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Grace Abounding - (Luke 5:1-26)

Introduction – Jesus’ ministry becomes very public now in the area of Galilee. Luke records three events of multitudes pressing upon Jesus and the message of the kingdom of God is declared through very public, miraculous events. Yet, in each event, an individual is also addressed, touched, and transformed by this Son of Man.

Up Against the Lake (5:1-11) – The authority of His preaching and the miraculous works of healing continued to cause a multitude to press about Jesus as He traveled through the cities of Galilee. Taking advantage of the natural acoustics of the shore and the two empty boats, Jesus has Simon take him out onto the lake to teach the multitudes. But the story focuses upon the calling of these first apostles.

“Let’s Go Fishing!” (vv4-7) – Imagine being Peter. Jesus is no fisherman. His timing is off. His placement is off. Maybe He just wants to make some kind of example – and besides, He told Peter to do so. Peter loves Jesus already. The next thing you see is Peter almost drowning in profits.

The Promise to the Church (vv8-11) – Peter’s response is to be full of fear; the reverent fear of realizing in a deeper way Who it is he is kneeling before (Is 6:1ff). It turns out Jesus is illustrating something. These are the men He will call to establish His church, and He intends to make these fishermen fishers-of-men. We must notice that this doesn’t mean they are casting out their fishing lines hoping to get a bite on the line. Boats are sinking with the catch (and here we are, 2000 years later because Jesus kept His word). In response, Peter (probably Andrew as well), James and John leave everything and follow Jesus.

Grace Abounding – What do we see here? Luke is telling us the stories of how certain disciples were selected – this is the establishment of the church, the new Israel within Israel. Jesus is going to bring to them a great catch (and the fish and the sea are often OT metaphors of the sea-of-nations, the Gentiles). Catching these fish does not occur through well thought-out plans, but rather through obedience to the Lord, even when it doesn’t make sense (maybe for us – our Lord’s Day worship, our attention to family-life, and our emphasis of table-fellowship can appear to have nothing to do with evangelism).

Authority and Grace to Make Clean (vv12-16) – Sinners are unclean and therefore untouchable and excluded from the holy, and nothing in the OT economy made that more clear than how lepers were to be treated. Leprosy or “skin disease” was a form of uncleanness in the OT that kept the leper from going to worship the Lord in His house and excluded him from normal society (Leviticus 13-14).

“I Am Willing” – Normally, touching the unclean made the other person unclean as well. But the kingdom of God is turning all that around. That which is clean is making the unclean clean. Sinners are being forgiven. Lepers are being healed (something the Rabbis taught only God could do). Jesus touched Him, welcoming this untouchable back into communion with God and society.

Grace Abounding – Jesus was bringing a great reformation, but not a revolution. He had not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17), and so he tells this man to go and follow the law of Moses before a priest. Word gets out, the crowds pile in, and grace continues to abound. Almost as a side-note, Luke again tells us that because of this, Jesus would go off into the wilderness to pray. The mainspring of Jesus’ life is communion with the Father.

Authority and Grace to Forgive Sins (vv17-26) – There comes a certain day when the crowds have piled into someone’s home and the ‘religious authorities’ show up because of what they have heard about this teacher. This is perfect timing, as though God Himself had planned it. A paralyzed man is brought by his friends, cannot get into the house by normal means, and so is lowered down from the roof in front of everyone, including the Pharisees and lawyers. Jesus sees His opportunity to clearly teach in front of all what He is doing and who He is.

Simple Logic – Jesus demonstrates through this little logic test that He is not simply going around as the great Healer, although He is that. His healing is a testimony to something greater – He is the great Savior: He can forgive sins and make clean. He is the Son of Man testified to in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7 and Grace Abounding – Jesus has been preaching the gospel, that is, the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43). Daniel 7 tells us of Daniel’s dream of the four great beasts who came up “from the sea.” Each beast represents an idolatrous, gentile-nation, and the nightmare-beast is Rome. But the Son of Man has come. This Son of Man is brought to the Ancient of Days, where He sits in judgment over all the nations in an everlasting kingdom (vv13-14, 21-27).

The nets were bursting because the Son of Man and the saints of the Most High have been given the kingdoms of the earth. The leper was cleansed because all that was unclean is being made clean by the touch of the Son of Man. The lame man was healed because the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. These are “*strange things*,” or “*paradoxes*” to the religious-minded, who think they can earn their way before this Holy God.

Dave Hatcher – November 20, 2005