

Luke 5:1-16

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

<sup>1</sup> Once while Jesus was standing beside the *Lake of Gennesaret* and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup> he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then *he sat down* and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the *deep water* and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.”

<sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, *he fell down* at Jesus’s knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a *sinful* man!” <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be *CATCHING PEOPLE*.” <sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they *left everything* and followed him.

<sup>12</sup> Once when he was in one of the cities, a man covered with a *skin disease* was

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

**Luke** is one of the four gospels. According to tradition it’s written by Luke, a disciple-intern of the apostle Paul. Our two stories, along with others follow and seem to embody the promise of Jesus in Luke 3:18-19

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

*Lake of Gennesaret*:: Luke uses a more ancient name for what elsewhere is called the Sea of Galilee. It derives from the name of a small plain on its western shore.

*he sat down*:: sitting down is the traditional posture of a Jewish teacher (the opposite of what we expect in our culture).

*deep water* :: βάθος pronounced /bathos/ depth; deep water; met: fullness, immensity; an extreme degree; profundities, deep-laid plans.

1. properly: Matthew 13:5; Mark 4:5; Romans 8:39 (opposed to ὑψωμα); Ephesians 3:18 (opposed to ὑψος); of 'the deep' sea (the 'high seas'), Luke 5:4

2. metaphorically:, deep, extreme, poverty, as in 2 Corinthians 8:2; and the deep things of God, things hidden and above man's scrutiny, especially the divine counsels – as in 1 Corinthians 2:10.

*he fell down* :: προσπίπτω pronounced /prospiptó/ :: to fall upon, prostrate oneself before, in homage or supplication: of a person, at one's feet, Mark 3:11; Mark 5:33; Luke 8:28, 47; Acts 16:29 (Psalm 94:6). An ultimate sign of respect and honor. Think of kneeling before a king.

*Sinful* :: ἁμαρτωλός pronounced /hamartólos/ :: sinning, sinful, depraved, detestable. Rather than just meaning “bad” or “evil” it comes from the word . hamartánō, meaning "to forfeit by missing the mark" – or to lose from falling short of what God approves, i.e. what is "wide of the mark." It’s less an innate evil than a contrast with the nature of God.

there. When he saw Jesus, *he bowed with his face to the ground* and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me **Clean**."

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus stretched out his hand, **touch**ed him, and said, "I am willing. Be made clean." Immediately the skin disease left him. <sup>14</sup> And he ordered him to tell no one. "But go, show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." <sup>15</sup> But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds were gathering to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. <sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, he would slip away to deserted places and pray.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- Peter sees himself as "sinful" and the man with leprosy is considered unclean ("sinful" – distant from what God intends). They both bow down in homage and respect to Jesus. How are they similar?; different?
- Being sinful or "unclean" means being impure or separated from the will/purpose of God. What are both men lacking, or needing?
- The first story is often used to describe conversion, choosing to follow Jesus. Why? What about the second story? What does it tell us about the journey of faith?
- How is Jesus bringing about the mission of freedom he declared as his purpose in Luke 3:18-19?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, – to act, speak, be, or change, through this scripture?

#### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

*they left everything*:: Luke uses this expression repeatedly to emphasize upon the radical call to discipleship and the way people would embrace the way and teachings of Jesus. See for example: used repeatedly by Luke see Luke 9:62; 12:33; 14:26-33.

*skin disease* :: λέπρα pronounced /lepra/ meaning leprosy or a deeply infectious, contagious skin disease. Such as disease would render a person "ceremonially unclean" in Jewish society. To contract this ailment meant the leper was reduced to a social outcast – barred from all the activities at the Temple such as worship, prayer, thanksgiving meals with family, even seeking help from a priest.

*he bowed with his face to the ground*:: here again the word προσπίπτω pronounced /prospiptó/ used in Luke 5:8 to describe Peter is used to describe the sick man's response to Jesus.

**Clean** :: καθαρίζω pronounced "katharizo" meaning to cleanse, or make (be made) clean literally, ceremonially, or spiritually, according to context. It comes from the older word katharós – properly, "without admixture" ; what is separated (purged), hence "clean" (pure) because unmixed (without undesirable elements); (figuratively) spiritually clean because purged (purified by God), i.e. free from the contaminating (soiling) influences of sin.

In Leviticus 13:1 - 14:32 it is described how a priest shall examine someone with such a skin disease and shall declare the person to be clean or unclean as per the law. If unclean, <sup>45</sup> "The person who has the defiling disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head be disheveled, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' <sup>46</sup> 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." (Lev 13:45-46). The priest shall also examine anyone who is healed and declare them clean, able to return to society and proscribe some sort of prayer, and sacrifice to offer in gratitude for God's healing.

**touch**ed him :: the section in Leviticus implies that the contagious skin disease is spread through touch, as well as the ritually/spiritual condition of unclean. So in touching the man Jesus takes his 'sinful state' – uncleanliness - upon himself.