

[Sunday, March 26, 2017] The Luke Series, Luke chapter 5, verses 1-16 – Craig Thurman

In our last lesson there were these topics discussed:

1. That the angels' primary mission among men is carrying the message of the Lord; they may also assist to physically strengthen in mind and body for service.
2. That Christ's fame preceded His coming into Nazareth.
3. In the reading of Is.61.1-2a Christ told them that this day this Scripture is fulfilled. He is the One, and this is the time.
4. Christ reveals the very words these shall say of Him when He is crucified, 'Physician heal thyself.' He knew that they would remain in unbelief.
5. By the prophets Elijah and Elishah, Christ reminds them of their rejection in the past.
6. The city takes offense and casts Him out. Christ moves to Capernaum.
7. In Capernaum demons are cast out; the sick are healed; Peter's mother-in-law was healed.
8. Christ then continues preaching the kingdom in the synagoges of Galilee.

It was about the time that Jesus had decided to come into Galilee that John the Baptist was put into prison. (Mt.4.12; Mk.1.14) His temptation, travels to Judaea, through Samaria, and into Galilee, and the calling of a number of disciples accounts for about the first six months of His ministry. A comparison of the gospels will show that the calling of the disciples, and particularly Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathaniel and Matthew (Levi) was before the first Passover since our Lord's baptism which was about 6 months since his baptism.

Note: John Gill, Jamisen-Fausset-Brown, Matthew Henry, agree that the gospel of John marks the four Passover observances during our Lord's earthly ministry, and therefore Christ's 3 ½ years ministry. Jn.2.23

Jn.2.23, the 1st Passover: the first 6 mos. of Christ's ministry

Jn.5.1, the 2nd Passover: 1 ½ yrs.

Jn.6.4, the 3rd Passover: 2 ½ yrs.

Jn.13.1, the 4th and final Passover in which He is crucified: 3 ½ yrs.

Chapter 5

1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

Gennesaret, aka Sea of Galilee; O.T. Sea of Chinnereth.

Ἦγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν ὄχλον ἐπικεῖσθαι αὐτῷ τοῦ ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἐστὼς παρὰ τὴν λίμνην Γεννησαρέτ

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake:

ships, either the Greek πλοῖον (small ship, little ships, boat) and πλοιάριον, always translated *ship*. There is an even smaller vessel which is the Greek σκάφη, and we would call a *skiff*.

but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

fishermen, ἀλιεῖς,, nom. & acc. pl. of ἀλιεύς; KJV, *fishers* (4, [Mt.4.18, 19; Mk.1.16, 17]); *fishermen* (1); the Greek verb, ἀλιεύω, is once in the N.T. and translated *a fishing*.

were washing, ἀπέπλυναν, 3rdpl. aor. ind. of ἀποπλύνω, ἀπό forth, since, of + πλύνω, Re.7.14, *have washed*; only used here.

nets, δίκτυα, acc. pl. of δίκτυον; always translated with the English word *net*.

Busy men ... *were washing*. Responsible men ... *their nets*.

2 καὶ εἶδεν δύο πλοῖα ἐστῶτα παρὰ τὴν λίμνην οἱ δὲ ἀλιεῖς ἀποβάντες ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπέπλυναν τὰ δίκτυα

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Peter deferred to this stranger and did as he was asked.

3 ἐμβὰς δὲ εἰς ἓν τῶν πλοίων ὃ ἦν τοῦ Σίμωνος ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐπαναγαγεῖν ὀλίγον καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου τοὺς ὄχλους

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

launch out, Ἐπανάγαγε, 2nd pl. aor. imper. act. of ἐπανάγω, ἐπί upon, over + ἀνά again, anew, re-, above + ἄγω, to bring, go, lead; **vs. 3, thrust out**; returned, Mt.21.18; thrust out, Lk.5.3; launch out, Lk.5.34.

The Greek for *launch out* reiterates going back out upon the water, as if to say, launch out 'again.' Jesus knew that Peter had been out on the lake already. The narrative of Luke informs us that the *fisherman were gone out of them, and were washing their nets*.

4 ὡς δὲ ἐπαύσατο λαλῶν εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Σίμωνα Ἐπανάγαγε εἰς τὸ βάθος καὶ χαλάσατε τὰ δίκτυα ὑμῶν εἰς ἄγρην

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master,

master, Ἐπιστάτα, voc. sing. of ἐπιστάτης, ἐπί upon + ἵστημι, to stand, set, establish; ἐπιστάτης is always (6) translated *master*.

δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς κοπιάσαντες
we have toiled all the night,
lit. through all the night [we] have labored, wearied,

have toiled, κοπιάσαντες, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. of κοπιάω; KJV, labor, toil, weary.

Peter's use of the first person plural pronoun must refer to his younger brother, Andrew, and perhaps some others with them. We have wearied ourselves all the night [fishing] and have taken nothing. (When it comes to fishing it sounds like I might be related to them. But I don't claim to be a fisherman either.)

ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ ῥήματί σου χαλάσω τὸ δίκτυον
and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.
but upon

Again Peter defers to the will of Jesus who has now directed him to do something about which he is very knowledgeable. He and his fellows have spent the night in an attempt to fill their nets with fish, and now this stranger would have him go back out and do it again.

5 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Σίμων εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἐπιστάτα δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς κοπιάσαντες οὐδὲν ἐλάβομεν ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ ῥήματί σου χαλάσω τὸ δίκτυον

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

they enclosed, συνέκλεισαν, 3ppl. aor. ind. act. of συγκλείω, σύν with, fellow, together + κλείω, KJV, *to shut, shut up*; KJV, *inclosed, concluded, shut up*.

brake, διεῤῥήγνυτο, 3ps. imperf. pass. of διαῤῥήγνυμι, διά + ῥήγνυμι, KJV, *rend, break, burst, tear, threw down*; διαῤῥήγνυμι, is translated as *rent, brake*.

6 καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσαντες συνέκλεισαν ἰχθύων πλῆθος πολὺ διεῤῥήγνυτο δὲ τὸ δίκτυον αὐτῶν

7 And they beckoned unto their partners,

(v.10) Which are James and John, who must have launched out when Peter did because of their relationship.

συλλαβέσθαι
which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.
assist

And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

began to sink, βυθίζεσθαι, pres. infin. pass. of βυθίζω; only other place is 1Ti.6.9, *drown*; the one time the noun is used, *deep*, βυθός, 2Co.11.25.

7 καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις τοῖς ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ τοῦ ἐλθόντος συλλαβέσθαι αὐτοῖς καὶ ἦλθον καὶ ἔπλησαν ἀμφοτέρα τὰ πλοῖα ὥστε βυθίζεσθαι αὐτά

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Realizing what had just transpired Peter understood who Jesus was and acknowledged the truth of his unworthiness to have him aboard his ship.

8 ἰδὼν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος προσέπεσεν τοῖς γόνασιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λέγων, Ἔξελθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι κύριε

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him,

For astonishment seized him,

was, περιέσχεν, 3ps. aor. ind. περιέχω, περί about, concern + ἔχω to have, possess; KJV, 1Pe.2.6, *contained*; Act 23.25, marg. *having*; Lu.5.9, marg. *involved*.

συνέλαβον
at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:
pronounced, draft
haul
Jn.18.12, *took*
3ppl. aor. ind. act.

draught, ἄγρᾱ, twice, only Luke, translated *draught*; the verb ἀγρεύω, once in the N.T., is translated *catch*.

9 θάμβος γὰρ περιέσχεν αὐτὸν καὶ πάντας τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἄγρᾱ τῶν ἰχθύων ἢ συνέλαβον

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

The words *and all that were with him* do not include James and John. They are referenced in the words, *And so was also James, and John ...* Who were these other men that were with them? We do not know, and evidently we don't need to know. What we need to know is given to us. There are these two particular points that we want to consider under the topic of discipleship. First, what means the Lord used to call disciples into service. And second, what the definition of a disciple is.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.
capture

catch, ζωγρῶν, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. of ζωγρέω; twice in the New Testament, 2Ti.2.26, *who are taken captive*.

10 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου οἳ ἦσαν κοινωνοὶ τῷ Σίμωνι καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Σίμωνα ὁ Ἰησοῦς Μὴ φοβοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

The Call to Discipleship

Jesus strikingly convinced these four experienced fishermen that they should follow Him by revealing to them who He was. Jesus used an everyday, ordinary means of fishing, but at the same time worked in a

powerful way, a miracle, that to anybody else would have been dismissed as a fluke. But to these men this was the work of God. What did Jesus do?

In spite of all of the evidence to the contrary, though they had spent the whole night long fishing and catching nothing because of obeying the Word of Christ they caught such an abundance of fish that both of their ships were beginning to sink. These men saw God at work. Instantly, Peter knew who Jesus was.

Each of these men are fully convinced that Jesus is the One for whom they had been waiting. They weren't looking for a meal ticket. They weren't looking to gain anything personally from this One. As a matter of fact they are prepared and willing to forsake everything that they had ever known and to step forward into absolute surrender to do the will of God. It is not until we come to this place in our lives that we have ever begun to follow the Lord.

So, what do I mean when saying that the Lord uses *means*? The answer is the *way* that the Lord Jesus uses to reveal Himself to others. To be quite clear, the greatest miracle had already been done in the lives of these men. We don't know when, but they had already received the gift of life. But as a result, the fruit of that life, the proof that they had life is that under the direction of the Lord, such as this, they *could* see the hand of God at work and receive Christ for who He is. So, the One that they had ever looked for, were hoping to see just stepped into their boat and to this time they had no idea. Yet all of the things that they were going through conspired together to prove to them that Jesus is the Christ that was promised in the Scriptures. The night of toiling without success, a morning of cleaning empty nets, a stranger wanting to use this empty boat as a podium to speak to the people of a coming kingdom, were contrary to what fishermen were looking for. It all added up to nothing times nothing times nothing. Then there is the command to go back out and fish again again. But suddenly, as if from out of nowhere, the fish filled the nets, and all of that nothingness, emptiness flooded the minds of these fishermen with one thought: this is the Christ of God. Without Christ life is nothing times nothing times nothing. Christ revealed Himself to them *for a reason*. There is a purpose for the new birth. By living He would that we come to know Him. And so

there is conversion. There is a purpose for conversion. By conversion He would that we might follow Him. At this moment, by what Jesus did, these men were fully prepared for the next words that came from the lips of the Savior: *Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.* He was calling those who had life already, who now know who He is, to following Him in discipleship.

A Biblical Means for Discipleship

It is a terrible mistake to fail to understand the God-ordained means for *catching* men for Christ. Catching fish was not by a bait and hook. It was not a matter of luring a fish to take the bait. Catching fish was accomplished through the use of a net. The concept of a hook with some sort of lure or bait is foreign to biblical soul-winning and discipleship. However, using various means of enticement to bring men to Christ has probably done more harm than good to the churches of Christ. It is wrong to say that the end justifies the means. Such persons will say, even by the use of enticement some might come to Christ. But the reality is that more have been misled to *think* they they have come to Christ when all that they have done is followed after some enticement, and been lured along after things that appeal to the flesh, rather than being led after things that of the Spirit.

The Net versus the Hook

Catching fish with a net is parallel to catching men with the gospel. What do we mean by catching men? We only mean that men are captured by something that is cast all about them. What is it that is cast all about them?

In the kingdom parables we read that the kingdom itself is like a net.

*Mt.13.47 Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:***

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

For the gospel of the kingdom to function like a net that was cast into the sea it must be that the preaching and teaching of the kingdom acts like a net cast among me. So, the gospel draws men like a net draws fish.

*Mt 24:14 And this **gospel of the kingdom shall be preached** in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

*Mk.1.14 ¶ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**,
15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

And what will this cast net do but draw or drag men to Christ.

Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

We do not entice men to come to Christ through the flesh, but through the preaching of the gospel.

Being drawn is the work of the Father:

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Being drawn is the hope of the gospel:

Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Preaching the Word of God is casting the gospel of the kingdom before the minds of men. There is no hook, no bait, or any lure used. The preaching of the Word of God must be trusted to bear forth the fruit of the Spirit within the hearts of men. It is the Spirit of God which brings forth the fruit of His own seed sown. The use of *other* means which appeals to the flesh confuses the works of conversion and discipleship. When the saints of God come to the house of God they should be involved in those things which promote the truth of God: worshipping, praising, giving of thanks, prayers, and preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Those who view the things that we do in our gatherings should see the fulness of the gospel at

work in that time. When we speak to others we must get to the points of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

There is a direct parallel that Jesus draws before the minds of Peter and Andrew between fishing for fish and fishing for men. Again we point out that there is nothing to the notion of a pole with line, a hook and bait. That kind of fishing which the Bible sets prominently before the reader is with a net. Either these fishermen fished from a ship or boat with a large net, or else they fished by casting a round, weighted net called in the Greek, ἀμφίβληστρον, **amphiblēstron**. These four fishermen knew exactly what Jesus was teaching them. Men shall be brought to Christ, that is, converted

Not born again (that is a sovereign, monergistic work of God).

to faith in Christ, through the ordained means of God alone, which means is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not exclude a virtuous life for Christ in the saints of God as a compliment to the preaching of the gospel.

1Co 9:22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

1Co 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

But even in the lack of a personal witness the gospel works in the hearts of those that have received life from above.

Only once in the entire New Testament is fishing ever with a line and hook. And that was to collect a coin to pay a tax. This had nothing whatsoever to do with preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Mt 17:27 (Jesus tells Peter) Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

What purpose does it serve to address this particular topic? Because discipleship, properly *winning souls* to learn of Christ is really only done God's way. Never become distracted from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

What is it at this moment that Andrew, Peter, James and John were experiencing? Is this the moment of their faith in God, or, as we would otherwise say, the moment of *coming to Christ*? No, it is not.

To be clear, at that time, *the believing* in Israel did not know the particulars of the Christ, that it was Jesus. But they were looking for His coming. These had believed all that God had revealed to them to this time, though they certainly did not have the understanding that we now have. They heard with faith the preaching of John the Baptist. They truly had repented and were baptized. They were preparing themselves because they understood through the preaching of John the Baptist that the time of the coming of the Christ of God was come. So, the issue concerning these fishermen is not a matter of their first faith in God, but a call to discipleship. (Read Jn. 1.35-42)

We read that one of the disciples of John was Andrew. We have already read that Andrew is brother to Peter. Now, in order for Andrew to have been a disciple of John he must have repented of his sins and received baptism from John. That was John the Baptist's ministry ...

Lu 1:17 ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Andrew was prepared for the coming of the Lord. So, on this day, Andrew and an unnamed disciple of John heard him say of Jesus, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' At that announcement, both of these men followed the Lord and spent some time with Jesus that day. It was after this that Andrew went to tell his brother Peter that they had found the Messiah. Andrew then brings his brother Peter to meet with the Lord Jesus. At this meeting Jesus gave to Peter the name of *Cephas*. It does not appear that Peter or Andrew were the first to be called to be disciples of the Lord. The gospel of John shows us that the first men called to be disciples of Christ are Philip and his brother

Nathaniel. But what is happening to these men? They have already come to repentance and baptism. As a matter of fact all twelve of these disciples were disciples of John the Baptist before they became disciples of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1.21) Because of this we can discern that the issue with them concerned not repentance, but discipleship. No one can be a disciple without having first repentance and baptism. Then we come to discipleship.

Many that were disciples of John the Baptist became disciples of the Lord Jesus. That was the right thing for them to do.

*Jn.3.25 Then there arose a question between **some of John's disciples** and the Jews about purifying.*

*26 And **they came unto John**, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and **all men come to him**.*

...

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

...

*Joh 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that **Jesus made** [disciples]*

Meaning that Jesus made disciples of John's disciples. They had no need of a baptism because they had received it already from God's authority, which was John the Baptist.

and baptized more disciples than John ...

Meaning, that there were others who had responded to the preaching of Christ which had no previous affiliation with John the Baptist, and these went on to become disciples of Christ. *after* they had received baptism from Christ's disciples.

Every person who has repented of their sins and received biblical baptism should become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Repentance and baptism does not *make* a disciple. But these are the preparatory steps to becoming one.

What does it mean to be a disciple? The word *disciple* comes from the Greek, μαθητής, **mathētēs**. (ē represents the Gr. letter η, eta) The verb is the Greek μαθητεύω, **mathēteuō**. (ō represents the Gr. letter , omega) The KJV translates this, **was Jesus' disciple** (Mt.27.57); **every scribe which is instructed** (Mt.13.52), and **teach all nations** (Mt.28.19), and **had taught many** (Acts 14.21). A disciple is a learner. A disciple is one that *can* receive instruction, or be taught. That means there is a willingness to learn the things of Christ. For example, both John the Baptist and Jesus taught their disciples how to pray.

*Lu 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, **Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.***

A disciple is subjected to the leading or rule of the Lord.

Mt 10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

A disciple is a follower. These words, *disciple* and *follower* are paired together at least nine times in the New Testament. (Mt.8.23; 16.25; Mk.2.15; 3.7; 6.1; 8.34; Lk.22.39; Jn.1.37; Acts 21.16)

*Mr 2:15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and **his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.***

To be a disciple is to wholly give my life to the cause of Christ.

Lu 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Lu 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Lu 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

A disciple's desire is to be like his Lord.

Mt 10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord ...

Discipleship is the next logical step for one who has confessed repentance for sin and received biblical baptism. It appears that one can be a disciple without being in a church, but the very catechetical nature of discipleship would lead a disciple of Christ into His church.

Now this might confuse some Baptists. But the commandment to baptize is not contingent on church membership, but on a profession of faith. Discipleship necessarily follows baptism and can actually precede church membership.

*Mt.28.18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,*

teach, μαθητεύσατε, 2^{pl}. aor. imper. act. of μαθητεύω, teach them, instruct them of Jesus Christ. Some of this instruction will likely precede one's actual coming into the Lord's church, but it should lead to it.

This is what the saints of the church do. For this discipleship seems to include the gospel, therefore conversion. Instructing repentance, baptism, and following Christ.

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

teaching, διδάσκοντες, nom. pl. masc. part. pres. act. of διδάσκω, to *teach*; KJV, always translated by the English word *teach* (97); the noun, διδάσκαλος, is translated master, teacher. Those who come past the issues of repentance and baptism are ready to be *catechized* by a church.

and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Now, in that day there were many coming to Christ and following Him. Are we disciples of Jesus Christ? Have we repented of our sins and received biblical baptism at the hands of God authority, the church of Christ? Are we subject to his leading? Are we following Him? Have we ever had a sense of a full, unreserved dedication to Christ? Are we patterning our live after the example of Christ in His Word. If so, we are His disciples.

11 καὶ καταγαγόντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἀφέντες ἅπαντα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

12 Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πόλεων καὶ ἰδοῦ, ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ λέγων, Κύριε ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι

13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

13 καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἤψατο αὐτοῦ εἰπὼν, Θέλω καθαρίσθητι καὶ εὐθέως ἡ λέπρα ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

If we have ever read of the cleansing of lepers in the Old Testament all that the priest there ever did was to *pronounce* a leper who had received a miraculous healing from the LORD as cleansed. The priest had no power to do any other thing but to make a pronouncement that God had cleansed a man of his leprosy. By that pronouncement the priest legally restored such an one into the fellowship of the children of Israel once again. But here Christ was the One that brought about *real* cleansing, not only *legal* cleansing. Christ did what no man could do. Christ did what God alone had ever done.

14 καὶ αὐτὸς παρήγγειλεν αὐτῷ μηδενὶ εἰπεῖν ἀλλὰ ἀπελθὼν δεῖξον σεαυτὸν τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου καθὼς προσέταξεν Μωσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

When Christ works on the privacy of the heart of a man great and powerful is the testimony of that one. There in the privacy of this place. Probably only Jesus and a few disciples, but certainly beyond the reach and view of any man or the natural eye Jesus washed away from this man the dreadful disease of leprosy. Who would deny that only God could do such a thing?

Leprosy is the disease which best describes the nature of sin in man.

Le 13:45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.

46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Sin, like leprosy, is said to be cleansed, not healed.

Leprosy cleansed:

Mt.10.7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

*8 Heal the sick, **cleansed the lepers**, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

*Mt 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, **the lepers are cleansed**, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

*Lu 7:22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, **the lepers are cleansed**, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.*

*Lk.17.17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not **ten cleansed?** but where are the nine?*

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Cleansing from sin:

1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Sin is a terrible deep-seated disease of corruption. What we see are the fruits of sin. The terrible acts that we see all around us, and know so well in our own hearts are manifestations, like the rotting flesh of leprosy, of sin. God through Christ alone brought the remedy for sin. He didn't just mask the results. He didn't just cover the corruption with bandages here and there. He got to the cause of sin and effected the cure. Christ's death for the sinner washed away their sin. Men in their unbelief professed that only God could forgive sin. Christ showed He could forgive sin by cleaning lepers and healing the sick and raising the dead. Though they saw Christ do these things they could not see Christ as God and with the power to forgive sins.

Mr 2:7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

As God never gave power to another to cleanse a leper so He has given to no man the power to forgive sins. This prerogative is His alone. That Jesus could forgive sins is true because He is God. He said that He is God. The Bible teaches that He is God. (Jn.1.1 ... *the Word was God*; Jn.1.14, that Word was made flesh) Therefore He alone could forgive sins.

What is the forgiveness of sins? It is the remission or removing from a sinner the penalty for guilt of sin committed against God. Forgiveness itself is based on a sufficient price that is paid. There is no forgiveness of sins without satisfaction. God's justice against sin must be satisfied. To forgive sin without satisfaction would mean that God's justice would remain unsatisfied and that is not possible. God is just. The eternal God is eternally just. He must repay the sinner for His transgression. Jesus Christ forgave the sins of men and woman during His early ministry based on the knowledge of the fact that before Him was the cross of crucifixion.

Christ was not condemnable before God or man. He had no sin of His own. Christ being God by His death on the cross died a substitutionary death for the sinner. He suffered died for the sins of His own people. Humanly speaking, because God cannot die, God in Jesus Christ died on the cross to satisfy His justice which stood against our sins. This satisfaction is called propitiation; atonement. In the Greek this is ἱλασμός, hilasmos. Some say, and I have said, that it is related to the Greek ἱλαρός, from which we have the English *hilarious*, and from which the word *cheerful* is derived, but I have not been able to prove that as yet. But to propitiate means to satisfy wrath. For example,

Jacob hopes to allay the enmity of Esau with presents:

*Ge 32:20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I **will appease** him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.*

The work of propitiation therefore brings us together to be friends.

*Joh 15:15 **Henceforth** I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

Blood-guiltiness for sin is satisfied by the substitution of the life of Jesus Christ for us. If God is not propitiated, satisfied, sinful man must suffer death for eternity. But if God is propitiated then He will save them forever. And if God saves man forever then man must be accepted with God.

*Eph 1:6 ... **he** (God) hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

There can never be any threat of condemnation against him.

Ro 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

As it is unjust for men to release another without requiring payment for their wrong-doing, so it is with God. It would be unjust with God to forgive a man without requiring payment for his crimes.

Is.5.23 [Woe unto them] Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

*Ex 23:7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for **I will not justify the wicked.***

But if payment has been made, God is just, that is, His justice being satisfied, He is righteous to *put away* whatever punishment there was that was previously *due* Him.

*1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and **just to forgive** us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

This is not a temporal satisfaction, but an eternal satisfaction. It is a satisfaction that is *once for all*, meaning it is *only once, one time*:

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

He.10.10 By the which will [of God] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit ...

15 διήρχετο δὲ μᾶλλον ὁ λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ συνήρχοντο ὄχλοι πολλοὶ ἀκούειν καὶ θεραπεύεσθαι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσθενειῶν αὐτῶν

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

16 αὐτὸς δὲ ἦν ὑποχωρῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις καὶ προσευχόμενος