

Undeserving Disciples Making Disciples

Luke 5:1 – 6:16 / October 28, 2012

Context:

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Last week we saw the very beginning of Jesus' ministry and were given an overview of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:14-44) based on the great promise of Isaiah 61. His ministry has two components: 1) a ministry of the Word and 2) a ministry of good deeds. People began to become interested in Jesus (4:36-37) and this raised many kinds of questions:

- What type of people should follow Jesus?
- What should people do who follow Jesus?

This week we are going to cover Luke 5:1 – 6:16 (55 verses which one commentary takes 100 pages to address, I could've preached 5 or 6 separate sermons on this section and I've got roughly 40-45 minutes - you see the challenge before us) and see Jesus begin to gather his disciples. This section begins with Jesus calling his first disciple, Simon Peter (Luke 5:1-11), and ends with Jesus calling the Twelve Disciples (6:12-16). We are going to see 1) what kind of people are Jesus' disciples along with 2) what they are supposed to do. This adds one more component to Jesus' ministry: 3) the gathering of disciples.

The Point: Disciples are sinners follow Jesus and bring others to Jesus to find forgiveness

I. Disciples are undeserving sinners in need grace (5:1-32)

a. Simon Peter, the First Disciple (5:1-11).

- Simon gives Jesus an implied rebuke: we're professional fishermen and we've fished all night, the best time to catch fish, and caught nothing. Why should we listen to you, a carpenter?
- Peter knew that God was at work through Jesus though he wouldn't fully understand who Jesus was until after the resurrection (see Luke 24:31, 36-43, 52).
- An awareness of God's presence results in a sense of unworthiness at receiving God's blessing (Isa. 6:1-8).
- ILLS - Fishing stories: We've all heard of fishing tales. You know, a guy goes fishing all day and then hangs out with his buddies describing all the fish he caught (how many and how big). There's no fabricating this fishing tale.
- Peter's response:
 - Peter is not confessing individual sins but rather the recognition of his entire character
 - Peter thinks that because of his sin he can have nothing to do with Jesus.
- He left everything and follows Jesus: this is a picture for all future believers (Luke 14:25-33).
- They left the greatest catch of their entire lives to follow Jesus. That catch wasn't as important as what they saw in Jesus.

b. An Unclean Leper (5:12-16).

- "Full of leprosy": this is a broad term for a whole series of skin diseases. To have leprosy was to face ostracism (see Lev. 13:45-46) because the disease was contagious. Anyone who touched a leper became ceremonially unclean. Some compare this situation with AIDS today.
- Imagine the social and psychological effects.
- Can an unclean leper be healed? He questions not the ability of Jesus but rather his willingness.
- Jesus' response: he stretches out his hand and heals him. His word would've been sufficient but his touch confirms his care. Jesus is not made unclean by touching the leper.
- The truth: Jesus has compassion on all and his salvation is available to all.
- Why was he charged not to tell anyone except the priest?
 - Jesus carefully avoids stirring up a misunderstanding of his messianic identity.

c. A Paralytic (5:17-26).

- The Pharisees were the most influential of the four major Jewish sects (Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots). Their goal was to keep the nation of Israel faithful to the Mosaic law so they emphasized meticulous observance of God's law. They even developed their own laws and rules to apply the law to a variety of possible situations. The "teachers of the law" were religious lawyers, usually called "scribes." They recorded this tradition for future generations.
- Luke gives all of these details to highlight their faith's persistent character (roof, tiles, etc.)
- This is the first time "**faith**" is used in Luke and in this context it means "the belief that Jesus can provide graciously to meet the paralytic's need" (Bock, 481). These men understand that Jesus has God's power to heal (5:17; also 4:18).
 - "It is not the amount of our faith but the object of our faith that saves us... Saving faith isn't a level of psychological certainty; it is an act of the will in which we rest in Jesus. We give ourselves wholly to him because he gave himself wholly for us" (Keller, CC, 36).
 - If you turn to God for help he will reply.
- **Only God can forgive sins - the Pharisees are right (see also Isa. 1:18; 43:25; Jer. 31:34).**
 - "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:8-12).
 - An OT prophet might declare, "The Lord also has put away your sin" (2 Sam. 12:13) but Jesus claims to forgive sins directly, as God alone can. He is therefore guilty of blasphemy which is punishable by death (Lev. 24:10-23; Num. 15:30-31; Mark 14:62-64).
 - If you sin against me, I can forgive you. But how can Jesus forgive their sins if they haven't sinned against him?... unless he is God.
- **Which is easier...**
 - Of course it's easier just to say the words because that is invisible and impossible to prove. It's harder to say, "take up your bed and walk" because if the man doesn't get up then it will be plain to all that he has no authority to heal, and therefore no authority to forgive sins.
 - The logic here is that, since Jesus can do the visible miracle (heal the paralytic) this is evidence that he also has the power to do the invisible miracle (forgive sins).
- **It's actually harder to forgive sins...it cost Jesus his life on the cross.**
 - "...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
- Jesus has authority to forgive sins and he demonstrates this authority by healing the man. His ministry has taken on a greater significance.

d. Jesus Calls Levi (Luke 5:27-32).

- Levi is also called Matthew (Matt. 9:9). He was a tax collector. Tax collectors were held in lowest esteem (see 3:12). The Jews probably considered Matthew a traitor.
- His response: he left everything and followed Jesus. Matthew would've been the richest of the disciples. If following Jesus didn't work out for the fishermen, they would've just returned to fishing. If it didn't work out for Matthew, he was finished.
- Who is the potential object of God's mercy?
 - The tax collectors and sinners didn't have any physical ills but they needed another cure.
 - The Pharisees considered themselves "healthy" before God and they were blind to their spiritual sickness. The point isn't that the Pharisees are "justified" already so Jesus will leave them alone, but that they are not open to their own need of a physician.
 - Only those who realize their need come to him to receive the help they need.
 - "Those who recognize they are 'sick' come to the Great Physician, Jesus, so he can exercise his power to heal and change them" (Bock, 499).

No one is allowed to sit on the fence concerning who Jesus is:

- How will you respond to Jesus?
- Is he a blasphemer or is he sent from God with authority to forgive sins?
- Is Jesus the promised one from God?
- What is keeping you from following Jesus?
 - Too sinful: Jesus came for the sinners
 - Too religious: Jesus came for the religious
 - Not accepted: Jesus came for the poor, the weak, and the despised.

II. Disciples are undeserving sinners who make disciples (5:1-11; 6:12-16)

a. Simon Peter, the First Disciple (5:11)

- Their understanding of discipleship from the very beginning was shaped by this truth: Disciples make disciples. "...catching men/women" means bringing people into the kingdom of God and into a relationship with Jesus. The point of the figure is the idea of gathering and rescue.
- Disciples rescue all kinds of people following the example of their master.
- "Jesus has gone from forgiving sinners to openly associating with them. Mission requires more than casual contact" (Bock, 489).
- Isolation from sinners is not the call of the disciple. If Jesus sought to save the lost, how much more should his followers?
- Peter now becomes the amateur fisherman, fishing for men.

b. The Twelve Apostles (6:12-16).

- He calls them "apostles" and they will play a key role in the early church (see Acts 1:21-22).
- "The Twelve chosen by Jesus were called to function as his representatives and mouthpieces for the message of the kingdom (Luke 9:1-6).
- "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

What is the discipleship strategy of RHC?

- It's the same as Jesus'. Equip disciples to make disciples.
- It's YOU! The gospel changes people, and people change the world.
- We call this "Evangelistic Networking": every believer utilizes his or her familial, geographic, vocational, and relational spheres of influence for the sake of the gospel.

What does this look like practically?

1. **Knows** the gospel drives our mission.
2. **Identifies** people in their spheres of influence (networks, proclamation points, church – OWN these)
3. **Prays** intentionally for at least 3-5 people.
4. **Displays** the gospel in community (accountability in CG, share stories of grace)
5. **Invites** people into their lives and the life of RHC (pathways, invite cards)
6. **Declares** their story and the story (Bible reading, resources).
7. **Disciples** new believers who will make more disciples (The Multiply Gathering – Fri. Nov. 9).

III. Disciples are undeserving sinners who submit to the Lordship of Jesus (5:33 – 6:11)

a. Fasting (5:33-39).

Why they shouldn't fast right now:

- Jesus wasn't against fasting, just fasting at the appropriate time.
- Fasts were used for repentance and mourning (1 Kings. 21:27; Joel 1:14; 2:15-27; Isa. 58:1-9).
- A wedding is not a time for mourning but rejoicing. Attendants don't fast as long as the groom is present.
- This imagery represents God's relationship to his people. The groom being present represents the period of his ministry as characterized by joy, not mourning. The groom being taken away is an allusion to his approaching removal through death.
- "The absence of fasting in the band of disciples was a witness to the presence of God in their midst" (Piper).

2 Metaphors:

- 1) You don't put a new patch on an old garment because when you wash it, the new patch will shrink and pull on the already shrunken, old garment, and tear it.
- 2) You don't put new wine into old wineskins because the new wine will stretch the old, inelastic wineskins and cause them to burst. New wine needs newer, more elastic skins.
- Implications:
 - Jesus isn't simply patching up Judaism, he is teaching something radically new.
 - The Book of Acts will flesh out some of these implications: circumcision, food laws, Gentiles, etc.

When should they fast? When should we fast?

- New wine demands new fasting. This new fasting is based on the fact that the Bridegroom has come, not just will come. New fasting rests on all the finished work of the Bridegroom.
- "The newness of our fasting is this: its intensity comes not because we have never tasted the wine of Christ's presence, but because we have tasted it so wonderfully by his Spirit and cannot now be satisfied until the consummation of joy arrives. We must have all he promised. And as much now as possible" (John Piper).
- Jesus is an example of regular prayer (Luke 5:16; 6:12).
- He serves as an example to the early church (Acts 6:6; 13:2-3; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

b. Eating on the Sabbath (6:1-5).

- Why was the Sabbath such a big deal?
 - Commandment, disobedience (idolatry), exile, and destruction.
 - Pharisees and the Mishnah – 39 tasks prohibited on the Sabbath.
- David in the Temple (1 Sam. 21:1-7; 22:9-10)
 - "Have you not read?" They were familiar with the account but missed a point in it.
 - 12 loaves of bread were to be baked and placed in the tabernacle on each Sabbath as an offering and this bread was to be eaten only by the priests (see Lev. 24:5-9).
- Jesus' point: in the OT there is an apparent violation by David. The implication is this: "If you condemn my disciples on this one, you also condemn David and his men."
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
 - "Jesus, as this representative, has authority as Son of Man to evaluate and interpret tradition and law" (Bock, 527).
 - The point: Jesus, the Son of Man, not the Pharisees, rules over and interprets the Sabbath.

c. Healing on the Sabbath (6:6-11).

- Healing or medical work was not to be done on the Sabbath unless a life was in danger (baby born, circumcision needed to be performed).

- Why the Sabbath? To provide rest, rejuvenation, and give time to contemplate God. It was never intended to prevent one from doing good.
- Jesus didn't do anything that could be called work. He spoke and the man's hand was healed. This is proof that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.
- **How should Christians regard the Sabbath?**
 - "It does not attempt to answer the question of a Sabbath rest for Christians, other than to show how a basic ethic of compassion should cause the Christian to serve those in need" (Bock, 513).