, weren't paramount from Jesus' perspective. Let's see what Jesus said was most important.

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In Luke 5:27-32 Jesus called Levi, who was a tax collector. The Pharisees and scribes complained, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"

Notes:

Luke 5:33-39 describes the religious leaders questioning Jesus as to why His disciples did not fast, as the disciples of John the Baptist did.

Luke 6:1-5 recounts how the Pharisees condemned His disciples for picking and eating heads of grain on the Sabbath.

Luke 6:6-11 describes Jesus healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath.

It is important to view today's passage in relation to the other controversy accounts. Luke's intention, if carefully considered, will help us to rightly understand and apply the passage.

> Have a volunteer read Luke 5:17-19.

*17 One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. 18 Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. 19 When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.*

It would help satisfy some curiosity if we had more information about the men that carried the paralytic man to Jesus. We know that they were men. That's the only thing the text says about them. The anonymity of these men, however, is significant. Further, their plan of action and the execution thereof is replete with lessons for us.

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- What ability did the paralytic man have to bring himself to Jesus? Why is this significant? How is this connected to our ability to gain salvation for ourselves?

Notes:

The paralytic didn't ask these men to lend a hand. He needed much more than a hand. He was completely helpless. We are reminded of the parable in Luke 15 when the shepherd, upon finding the lost sheep, carries it home across his shoulders. Like the shepherd, these men took on the full burden.

What these men did for the paralytic is a reflection of the gospel, of what God has done for us. Colossians 2:13 says, "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins." The essence of the gospel is that God took on a burden for us that we were unable to bear on our own.

If we want to live lives that reflect the gospel, we will look for ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. We will carry out selfless acts of service for the good of another and willingly bear the detriment it causes us. This is possible because we are a transformed people, who have had their unbearable burdens carried away by Another. We now experience undeserved goodness and full assurance of unspeakable good in the life to come.

- How did the men finally get the paralytic to Jesus? What does this teach us about the lengths we should be willing to go to share Jesus with others?

We spend a lot of time and resources mitigating risk. That's not necessarily a bad thing. There's wisdom in carefully planning in order to avoid scenarios in which

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we find ourselves unnecessarily victimized or liable. However, living a gospel-saturated life means loving Jesus and our neighbor enough to expose ourselves, our resources, our property, and our preferences to risk. These men tore the roof of a house! At times, we must be willing to take desperate action to point others to Jesus.

Notes:

- Why do you think we aren't given more detail about these men?

We likely don't know more about these men because this account wasn't about them. Their job was to point to Jesus and take whatever steps within their ability to get the paralytic to Him. We often talk about the work of Paul and other famous Christians throughout the history of the church, but we should remember that the gospel message went from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth on the lips of countless nameless Christians, whose motivation was gratefulness, whose audience was heaven, and whose treasure was laid up where rust and moth could not destroy.

Followers of Jesus ought to serve their King without aspirations of personal recognition and glory. Good deeds done for the approval and notice of men don't please our King and don't reflect the gospel. We can be sure that when we faithfully obey God, even anonymously, He sees and is well pleased with us.

> Have a volunteer read Luke 5:20.

*20 When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."*

What Jesus said to the paralyzed man is shocking. It's shocking to us and it was shocking to the Pharisees, but for two different reasons. It was shocking to the Pharisees because by telling the man that his sins

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were forgiven, Jesus was claiming that no less than equality with God. The Pharisees would have perceived this as blasphemy.

Jesus' words are shocking to us for another reason. We have the benefit of knowing how the story ends, but let's suspend this knowledge briefly. How does Jesus' response land on our Western ears? At best it's confusing, at worst it's insensitive and tone-deaf. This man was desperate for physical healing. He had a need that Jesus was able to meet. Why wouldn't he?

Notes:

- Why was it necessary that Jesus first addressed the man's sin before addressing His physical need?

Sin is an offense against God. When a person rebels against God's law he commits sin. These acts of rebellion are rooted in the sinfulness of the human heart. Due to the inherited sin of Adam, the human soul is infected with the disease of sin, which produces sinful behavior. That's what makes the human condition so dire. It's a cancer that it is absolutely fatal unless acted upon by some outside force.

When Jesus saw this man, He didn't only see physical ailment. He saw a sin-sick heart and a spiritually dead creation of God. The desperate need of this man wasn't restored limbs, but cleansing from sin.

This account is a clear reminder that the spiritual condition of a person dwarfs any temporal need that we might experience. We would do well to let Jesus' focus and priority shape our priorities, whether we are planning a mission trip, church activities, or giving to the needy.

- What is our responsibility to meet physical needs if our priority is to be spiritual needs?

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Historically, churches that are more liberal have placed an emphasis on the social mandate (feeding the hungry, healing the sick) over the spiritual mandate (evangelism, discipleship, church planting) and churches that are more conservative have placed more emphasis on the spiritual mandate over the social mandate. Many people argue that we should do both. This is true, and there is New Testament precedent for doing both. However, the New Testament is clear that the spiritual mandate is always to be the priority because of the eternal nature of the need and impact. The account we are studying today bears this principle out.

Notes:

> Have a volunteer read Luke 5:21-26.

*21 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

*22 Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? 23 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 25 Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. 26 Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."*

Have you ever asked, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" We often find it hard to reconcile when people seemingly suffer unjustly. It may make us uncomfortable to think about how God is involved in the situation. If it's the Devil's doing, then is God too weak to stop him? If it is within the scope of God's will, then is God really good? Nothing causes Christians to wrestle with their faith more than suffering. Yet, nothing causes Christians to grow in their faith more than suffering.

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- If God controls all things, how are we to think about suffering and hardship?

Notes:

- Does God have control over the schemes of the Devil?

God is 100% trustworthy and completely reliable. Nothing is able to thwart his plans, He always accomplishes his purposes (Job 42:2; Isaiah 14:27). This is something that we should be thankful for because it means that we can rest in God. We have no reason to fret or worry, even in the face of the schemes of the devil.

We should remember, God created the devil. Just because he later rebelled doesn't change the fact that the creation is still subject to its Creator. Further, the assaults of Satan are intended to harm us, but God uses them for our good and his glory. For example, when Paul advised the church to turn someone "over to Satan" for discipline (1 Corinthians 5), the hope was that through suffering, they would be restored. Don't forget Job. First, Job had to seek permission from God himself to attack Job. Lucifer wanted Job to curse God and die, but Job worshipped and glorified God instead! The devil can do nothing to us without God's permission and God uses his attacks for God's purposes.

- What is God's ultimate purpose in suffering and tragedy?

His ultimate purpose in these things is the same as His ultimate purpose in all of life: His glory. After the paralytic was healed the text says that those who saw glorified God (26). See also John 9:1-5 for another example of this. When God acts to relieve

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suffering, people glorify him. But, God also receives glory when His children walk by faith and persevere in trials. Finally, God is glorified when suffering produces Christlikeness in His children. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” The good work of God takes place in all things, not only those that are good and pleasing to us.

Notes:

## APPLICATION

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

- 1 How can you sacrifice yourself for the good of others? What are some specific ways, today that you can give of yourself to bless others?
- 2 How can we seek to serve others in both their spiritual and physical needs?
- 3 How has God used suffering in your life? How might this be used to point others to Him?

## PRAY

Pray and thank God that He has the power to meet all of our needs, both spiritual and physical. Pray for the remembrance that He uses all things for His purposes, even in times of suffering. Pray for faithfulness in these times for His glory.

## FOLLOW UP

Notes:

*Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:*

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
  - Who do you know that is in spiritual and physical need?
  - How will you seek to serve this this week in a way that points to God's power to restore?
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- > The challenge to memorize Luke 5:24.

## LUKE 5:17-26

5:17. Jesus faced a crisis decision. Would he keep the healing powers to himself in the face of unbelieving leaders with political power? Or would he heal and let these leaders react as they would? His opponents certainly made a power play. They brought in the troops from every corner of the country to wait, watch, and react.

NOTES:

5:18-19. The people ignored these power confrontations. They saw a power source and did everything necessary to connect with it. At times crowds held the upper hand. Their physical presence prevented anyone from reaching Jesus. Not these resourceful men. If they could not carry the paralyzed man on his pallet through the crowds to Jesus, they would make their own doorway to the Master Physician. They cut away the roofing tiles and lowered the man's pallet attached to ropes. Now the sick man became the object of power-play politics.

5:20-21. Jesus made his power play on behalf of the sick man. He pronounced him cured from illness, sin, and death. Religious leaders made a power play against Jesus. Anyone who claimed to forgive sins put himself on an equal level with God. No one dared make such claims. Jesus must be arrested. He must not influence the crowds.

5:22-25. Jesus' power extended even beyond forgiving sins. He could read minds. He knew they saw him as a blasphemer, one who claimed for himself powers limited only to God. He proved his point. He told the man to walk. Immediately he walked, carrying away his pallet. Jesus' healing powers won this round of argument.

5:26. The people knew who had won. They knew who had divine power. They came to Jesus. Again amazement and praise filled their lives. What they saw made them awe-struck. They stared in wonder at what God had done.

Revealing power is more than healing power. It is the power to put all life forces back together. As such, it is a gift from God. It reveals who has God's power. It also reveals who opposes God's power.