

The Word with Authority (Luke 5:1-39)

We're studying the Gospel of Luke. Today we'll study cp.5, the theme is "The word with authority."

1. To listen to the word of Jesus

v.1-3

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ² he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Peter was a fisher man. Daily he took his boat to the lake, let down nets, caught fish, returned to the shore and washed the nets. That was his daily life. On that day, he was washing his nets as usual, preparing for the next day. As he was washing his nets, he thought this was his life. He had never thought of having a different lifestyle. However, one event completely changed his life, and he ended his life of washing nets. The event was that he listened to the word of Jesus.

Now, we move to other scene.

v.12

¹² While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

There was a man with leprosy. In the days of Jesus, lepers were kept in isolation, and were looked down. He said "You can make me clean." It shows that he looked at himself unclean. At outside he was covered with a dreaded skin disease, in his mind he thought he was unclean. He should live in isolation, even from his family. He thought it was his life, he should accept it. However, because of one event, his life was changed completely. The event was that he met Jesus.

v.13

¹³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

We are not sure how long he had been suffering leprosy. As he "was covered with leprosy (v.12)" it seems it has been for quite a while.

Since he was with leprosy, everyone stayed away from him. There were people who look at him with prejudice. No one wants to come close to him, let alone touch him.

But Jesus paid attention to him. He paused and listened to him. He came close to him. And he reached his hand and touched him who was covered with leprosy.

The man never thought someone would ever touch him again. Although he could not feel it physically, he may have felt the warmth of Jesus' love spreading from his hand throughout his whole body. How happy he was!

And Jesus said "I am willing. Be clean!"

And, immediately the leprosy left him.

When he heard the word of Jesus "I am willing. Be clean!", his life became completely new. However, it doesn't mean that suddenly everything in his life became all roses. It is only a new beginning. What is important is that how he lives from now on.

He met Jesus. Jesus reached his hand and touched him. When he received to his word, he started his new life. What is important is the life after that. Would he listen to the word of Jesus? Would he relate to Jesus? How he lives after the healing. That is important.

2. To let down the net by faith

We get back to the scene of Peter.

v.4

⁴ When he (Jesus) had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

At that time, it would have been harder for Peter to let down the nets more than we think. There are at least 3 reasons.

(1) He was pretty tired as he had just finished his work over night. Now for him to take a boat into deep water again is not a fun thing to do.

(2) He worked hard all night long and caught nothing. As a professional fisher man, he decided to stop fishing and returned to the shore. Then, now he

was told to let down the nets by a former-carpenter. It is not an easy order to follow.

(3) Moreover, he had already started to wash the nets. If he lets down the nets again, he had to wash them again. It was really troublesome.

In short, for Peter letting down the nets here is quite costly. What did he do?

v.5

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

He paid the cost.

When we act on the word of Jesus, we may need to pay cost. At that time, it will become clear whether we have active-living faith or not. If our faith is active and living, we are willing to pay the cost to act on the word of Jesus. But if we don't want to pay the cost, it shows our faith is not active and living.

v.6

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

When he let down the nets by faith in Jesus word's, he caught such a large number of fish. He experienced the truth and power of the word of Jesus.

Now, we move to other scene.

v.18-19

¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

In this scene, there are people who take a paralyzed man to Jesus. They are also those who let down the net by faith.

"Some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed. (NASB)"

It is easy to say this, but not easy to do this. Let's think about how you can do this. First of all, you must plan how to carry a bed on which one grown-up man is lying on. Secondly, you must prepare all necessary materials and set them up. Finally, you must carry a man on a bed safely according to the plan.

Then, when they reached the house where Jesus was, there were so many people inside and outside of the house. They could find no way to take him in.

So, did they give up? No. What did they do? They went up on the roof. It is not easy. Then, they made an opening in the tiles. The opening was big enough to let the man on the bed go through safely. That's pretty big. But it is not the end. They carried the man up to the roof safely, and let him down safely with the bed.

Surely it was a big project, a lot of works. It was very troublesome for them. Yet, there was no guarantee that he would be healed. It's all up to Jesus. So, they did all these works by faith in Jesus.

v.20

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

Jesus saw their faith in their actions. Only by faith in Jesus, they let him down from the roof, then they saw the great mighty work of Jesus.

3. To admit our own sins and accept His authority

Now, we get back to the scene of Peter.

Peter listened to the word of Jesus. He let the nets down by faith, and experienced a big catch. After that, what did he do?

Did he think like this? "Wow, I've met a great man. If I ask him where I should let the nets down, I can make a big catch every day. Oh, what a wonderful day it is! Definitely, I'm going to be a rich man. I should keep him with me. Don't let him go to others. Let's think how I can please him..." Did he think like that? Let's look at the Bible.

v.8-10

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Peter listened to the word of Jesus. He let the nets down by faith, and experienced a big catch. Through those experiences, he understood two things.

One is that the word of Jesus has authority. Another is that he is a sinful man before Jesus, unworthy to be with Jesus.

v.11

¹¹ Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

It's not only Peter but James and John also understood those things. Now they can see that they deserve judgement. They are afraid before Jesus. Now he said "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." Perhaps they might not have fully understood what it meant. But they just followed him.

If you truly understand the authority of Jesus and you deserve judgement as a sinful man, you will happily accept the word "Do not be afraid. I will give you a new life." No one wants to live with fear of judgement. If it is possible to cancel your life in sins and reset your life, you will agree to do so without grumbling.

If you truly understand the authority of Jesus and you deserve judgement as a sinful man, you will know that you are not in the position to negotiate with Jesus. You would not say, "I don't like that way. I want to do it this way instead." Or, "It's not convenient for me, because if I do so I will lose face. Can you change the plan? Instead of that, I will do this."

You are a sinful man who deserve judgement, yet the one who has the authority to judge says to you, "Do not be afraid. I will take care of you. I am able to set you free and give you a new life." No negotiation, you just trust him.

Now, we move to other scene.

v.27-30

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, ²⁸ and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

In this scene, Jesus was invited for a great banquet with his disciples at Levi's house. And there were many tax collectors and others also. Levi was a tax collector. He just became Jesus' disciple and threw a party. He invited his ex-colleagues also. Now they are having a big celebration dinner together. But it

doesn't mean Jesus and his disciples eat and drink in the same way tax collectors and sinners do.

1st Peter 4:3-4

³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do-- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

Jesus and his disciples had dinner, and many tax collectors and others were also at the dinner table. But it doesn't mean Jesus and his disciples eat and drink in the same way tax collectors and sinners do.

Jesus has intention. He said to those who complained:

v.31-32

³¹ Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

He said "I have come to call sinners to repentance."

How did he invite Peter to be a disciple?

Peter understood that the word of Jesus has authority and he is a sinful man before him. Then, Jesus called Peter. Peter responded to it.

Here, Jesus says "I have come to call sinners to repentance."

What is repentance? You change the direction of life. You make turn from the previous direction whatever that is, and will remain in Jesus from that time on. In other words, anyone who doesn't want to change his life style doesn't repent. He doesn't accept Jesus as his Lord. He doesn't want to entrust himself to Jesus. He doesn't need Jesus.

v.33

³³ They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking."

What is their intention when they said this?

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' ¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

In this parable, how does the Pharisee look on himself as he fast regularly? He considers himself righteous. What is he praying for here? He is showing he is righteous before God. He doesn't need forgiveness of God. He doesn't need savoir or Christ. He doesn't need Jesus. Yes, he is praying before God. In a way, he comes to God. But essentially he doesn't need God.

Gal. 5:4

⁴ You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

This verse says, the people like this Pharisee are severed from Christ (Berkeley), they have cut themselves off from Christ (NLT). They are fallen away from grace. That's why they must work hard. For them, the life is a thorny pass, they are to endure, bear, and put up with life. When they see those who are rejoicing with Jesus, they are so frustrated. They cannot stand those who have peace and freedom in Jesus. No matter what they do, they would find reasons to blame them, even in their way of using chopsticks.

v.34-35

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? ³⁵ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

Why do people fast? To seek God. When you are with God, when you are in his presence, when you received God's answer, you have no reason for fasting. Rather you rejoice in his presence, in his blessings, in his glory.

Now disciples are with Jesus who is full of grace and truth (Jh. 1:14). There is no reason to fast. This is the time to taste and rejoice the fullness of grace and truth being with Jesus.

v.36

³⁶ He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old.

An old garment symbolises legalism or performance. A new garment symbolises Jesus or grace.

There is a man who tries to make him righteous by observing the law. He wants to keep up his appearance. So he tries to patch some of grace from Jesus on him to cover his weaknesses and bad points. But it doesn't work that way.

v.37

³⁷ And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.

Old wineskins symbolise legalism or performance. New wine symbolise Jesus or grace.

When people try to live imitating Jesus by legalism or performance, they will be required to do more and more, their life will become harder and harder, up to point it will be unbearable and finally break down.

But people who are born again and remain in grace receive grace abundantly, and the grace will be flowing from within like streams of living water.

v.21

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

"Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Good point!

Sins must be either forgiven or punished. It doesn't matter whether sinners keep the law or do good deeds. Sinners are still sinners. They will either receive forgiveness or punishment. They cannot become righteous by themselves. They need to be forgiven by the one who has the authority to judge.

God is the one who judges our sins. He alone can give us true forgiveness.

v.24-25

²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Through this healing, Jesus shows he has the authority to forgive sins. He is God.

Today we studied "The word with authority" from the Gospel of Luke cp.5.

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2. To let down the net by faith
3. To admit our own sins and accept His authority