

THE BIG IDEA: Jesus deals with sin in a way that heals the heart.

The Take-Off

Have you ever bitten off more than you can chew? Not figuratively, but really?

You get a big 'ol chunk in your mouth and it takes about 5 seconds to realize you're never gonna get it down, right?

That's when you look for a way to get it out of your mouth without anyone seeing it!

That could happen today if we're not careful, because we're going to take a HUGE chunk of Luke 5 and try to digest it.

The only way to keep that from happening is to cut that thing down to bite size pieces.

So, we're going to cut the rest of chapter 5 into 4 bite-sized pieces, but before we get to them, let me show you the one verse that this whole thing hangs on and tell you the Big Idea that we can't afford to forget.

If you like to mark in your Bible, draw a big circle around the first 4 words in the question found in verse 21: "Who is this fellow...?"

It seems the Pharisees were asking the same question about Jesus that Theophilus was, except they were asking it to find a reason NOT TO believe and Theophilus was asking to find a reason TO believe.

At any rate, this is the question the whole book of Luke is about - WHO is Jesus?

It's quite possible that you have, you are, or you will ask that question, too.

It's a huge question! Our faith doesn't rest on a set of ideals, but on a man named Jesus who claimed to be God.

Jesus is everything, and if we answer that question incorrectly, we'll lose everything!

Some would say an ordinary man (the Pharisees); but Luke is presenting a different answer to Theophilus (and us):

Jesus is God, the Messiah.

To this point in Luke, all Jesus has basically done is heal people, but in chapter 5, Luke begins to show us WHY he can heal people - it's because he is God.

And that simple statement is going to be at the center of everything that happens from this point on.

Who is this fellow? He's God, and he can forgive sins and heal bodies, and the religious leaders hate it.

What will we see today? That **Jesus deals with sin in a way that heals the heart.**

That's very different from what people had known, which was the Pharisees approach. They dealt with sin in a way that hardened the heart.

So, the big question: "Who is Jesus?" The answer is that he's God, and that leads to the Big Idea: **Jesus deals with sin in a way that heals the heart,** and he's a genius in how he does that.

So, with all that backdrop, let's jump in to these bite sized pieces of Luke 5.

I'm calling this message "4 bites and a breath mint."

Here we go...

1. **Bite 1: Jesus touches the unclean**

- a. All you need to know about lepers is that they were outcasts because they were unclean.
- b. Lepers were required to yell out "Unclean! Unclean!" as they walked around, and so this one did, too.
- c. And what did he do? He worshipped. Fell at Jesus' feet and worshipped - BEFORE Jesus did anything!
- d. Sometimes it's all we can do to worship when things are going great. He worshipped and was unclean.
- e. How did Jesus respond? Verse 13 - he touched him.
- f. Jesus touched the unclean leper. Broke all kinds of religious rules there, but he did it.
- g. Oh, and he healed him, too, but it was the touch that made Jesus go viral in verse 15.

2. **Bite 2: Jesus rewards the undaunted**

- a. Next bite happens a little later, although we don't know how much later, but we know it was crowded
 - tons of religious leaders came from all over to see Jesus (v. 17)
 - probably heard about him touching the leper (v. 15)
 - The front door and all the windows were blocked by the crowd (v. 19)
- b. 4 men and their paralytic friend wouldn't be stopped. They were undaunted (not intimidated or discouraged by difficulty, danger, or disappointment), and they were rewarded by Jesus
- c. Before we even get to the reward, let's ask the question: when it comes to getting people to Jesus, is undaunted the word that describes you? Me?
- d. This man and his friends were seen by Jesus, spoken to by Jesus, and the paralytic was healed and forgiven by Jesus. Quite a reward for being undaunted!

3. Bite 3: Jesus challenges the unwilling

- a. We know that Jesus rewarded the friends, but look what that reward set off!
- b. Jesus turned to the paralytic and said words that rocked the world (and still do!): “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”
- c. Notice that he called a sinner “friend” and that he forgave the sinner’s sin
- d. Both were bombshells and led to the question we highlighted earlier: “Who is this fellow?”
- e. The “sinners” didn’t ask it; the religious did. Why?
- f. Because Jesus challenges the unwilling, and these men were unwilling to:
 - admit Jesus might be God
 - admit that a “sinner” like that man could or should be acknowledged
 - drop the religious system that they had set up to allow this man access to God
- g. The friends were undaunted in helping this man get to Jesus; the religious leaders were unwilling to move
- h. Even after Jesus healed the man (proving his authority to forgive sins - according to the system the Pharisees had set up that attributed sickness to sin - we know from the rest of the story in the Gospels that they STILL were unwilling to believe
- i. You know what that means? If we’re unwilling, the truth about Jesus that heals others will hurt us. It will liberate them, but challenge us, because Jesus challenges the unwilling.

4. Bite 4: Jesus calls the unexpected

- a. And finally, the last bite.
- b. After that whole showdown, Jesus kicked it up a notch by walking out and calling Levi as a disciple.
- c. Levi - a TAX COLLECTOR - the lowest of the low, scum, hated, cheaters
- d. In another move that left the religious chewing, Jesus called the unexpected.
- e. It’s funny, isn’t it, that the “qualified” (in their eyes) weren’t willing to do ANYTHING and the unqualified (in their eyes) was willing to leave everything and follow (v. 28).
- f. Sounds familiar, doesn’t it? Jesus calls to all of us, and the only qualification that he requires is that we leave it all and value him more than anything else.
- g. Sometimes it’s surprising who does - and does not - answer that call.

The Landing

4 bites, all of which Luke used to answer the question, “Who is this fellow?”

If he forgives sin (and he does), then he’s no ordinary man. He’s God, by the words of the Pharisees themselves!

But his approach was SO DIFFERENT than the Pharisees, wasn’t it?

Jesus deals with sin in a way that heals the heart.

Religion deals with sin in a way that hardens the heart.

The religious leaders saw the difference, and at the end of it all, the weren’t asking about who he was, but about why he did things the way he did.

Why do you eat with “those” people? (v. 30) Why don’t your disciples act like other disciples? (v. 33)

Jesus’ response: “You need a breath mint.”

Breath mints allow us to have a fresh approach, right? There’s nothing worse than someone telling you something good while their breath smells so bad! Jesus told these religious people, “Your religion is stale, old, and it stinks. But I’ve got a different approach, and this new wine needs to go in new wineskins. So freshen up! Use a breath mint for your soul, and you’ll find that people will be drawn to you instead of repulsed by you.”

The whole remainder of Luke’s report will highlight the struggle between an old way and a new way, and ultimately end up revealing the truth of v. 39 - they would hold onto the old and, as a result, lose out on the new.

The old way was to beat up the sinner and use their sinfulness to keep them separated from God.

The new way was to deal with sin in a way that would heal the heart.

Only Jesus - the Messiah - is able to do that.

Let’s pray.