

04/06/25 - Luke 5:17- 26 - "From the Roof to Redemption"

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- [0 : 00] Please turn with me to Luke 5, 17-26. On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there! who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.
- And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.
- But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven you.
- And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, Why do you question in your hearts?
- Which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven you, or to say, Rise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.
- [1 : 21] He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.
- And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, We have seen extraordinary things today. This is God's word.
- Thanks be to God. I'd like us to think about some of what's going on in this passage, but looking into evangelical history. Thomas Aquinas of the 13th century was one of the greatest theological minds in Christian history.
- I won't say he's the greatest, but one of the greatest. And he wrote many different volumes. He was known for shaping the church for centuries through his logic, through his philosophy, through his doctrine.
- And just built brilliance, just flowed from his pen. And near the end of his life, there was something that did happen. During worship one day while he was praying, Aquinas experienced something overwhelming.
- [2 : 39] That as it's theologically true, that when we pray, we are praying and encountering God through the Holy Spirit, right? And this was a kind of direct encounter with the Holy Spirit at this time and with Christ being co-equal with the Holy Spirit, which is the same with the Father.
- And afterward, after this encounter, he stopped writing entirely. His pen, his brilliance of the pen just stopped flowing.
- He stopped writing. People around him are like, are you going crazy? This onset dementia? What's going on? They urged him to finish his work.
- And he replied, I cannot. All that I have written seems like straw compared to what he had experienced, to what he had seen.

Now, Thomas didn't need more arguments, more words. He had the living Christ and an encounter with the living Christ.

[3 : 54] And in that moment, he realized that the truest and greatest thing that he could ever experience, greater than any healing, greater than any miracle, and in his case, any intellect, intellectual advances, or even anything physical of this world.

It's what Jesus does in his soul, which is the greatest miracle. And when he truly encountered Jesus, just like when we truly encounter Jesus, when he breaks through those barriers that we put up of pride, of fear, of sin, and for Aquinas, it was intellect, very smart, you don't walk away the same after encountering Jesus Christ.

And that's the kind of moment that we arrive at today in this passage in Luke 5. We see a crowded home, a blocked entrance, the fire marshal still writing up the tickets for this instance.

That was a joke. Wake up, everyone. All right. Maybe not so funny, but four friends are refusing to give up to get into this home.

And some came to this home with evil intent to critique Jesus, while others came carrying someone to him, believing that Jesus Christ was the only hope for the man.

[5 : 24] But there is only one group in this home that walked away completely changed. And today we're going to witness two miracles. One being the miracle that stunned the crowd, and the other that silenced the critics.

So I'd encourage you to tune into this sermon title today, From the Roof to Redemption. And as we see this narrative unfold, I believe what we will see being thrust into our hearts today is the fact and the main point that faith gets us to Jesus, but his authority gets us to God.

And let's unpack that today into two different sections. And I'd like to pray before we get too far along here and pray for the power of that Holy Spirit, which is present here today, and inspire the words upon the pages and the reading that we have, that we encounter the living God through this.

Let's pray for the Holy Spirit to help us. Father, we submit to you today. We come to you crawling in a needy, desperate estate, asking for you to reveal hope to us that surpasses anything in this life, whether physical or health-related.

No matter what physical needs we have, Lord, let us be in tune with the greatest spiritual need, and that is a hope that can only be filled in the power and the presence of Jesus Christ actively working in our lives.

[7 : 21] Father, allow your Holy Spirit to open our ears, open our minds, open our hearts, and that we may leave this building changed because of this encounter.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right. First section. And we're going to see love and faith that breaks through barriers.

And this is a smaller section with a typo. I just realized it's to verse 19, not 17 to 19. That's my fault. And so let's look at what was just read.

One of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. As Jesus' fame was spreading all throughout this region, the Pharisees gathered from every corner of the region.

[8 : 32] Do you get that kind of emphasis? It seems like nobody was left out of here. They were all packed in here. They were coming, and it's like they had the powerhouse.

This is the alpha team, the A team, coming to figure out what in the world is going on. And with all of this power assembling in this one place, it's like Luke is reinforcing.

The power of the Lord was with him to heal, regardless of all that. And now since the Pharisees will be prominent in the upcoming weeks, Luke assumes to his audience that they know exactly who the Pharisees are.

We would probably fail that Jeopardy question, maybe many of us, but not all of us. And we might need a refreshing on who the Pharisees are to really understand what the tension is of this passage.

And so the Pharisees, literally the word Pharisees in Hebrew means separated ones, set apart ones. They were separatists. And these men, as you may in your mind imagine them as kind of like the, I don't know, bougie sort of upper class men who just walk around, right?

[9 : 46] But these were middle class men. Some were, not all of them were priests. Some of them were scribes and just regular workers, right? They were known though for their zeal in holiness.

They pursued holiness, a set apartness in their lives. And now the Pharisees started out with good intentions, but their pursuit of purity and set apartness became corrupted by pride, by elitism.

They were highly devoted, so highly devoted that they created fences around God's law to protect the law of man-made ideas. For instance, like if the Lord's law said, don't work on the Sabbath, these Pharisees would be like, all right, let's determine what this means.

They would basically define what that work looks like, right? And so they were kind of conservative in their beliefs to one extent, but on the other side, they were sort of liberal a little bit in the sense that like Leviticus chapter 15 through 17 talk about the washing, like a complete washing, and the Pharisees are like, yeah, we don't need to take a bath that many times.

The water bill's been running high. Let's just wash our hands. And so they allow themselves to kind of reduce the greatness of God's law in some extent to just mere hand washing rather than full submersion.

[11 : 20] They were fairly hypocritical, and they, at the end of the day, did what they wanted and what the group decided to do. These were the men who gathered from all over the region to figure out what in the world is going on here.

And so the room was charged. You should feel that tension. It was charged with power, yes, but also with scrutiny. A clash of authority was sort of brewing in this room, and the Pharisees sat in their pride but stood in the presence of Jesus who did not have pride, but He had power, as Luke is entailing here.

Power to do miraculous things as God. And now we see the disturbance in verse 18. And behold, right?

Behold! Look! Some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

Wow! Behold! Indeed! Now you've got to imagine sitting here. Maybe you just put yourself in your own creative thoughts in this house.

[13 : 12] We can probably imagine those situations where we're all packed in like sardines. It's uncomfortable, right? We want to get out of there.

And then all of a sudden, within this time frame, smelling all the smells, hearing all the sounds, you hear a scratching on the roof.

Digging. Now these roofs weren't necessarily, you know, you got the roof joists, you got some plywood, you have some paper down, you got some shingles.

These were actually big, thick roofs made of twigs, mud, all sorts of things, and some roofs had grass growing on them. You had about a two-foot-thick roof in some cases.

And now you hear the scratching. And you hear the digging. And it's like crescendoing. You know that when you have those moments where you're just like, all right, it's just going to fix itself.

[14 : 21] You know, we'll just ignore that. You couldn't ignore this sound in the midst of this packed house. Tiles being pulled away through this two-foot-thick roof, and then voices.

People are startled, gasps, and gasps, as this passage indicates. It's like claustrophobia is meeting possible bear attack.

Right? And then you see the sunlight breaking through. And you can imagine the dust and the dirt filling the air through all those gleams of light.

And finally, you see something to behold. A bed with a guy in it being lowered down by a rope into the center of the crowd.

Now, if you're new to Steel Valley Church, we get some weird distractions here once in a while. We have exterminated raccoons. Right before the church service, Rick is upstairs in the attic.

[15 : 42] We hear the scratching, the squeaking. Sometimes there's a bat that decided to figure out what Jesus is all about in the sanctuary and flies around once in a while. We've had technological failures that are just so distracting like last week, but Rick is back.

He just fixed it. He rebuked it, and everything's good. And so, all things are, the equilibrium is balanced with Rick. Praise the Lord. And sometimes, praise the Lord.

And we get sometimes those rogue cell phones that you forgot to turn off on silent and all sorts of things, but there is no disturbance that beats this.

This dramatic breakthrough here, and it is worth resting upon for a moment before we move too fast in the narrative, because this is very symbolic.

This is a sermon in and of itself. It shows the depths of faith that moves people towards Jesus Christ.

[16 : 56] But it also symbolically shows the depths of love that Jesus Christ broke through to His people. Let me qualify it.

from above. God dug through the roof of the world, so to speak, to what? Lower His Son upon earth into our mess, into our stinky house, so that He could save those within that house.

And now, from below, these, as Mark, chapter 2, verse 3, He helps us understand details that Luke left out. There were four men that lowered Him down. These four friends believed Jesus was their only hope, so far to the extent that they would do vandalism to get their buddy down, install a new skylight in the roof.

who said amen to that? This is, I'm just kidding. They believed that Jesus was their only hope.

And that faith drove them to bold, barrier-breaking action. What a powerful symbol of what it truly means when John tells us, for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.

[18 : 28] Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life, everlasting life. God broke through and lowered His Son into the world, into our mess.

And this really demonstrates, thinking about these friends, demonstrates radical evangelism. When we believe that Jesus Christ is truly the only way, we will go to extraordinary lengths to bring our friends to Him.

Now, you might be like, yeah, but I'm a parent. I don't have time for friends. What are friends? Anyhow, I got kids. Well, that's what it means, taking your kids to extraordinary lengths to bring them to Him.

But if you're not a parent bound to those things, how much more real is this call to you that you can't sit in the back row and not engage in this extraordinary, radical evangelism?

Because it begs the question, do we really believe this? Do we really believe that Jesus Christ is the only hope? Do we possess that type of faith to lead our friends to Jesus Christ?

[19 : 56] Or are we sort of a friend? Our narrative would say, well, we got through the layer of dirt. They were tired. Said, well, this is going to be embarrassing.

Everyone's going to be looking at us and thinking we're weird. And yeah, guys, you'll finish off without me. You guys got three. You can lower them down with three men.

I'm going to go preserve my integrity and not embark in this ridiculous act of vandalism. Church, evangelism is roof-ripping faith in action.

That is evangelism. This is evangelism. This is precisely what Jesus Christ zeroes on upon.

It's like His sights are on these friends. The faith of these five men who installed a new skylight. Jesus Christ was not disturbed by this disturbance.

[21 : 05] And faith that won't be stopped finds a Savior who won't turn away. Jesus used this unexpected moment of faith as a sermon illustration.

And we get to the second part here, a little bit lengthy part, the verse 20, not 21, verse 20 to 26. We see the greater miracle that heals the soul.

So the new skylight's put in, got the ropes hanging, got four faces peering through. You probably see silhouettes of men looking down.

This light pierced, the dust-filled room. All the Pharisees are just shaking the dirt off of their robes. They're like, what the, wow, it's a circus in here.

Jesus looked deeper than any dust particle within the room, any disturbance. He looked past it all and nothing in front of him.

[22 : 12] He saw something unseen and it rested within the hearts. Verse 20, and when he saw their faith, he said, man, your sins are forgiven you.

Now, as you can imagine, the hole in the ceiling, these four figures sort of popping down, I wonder what he's saying. did he heal him?

They were probably like, no, he said his sins are forgiven. They're like, well, what's that about? We went to all this trouble for that?

Heal the guy! This seems cruel! Boy, I guess those rumors truly were just rumors. And these hopeful men went to such great length and Jesus didn't heal them!

Maybe we need to see something here. See, maybe our greatest need in this life isn't physical, but spiritual.

[23 : 32] this is the hope that the false prosperity gospel misses.

It says that physical disabilities is a lack of faith, something wrong with you. It's not always that being the case.

That's manipulation. I mean, consider my own situation. I would love to be healed from Crohn's disease, to stop getting IV infusions every four weeks.

That would be fantastic, right? But it's not first priority. It's not first priority.

our greatest need is not to be healed, it is to be forgiven. Matthew 18, 8 through 9 really makes it, makes this theological fact make sense.

[24 : 39] It helps us to see that Jesus says, if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! Now, this is symbolically, and throw it away.

It is better for you to enter eternal life crippled or lame than with two hands and two feet to be thrown into eternal fire. He also talks about plucking your eye out.

Now, this is all symbolic, right? In other words, he's reinforcing it's better to limp into heaven than to sprint into hell. And unbeknownst to everyone, gather, here, around Jesus.

The real paralytic of this day were actually the Pharisees. Not the ones lying on the mat, but the ones sitting there in judgments, in unbelief.

And the scribes and the Pharisees in verse 21 began questioning, saying, who is this? This is verbal. This is audible. This is important in the passage. Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

[25 : 51] Who can forgive sins but God alone? Now, Jesus, obviously, his ears were open, but he perceived their thoughts.

He knows the games the Pharisees play. The outward, everything they say sounds good, but inwardly is the truth. He saw their thoughts and he answered them at the end of verse 22.

Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven you or to say, rise and walk?

And so, we have to catch something real quick here. In verse 21, outwardly, they were concerned about God's glory, God's honor, God's holiness being set apart.

You can't just forgive sins like that. But inwardly, Jesus saw their thought life, which was drowned in unbelief. In their unbelief, the Pharisees would naturally think that forgiving sins would be much easier because that's internal.

[27 : 01] You can't verify that necessarily. It's fairly subjective, whereas outward healing is 100% objective. And faith healers today will, quote, heal somebody who has anxiety, but they will tell everyone in a wheelchair to go over to this area on the side.

Well, they heal people with anxiety that nobody can verify and place a little segregated section of people in wheelchairs with true physical disabilities.

So, Jesus, in superior authority, verified the internal miracle of forgiveness with an external miracle of healing.

And get this, he says, but, but, that you may know, so I can convince you judgmental, critical Pharisees of what is truly going on here and who I am, but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He then said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home. Notice he didn't say, be healed.

[28 : 25] Notice he didn't rebuke the disease as a word of faith preacher may do. The healing was assumed, be healed, through just saying, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, go home.

This is nothing for God to do. And the man immediately got up, radiant in the dusty beams of light coming in that room, bed hoisted on his shoulders.

The men upstairs are like, all right, it happened. We knew Jesus was our only hope, but it was far deeper than any need that they could have perceived this paralytic experiencing.

I imagine all five of these men dancing down the street together. What a beautiful picture that is.

Forgiveness is invisible, but its evidence walks out carrying a mat. A life changed by internal healing will be noticeable.

[29 : 40] This is the power of Jesus Christ entering our mess and redeeming those who are lost, lost in sin.

This man carried more than just a mat. Carried a new heart, a new identity, forgiven and free.

Let's remind you what Jesus Christ's ministry began. He said from the scroll Isaiah 61, he said, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

year of jubilee. And here we see liberty, forgiveness of sin.

[30 : 46] Amazement sees them all in verse 26, and they glorified God and were filled with awe saying, we have seen extraordinary things today. I love how that translates.

It is your birthday, right? We have seen extraordinary things today. R.C. Sproul says, the miracle of healing a lame man made the crowds marvel, but the forgiveness of sin makes heaven rejoice.

And indeed, this was a day that went down in history as one of the greatest disturbances of a church service. God is a God Luke has been highlighting something very important and he's been carefully building upon something here.

Building upon a theme of authority. This began with the reading of the scroll of Isaiah from Isaiah 61 back in Luke 4. Authority to fulfill the scroll of Isaiah, the year of the Lord's favor in himself.

Not only that, it continues. He has the authority over evil spirits in Luke chapter 4 as well. He has authority over the fish. He has authority over uncleanness of the leper in Luke 5.

[32 : 09] And now he has the authority to forgive sin. Jesus is changing the world. He is changing the status quo.

And this theme will continue to build throughout the next scenes in Luke 6. Jesus has the authority to break through to this world to become one of us.

He has the authority to live a sinless life. He has the authority to substitute himself on behalf of us upon the cross to forgive us from sin.

He has the authority to rise from the dead as he did. He has the authority to reign as king and judge over heaven and earth. His authority is here today according to his word.

And this says to anyone who is not a believer in Jesus Christ. Maybe you just got up with the entire church took communion but you don't know Jesus.

[33 : 15] You're just trying not to stand out. You're hiding among everyone. Let Jesus find you today. Don't hide in your sin. No matter what you've done, whether that be murder, infidelity, perversion, betrayal, theft, lying, gossip, whatever that may be, Jesus Christ can forgive you completely.

Completely. Completely. Jesus Christ forgives sin. As John Murray says, the forgiveness of sins is the heart of the gospel.

all other benefits of Christ flow from this. What Thomas Aquinas experienced and encountered within his prayer time and his worship time is here today through his word, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The only question is will he say to you, your sins are forgiven you? That depends. Do you have the kind of faith that's willing to break through the barriers of your life between that's separating you from Jesus Christ in unbelief?

Now, you don't have to be perfect to come to Jesus, but it does take desperate faith to be fully desperate, full of faith.

[34 : 53] Faith gets us to Jesus, but his authority gets us to God. Come by faith. He is faithful and just to forgive.

Amen. Let's pray.