

Help of the helpless ... and humble

a. Lord of lands & lakes (5:1-11)

5:1-3 A precedent-setting 'setting' for a sermon

[1] [5:1-3] Luke, incidentally, always calls this sheet of water a lake, whereas the other Evangelists follow the Old Testament in calling it a sea. It measures roughly 13 miles by 7 miles and is situated about 700 feet below sea-level. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 112

5:4-7 Do we detect a certain sarcasm in Simon – i.e. 'You may know theology, but I know fish!?

[2] [5:8] Here only in his Gospel Luke uses the compound name *Simon Peter*. Up till 6:14 (apart from this verse) he always calls this man Simon. Afterwards, except in passages where he is quoting other people, Luke always calls him Peter. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 113

5:8-11 What has Peter learned experientially – if not doctrinally – about the 'Lord of lands & lakes'? (8:22-25; Acts 27)

[3] [5:8-10] Peter's doubts about Jesus give way to doubts about himself. The acted parable of the catch of fish reveals the remedy for Peter's lack of spiritual qualifications. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 102

[4] [5:8] Such humility is appropriate before a person addressed as *[kurios]*, which here presumably has a deeper meaning than *[epistates]* and is not simply equivalent to 'Sir' (6:46 note). But no precise connotation (e.g. of divinity) can necessarily be attached to it. **I. Howard Marshall** *Luke* p. 204

[5] It is the "Master" whose orders must be obeyed, the "Lord" whose holiness causes moral agony to the sinner (Dan.10:16). Grotius, followed by Trench, points out that the dominion over all nature, including "the fish of the sea, and whatever passeth through the paths of the seas" (Ps. 8:8), lost by Adam, is restored in Christ, the ideal man and the second Adam. But that Peter recognized this is more than we know. **Alfred Plummer** *St Luke* p. 145

[6] [5:10] Let us not forget, in reading this miracle, that holy and good men in every age have seen in it a remarkable type and emblem of the history of Christ's Church in the world. They have regarded the ships as emblems of the Churches, the fishers of Ministers, the net of the Gospel, the sea of the world, the shore of eternity, and the miraculous draught of the success attending work done in strict compliance with Christ's word. There may be truth in all this. But it needs to be cautiously and delicately used. The habit of allegorizing and seeing hidden meanings in plain language of Scripture has often done great harm. **J. C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol 1 p. 135

[7] Jesus makes a pulpit of the boat which his friends had just left, whence He casts the net of the word over the crowd which covers the shore. Then, desiring to attach henceforth these young believers to Himself with a view to His future work, He determines to give them an emblem they will never forget of the magnificent success that will attend the ministry for the love of which He invites them to forsake all, and in order that it may be more deeply graven on their hearts, He takes this emblem from their daily calling. **Frederic Godet** *Commentary on Luke* p. 164



Richard Chenevix Trench
(1807-1886)
One of the creators of the
Oxford Dictionary & the
Revised NT – and a theologian
astute enough to see that
Christ, in displaying His
Lordship over fish as well as
men, was in effect restoring
man's dominion lost by Adam

'While we are lingering & delaying souls are perishing'?

[9] [5:1-11] And where does He preach? Not in any consecrated building, or place set apart for public worship, but in the open air; – not in a pulpit constructed for a preacher's use, but in a fisherman's boat. Souls were waiting to be fed. Personal inconvenience was allowed no place in His consideration. God's work must not stand still. The servants of Christ should learn a lesson from their Master's conduct on this occasion. We are not to wait till every little difficulty or obstacle is removed, before we put our hand to the plough, or go forth to sow the seed of the word. Convenient buildings may often be wanting for assembling a company of hearers. Convenient rooms may often not be found

for gathering children to school. What, then, are we to do? Shall we sit still and do nothing? God forbid! If we cannot do all we want, let us do what we can. Let us work with such tools as we have. While we are lingering and delaying souls are perishing. It is the slothful heart that is always looking at the hedge of thorns and the lion in the way. (Prov. 15:19; 22:13.) Where we are and as we are, in season or out of season, by one means or by another, by tongue or by pen, by speaking or by writing, let us strive to be ever working for God. But let us never stand still.

J. C. Ryle *Luke* Vol 1 p. 131

b. Foundation of ALL sound theology – the goodness of God (5:12-26)

5:12,13 A world of wonky theology packed into one small expression – ‘if you are willing ...’! (Gen.3:9,21; I Tim.2:1-7)

[8] [5:12-14] In its physical aspects it was a whitish pustule, eating away the flesh, attacking member after member, and at last eating away the very bones; it was attended with burning fever, sleeplessness, and nightmare, without scarcely the slightest hope of cure. Such were its physical characteristics; it was a living death. ... In the religious point of view, the leper was Levitically unclean, and consequently excommunicate. His malady was considered a direct chastisement from God. In the very rare case of a cure, he was only restored to the theocratic community on an official declaration of the priest, and after offering the sacrifice prescribed by the law **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 166

[10] In this section Luke recounts six incidents, in all of which (except the first) various actions by Jesus and his disciples lead to criticism from the Pharisees. **I. Howard Marshall** *Luke* p. 206

[11] [5:13] Jesus’ compassion comes out in the fact that He *stretched out his hand* (was the man keeping his distance?), *and touched him*. Men shunned lepers and we are safe in saying that nobody but other lepers had touched this man in years. That touch spoke volumes. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 115

5:14-16 Again, Jesus does not disassociate Himself from Jewish ways & worship. But what is the secret of His spiritual strength? (4:1-4)

[12] [5:14] The priests will thus have evidence that Jesus does not disregard the ceremonial laws where they do not clash with the law of love, and also that He is indeed the Messiah who heals even leprosy. **Norval Geldenhuys** *The Gospel of Luke* p. 186

5:17-20 Contrast the faith of the ‘rabble’ with that of the Pharisees & teachers of the Law

[13] [5:17] One can easily imagine that these heresy-hunters would be much too superior persons to mix with the crowd about the door of Peter’s house, and would, as Luke says, be ‘sitting by,’ near enough to see and hear, but far enough to show that they had no share in the vulgar enthusiasm of these provincial peasants. They were too holy to mingle with the mob, so they kept together by themselves, and waited hopefully for some heresy or breach of their multitudinous precepts. They got more than they expected. We may note the contrast between their cynical watchfulness and the glorious manifestations for which they had no eyes. ‘The power of the Lord’ – that is, of Christ – ‘was’ (operative) ‘in His healing,’ or, according to another reading, ‘to heal them.’ But the critics took no heed of that. There is a temper of mind which is sharp-eyed as a

lynx for faults, and blind as a bat to evidences of divine power in the Gospel or its adherents. Some noses are keen to smell stenches, and dull to perceive fragrance. The race of such inquisitors is not extinct. **Alexander Maclaren** *Expositions: Luke* p. 120

[14] [5:19] Why is it that so many people take no pains in religion? How is it that they can never find time for praying, Bible reading, and hearing the Gospel? What is the secret of their continual string of excuses for neglecting means of grace? How is it that the very same men who are full of zeal about money, business, pleasure, or politics, will take no trouble about their souls? The answer to these questions is short and simple. These men are not in earnest about salvation. They have no sense of spiritual disease. They have no consciousness of requiring a Spiritual Physician. They do not feel that their souls are in danger of dying eternally. They see no use in taking trouble about religion. In darkness like this thousands live and die. **J. C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol 1 p. 143

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— **J. C. Ryle**

5:21-24 What is the connection of sin & illness in 1st century Jewish thought?

[15] [5:21-24] The term ‘blasphemy’ is understood in the Mishnah to mean use of the Name of God (the Tetragrammaton; Sanh 7:5), but the NT evidence indicates that the term was used more widely to indicate any ‘violation of the power and majesty of God’. **I. Howard Marshall** *Luke* p. 214

[16] [5:22] It should be a daily and habitual reflection with us that we can keep nothing secret from Christ. To Him apply the words of St. Paul, “all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” **J. C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol 1 p. 144

[17] [5:24] The Jews of the day thought that all sickness was due to sin (cf. Jn. 9:2). ‘R. Alexandri said in the name of R. Hiyya b. Abba: A sick man does not recover from his sickness until all his sins are forgiven him’ (*Nedarim* 41a). Had they been consistent accordingly they must have accepted the man’s forgiveness! This Luke’s first use of the expression *the Son of man*, which he will use in all twenty-six times. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 118

5:25.26 What conclusion do you draw as to the ‘orthodox theology’ of the onlookers once Jesus is done for the day? (vv. 8,10,15)

[18] [5:26] Lit. “things contrary to expectation” (*paradoxa*). This Greek word is used only here in the NT, and it is noteworthy that it is related to a miracle. It is one of the terms that would come closest to the modern term “miracle” for the powerful deeds of Jesus (*dynamicis* – as his deeds are usually called in the Synoptic tradition). It suggests the extraordinary character of the new dimension in human life that comes with Jesus’ power and authority. **Joseph A. Fitzmyer** *St Luke* Vol. 1 p. 586

‘Lord, depart from me ...!’ – the voice of humble faith

[19] It is the “Master” whose orders must be obeyed, the “Lord” whose holiness causes moral agony to the sinner (Dan.10:16). Grotius, followed by Trench, points out that the dominion over all nature, including “the fish of the sea, and whatever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Ps. 8:8), lost by Adam, is restored in Christ, the ideal man and the second Adam. But that Peter recognized this is more than we know. **Alfred Plummer** *St Luke* p. 145 [repeat of quote 5]