



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Strange Story

Luke 5:17-26

Message #16 of 50 – S791

Sermon given on May 13, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

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A Strange Story

Luke 5:17-26

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 5**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- If you read through the Bible, which I believe you should, you will come across some strange stuff
- If you are reading the One-Year Bible, you should have just finished Judges – the Levite and his concubine – weird stuff
- These accounts or stories are weird only because we don't understand the message the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate
- There are some strange things about today's Scriptures
- The people who witnessed the miracle we will look at this morning thought the events and Christ were strange
- People still see Jesus and His followers as strange
- But with understanding will come a greater appreciation of Jesus and His ministry on earth
- And hopefully you will have a greater comfort with being strange like Jesus
- The world wants to mold you to its shape – The Holy Spirit is conforming you into the image of Christ – strange to the world
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Strange Story**
- Last time Jesus performed the miracle of healing a leper
- Healing was an important part of Christ's ministry on earth
- Because it was one of the proofs that He was the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior
- Today's text opens with Jesus teaching to a critical audience
- **Luke 5:17**
- Pharisees were the hyper-religious people of Jesus' time
- Lived in strict adherence of the Law of Moses

- But by the time of Christ – was highly legalistic and hypocritical
- The ‘teachers of the law’ were the seminary professors of the day
- Jesus has become famous, both as a healer, and as a teacher
- At the end of the Sermon on the Mount **Matthew 7:28-29**

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

- Scribes = teachers of the law
- They have come to check this new teacher out, make sure he is legit
- Which they had the right and responsibility to do
- It is the church’s responsibility to make sure the teaching that goes on in the church is right
- People don’t like to talk about doctrine, but it is important
- But the focus of this account is not about Jesus’ teaching, but on who He is
- Verse seventeen ends with ‘the power of the Lord was present to heal them’
- To set the stage for this we first see - **A Strange Love**
- **Luke 5:18**
- Jesus is inside a house teaching – multitudes have been following Him
- The Pharisees and teachers of the law have taken the best seats inside the house
- Outside is a crowd pressing in to hear Jesus’ amazing words
- Then, from somewhere out of sight appears a small crowd of people
- Mark says four men were carrying the litter with the man, but it could have been more
- As they approach the fringe of the crowd, they ask people to move so they can get to Jesus
- This is one of those times that I wish I had more details
- Who was the ringleader of this little band – the paralytic, or maybe one of the men carrying him?
- At least one of them didn’t take this roadblock as the end
- **Luke 5:19**
- Try to imagine the scene – Jesus is teaching, and everyone is straining to hear every word He says
- Then comes the sound of people moving around on the flat roof

- And then comes the sound of tiles being moved
- Some dust starts to fall on the crowd below, and then dirt, and then large chunks of the ceiling – people scrambling out of the way
- I can imagine Jesus pausing as this scene unfolds – maybe with an approving grin as He realizes what is happening
- How long did it take to get through – five – ten minutes?
- And then, down comes the litter with the paralytic looking hopefully at Jesus
- These men had a friend or family member who was paralyzed
- They believed Jesus could heal the paralytic
- Their faith and love were so great that picked up the man and carried him to lay him before Jesus to be healed
- And when their way was blocked, they found another way
- There is a radical picture of intercessory prayer in this
- God calls us to pray for others, to ask Him to heal them, restore them, save them, whatever

• Not just once, but to pray until something happens **Luke 18:1**

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart...

- Our responsibility is to carry them to Jesus in prayer until they are in front of Him and something happens
- So, there he is, the paralytic is front of Jesus, what will He do now?
- It is not what anyone expects – **A Strange Answer**
- **Luke 5:20**
- Jesus looks at the paralytic and doesn't do what anyone expected Him to do
- They all expected Jesus to heal him – everyone there knew that was what the man needed – he needed to be healed of his paralysis
- As a paralytic, he couldn't provide for his family – usually had to beg just to live
- Instead of healing him, Jesus forgave him of his sins
- Jesus didn't do that in the last miracle – the leper asked to be cleansed, and Jesus healed him
- What is different here? Jesus sees a greater need in this man than simply healing from his physical infirmity – he has a spiritual problem

- We're not told how the man responded to Jesus' forgiveness
- It is possible that the paralysis was a result of some sin in the man's life **R. Kent Hughes**

Physical impairments sometimes have a moral base.

- Jesus looks at this man and sees that his greatest need is not healing, but forgiveness
- Jesus could see that sin had paralyzed him spiritually
- He needed to be freed from sin before He was healed
- People still come to Jesus just like this paralytic did – asking Him to change their circumstances
- I believe He would say the same thing to them – they need to be forgiven of their sins before they need their circumstances changed
- Changing your circumstances while you continue to sin will not make your life better
- Go to Jesus – repent of your sins – Hear Him say to you, ‘Your sins are forgiven you’
- Until you hear that in your heart, your circumstances may not change
- And even if they do, it won't really matter
- Another important thing in this verse – Jesus ‘saw their faith’ the faith of the men and the paralytic
- It is faith – believing God and acting like you believe God that Jesus is responding to here
- If you want to empower your prayer, believe – and then act like you believe
- We're not told how the paralytic or the men on the roof respond to Jesus' words
- But we are told how His critical audience responds – **A Strange Response**
- **Luke 5:21-22**
- They are right – only God can forgive sins
- That's because all sin is against God
- When David sinned with Bathsheba and murdered her husband **Psalms 51:3-4**

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

- Turn to **John 10**
- This is a big deal – Jesus is revealing to them exactly who He is
- If only God can forgive sin, and Jesus forgives sin – saying I am God
- This is something this group will confront Jesus about later
- The Jews come to Jesus and ask Him plainly – are you the Christ
- He replies – look at My works – they prove it to you, but you refuse to believe – then says

- **John 10:30-33**

- Turn back to **Luke 5**
- Jesus is God and His miracles proved it – which their Scriptures told them would happen
- He brings this home with the next thing He says

- **Luke 5:23-25**

- Only God could make that paralytic walk again
- Only God can forgive sins, and only God can heal miraculously
- Doing either one proves that Jesus is who He says He is
- Jesus was always planning to heal the man, but He knew He needed to do something spiritual in the hearts of everyone present
- The paralytic stands up for the first time in who knows how long and walks out – imagine the celebration
- Everyone is amazed

- **Luke 5:26**

- The phrase ‘strange things’ is the Greek word ‘paradoxa’ from which we get the English word ‘paradox’

A statement or proposition seemingly self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expressing a possible truth.

- The whole Christian life is a paradox
- We live for a world that we cannot see
- We expect God to pour out His grace upon us – His undeserved favor
- We trust that God will not demand justice for our sins – instead He forgives us
- We should be living paradoxes to this world
- They should look into our lives and see ‘strange things’ – things they don’t understand or struggle to believe
- And the strangest thing of all is love **John 13:35**

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

- Let them see your faith lived out in your love for other Christians
- Faith like these men had who brought the paralytic to Jesus
- It was a strange thing to see this man being carried by those men
- It was strange that they took him up on the roof
- It was strange that they dug through the roof
- It was strange that they lowered him down in front of Jesus
- All that strangeness was motivated by faith and love
- They loved that man and believed Jesus could heal him
- We're going to partake of Communion this morning
- Take a little time
- Is Jesus calling you to a strange expression of faith – stop fighting
- Have you been praying for Jesus to change your circumstances, but you are living in sin – repent
- Take a moment and open your heart to the Holy Spirit
- **Pray!**