

FPFWC Christian Development



The Measure of Faith

April 2024

Spring Quarter

April 6, 2024

Lesson #1 – Faith of the Persistent

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Luke 5:17-26

ICE BREAKER –

1. How do you maintain an attitude of worship even when it seems God has not worked in the manner that you desired?
2. Why should a believer have persistent faith when seeking Jesus?

Key Verse – “Behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.”—Luke 5:18–19

LESSON BACKGROUND

The third Gospel and the book of Acts were written by a man named Luke. He was a traveling companion of the apostle Paul and a physician by profession (see Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24). Because Luke was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, he gathered his information from those who had been so he could write a detailed account (Luke 1:1–4). Most students believe that the Gospel of Mark was written first and, therefore, could have been one of the sources used by Luke. The scene in today’s lesson is worded quite similarly to Mark 2:1–12 (but see Luke 5:17, below; compare Matthew 9:1–8).

Today’s lesson locates Jesus in Galilee, early in His three-and-a-half-year ministry. His popularity was rising, and He was drawing crowds. The news of Jesus’ teaching and miracles was spreading rapidly (Luke 4:37), and attempts to keep things under control in that regard didn’t work (5:14–15). As a result, Jesus had to make a conscious effort to carve out some “alone time” for prayer with His heavenly Father (4:42; 5:16).

Luke 5:12 states that the healing miracle just prior to the one in today’s text occurred “in a certain city” of Galilee. Mark 2:1 is more specific in indicating that the events of today’s lesson took place in Capernaum. This town, located on the northwestern bank of the Sea of Galilee, became something of a headquarters for Jesus during His tours of Galilee (Matthew 4:13).

LESSON COMMENTARY

5:17–26. The second special example of power over disease—the healing of the paralytic (5:17–26; see also the comments on Mt 9:1–8)—occurred at a time when, as Jesus was teaching (Luke informs us) He also had **power ... to perform healing** (5:17c). This note is likely simply meant to remind the reader that healing power was a mark of His “messianic credentials”; cf. 4:18; Is 61:1.

While He was teaching, several men brought a paralyzed man on a bed or cot. As the size of the crowd prevented them from getting to Jesus (Lk 5:18–19a), they made a hole in the roof of the room where Jesus was and deposited the man **in front of Jesus** (5:19b). On this occasion Jesus took the opportunity not only to demonstrate His power over disease but also to confirm His authority to forgive sin. Instead of immediately doing what the paralyzed man and his friends wanted, Jesus, **seeing their faith** (5:20a, seeing they believed He had the power and authority to heal), said to the paralyzed man, **Friend, your sins are forgiven you** (this need not suggest that the man’s disease was caused by sin). This declaration provoked a reaction in the hearts (they **began to reason**) of the Pharisees in the crowd (5:21a). For them such a claim amounted to blasphemy because **God alone** can forgive sins (5:21b). Jesus offered a reasonable challenge to the “reasoning” of the Pharisees: to say **Your sins have been forgiven you** is just as easy to say as **Get up and walk** (5:23). The unexpressed point Jesus was making is if One can say to a paralytic “Get up and walk” and he does get up and he walks, that says something about the power and authority of that One—both to heal *and* to forgive sins. Jesus then explicitly claimed the authority to forgive sins (5:24a) by healing the paralytic (5:24b–25). The effect on the crowd provoked astonishment, fear, and praise (5:26).

LESSON NUGGET – **Jesus responds to sinners** – He forgave the paralytic, Matthew the publican, and Matthew’s friends who trusted Him because He is the “friend of sinners” (Matthew 11:19). He could not forgive the scribes and Pharisees because they would not admit they were sick and in need of new clothes!

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word for Today Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*