

Sun., Feb. 6 - Holy Communion

Memory Verse: Luke 5:26, “All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, ‘We’ve seen unimaginable things today.’”

Reading of Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

Message: “The Son of Man 6: Unimaginable Things”

Text: “I didn’t come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.” -Luke 5:32

Scripture: Luke 5:27-39

Blurb: Those legalistic Pharisees are always sparing Jesus, right? We encounter them for the first time in Luke here in chapter 5. But beware! As we hear Luke tell the stories, we discover that we are like the Pharisees! This Sunday we’ll receive Jesus’ invitation to let go of our old selfish ways and embrace His new transformation.

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor Andrew

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor Andrew

“All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, ‘We’ve seen unimaginable things today.’” -Luke 5:26

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Pastor Andrew

Different

O Give Thanks! (Psalm 107)

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *In Tenderness* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, ‘We’ve seen unimaginable things today.’” -Luke 5:26

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Different

Glory to Glory

Where He Leads Me

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

READING OF SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26

Jesus' healings make Him popular with the people, but the religious leaders not so much! Jesus heals a disabled person just to show the leaders His divine authority. Luke 5:17-26,

“17 One day when Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and legal experts were sitting nearby. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem. Now the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal. 18 Some men were bringing a man who was paralyzed, lying on a cot. They wanted to carry him in and place him before Jesus, 19 but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they took him up on the roof and lowered him—cot and all—through the roof tiles into the crowded room in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw their faith, he said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven.’

“21 The legal experts and Pharisees began to mutter among themselves, ‘Who is this who insults God? Only God can forgive sins!’

“22 Jesus recognized what they were discussing and responded, ‘Why do you fill your minds with these questions? 23 Which is easier—to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 24 But so that you will know that the Son of God has authority on the earth to forgive sins’—Jesus now spoke to the man who was paralyzed, ‘I say to you, get up, take your cot, and go home.’ 25 Right away, the man stood before them, picked up his cot, and went home, praising God.

“26 All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, ‘We've seen unimaginable things today.’”

GROW MOMENT: Spring Grow Groups -Video by Amanda

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE: “Fathers 6” -Pastor Andrew

MESSAGE: The Son of Man (Luke 3-6) 6: “Unimaginable Things”

PP#1: The Son of Man: “Unimaginable Things”

“I didn't come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.” -Luke 5:32

The Son of Man: “Unimaginable Things.” Luke 5:32 “I didn't come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.”

PP#2: *Image of Jesus healing the handicapped man lowered down through the roof*

Stop and think for a moment: what are some of the unimaginable things that God has done in your life? How has God given you gifts and blessings beyond your imagination? Think of those big things: your family, your wealth, your health, perhaps you've experienced a healing, perhaps you can point to a miracle that you will never forget. Think, too, of something more recent, perhaps some smaller ways that you notice you're blessed: safety in an accident, just the right encouragement from a friend, answered prayers for someone's recovery. God is so good, and we must routinely stop and call them to mind: for our own mental health! We tend to spend so much of our day dealing with

issues, solving problems, focused on what we need to do. It makes us negative, testy, looking at things half-empty. We need to counter that, every day, by counting our blessings! This is why we need daily devotional time. The weight of daily living brings us down. We need to stop and notice—and remember—ways that God lifts us up. That is what fuels our joy.

I would guess, in all the blessings we thought of, however, that we didn't think of one of the most important. I know I tend to think of my family, my material blessings, the healings I notice, things like that. This is where Luke comes and helps us. As we are following Jesus with Luke, he's telling us the Jesus story in a way that will grow us as disciples. And mature disciples think past our material blessings.

PP#3: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

17 One day when Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and legal experts were sitting nearby. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem. Now the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal. 18 Some men were bringing a man who was paralyzed, lying on a cot. They wanted to carry him in and place him before Jesus, 19 but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd. So they took him up on the roof and lowered him—cot and all—through the roof tiles into the crowded room in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

So, turn to Luke 5. We heard earlier the story of when Jesus healed the disabled man on the cot. It's a story, really, about his amazing friends. He had awesome friends who had heard that Jesus was healing people. So they went to their handicapped friend, grabbed him cot and all, and carried him over to Jesus. Last time I preached on this passage, I focused on the friends and their incredible faith. Who are your stretcher-bearers? For whom are you a stretcher-bearer?

But notice that for Luke, the story starts with Pharisees and scribes. Jesus is teaching—right, the Word of God, the Good News?—somewhere up in Galilee. He's at someone's house, and the crowd fills the house and spills out into the yard. Among the crowd are Pharisees and Scribes.

PP#4: Pharisees: Ordinary people committed to following the strictest Jewish life
Scribes: Experts in the Scriptures (professors)

Pharisees are ordinary Jews who have voluntarily joined the religious and political party of the Pharisees. Their main commitment was to live a strict Jewish lifestyle, following all the laws and rules of the Scriptures to the extreme. Interestingly, many commentators suggest that Jesus may have been a Pharisee, or considered a Pharisee. At least, it seems, Jesus closely aligned with the Pharisees. This may be why He was so hard on them. They got it *mostly* right...but even though they had good intentions, they became legalistic about the rules, and often missed the whole purpose for following the rules. Draw a line to “pharisees” in verse 17 and write, “Religious rule followers.” Now, often Pharisees were well-to-do people who had the time to spend obsessing about living the details of the Jewish laws. And they were respected in their communities, often looked up to—influencers—who were also often involved in community leadership roles.

Because the Pharisees studied the Torah so closely, they were often close friends with the Scribes, the professors of the communities. Scribes read and copied the Jewish scriptures, and knew them inside and out. Draw a line to the word “Scribes” and write “Professors of Jewish texts.”

PP#5: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

17 One day when Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and legal experts were sitting nearby. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem. Now the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal. 18 Some men were bringing a man who was paralyzed, lying on a cot. They wanted to carry him in and place him before Jesus, 19 but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd. So they took him up on the roof and lowered him—cot and all—through the roof tiles into the crowded room in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

So, imagine the scene: a local man starts wandering around teaching and preaching about God. He also starts doing miracles and healings, and He starts to make the news. The local experts in following God and God's writings, of course, come to check Him out. This Jesus may be popular with the people, but the experts are not so easily swayed. They compare Jesus to what they know is God's Word: the Law. If Jesus is authentic and trustworthy, He will strictly conform to the Jewish Law. Interestingly, in verse 17, it says that they even came from Jerusalem, where Jesus had been before. Draw a line to "Jerusalem" and write, "See John 5:16." It seems Jesus' popularity was gaining attention. Draw a note to the end of verse 17 and write "The Holy Spirit leading Jesus."

Well, as the Pharisees are listening to Jesus with squinting eyes, in comes the friends carrying the paralytic. Dramatically, they lower the guy on the stretcher down through the ceiling right in front of Jesus. Jesus, it says in verse 20, looked up at them and saw their determined belief that Jesus could heal, turns to the lame man as he heals him: *spiritually!* He declares, loud enough for the Pharisees to hear, "Your sins are forgiven!"

PP#6: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

21 The legal experts and Pharisees began to mutter among themselves, "Who is this who insults God? Only God can forgive sins!"

So, there's a couple different things going on here. First of all, the friends brought the handicapped man there for *physical* healing. They were not thinking too much about forgiveness from sin. This is where I see a connection to our memory exercise a moment ago. When we think of our blessings from God, we usually think about our *physical* blessings, right? But this is not God's primary goal. God is more concerned about our *spiritual* healing. Secondly, Luke wants us to notice the difference between the religious—but doubting—Pharisees and the less religious—but believing—men. And thirdly, I dare say, that although we may be able to identify with the man needing healing, or we may identify ourselves as stretcher-bearers, Luke is intending for us to identify with the Pharisees. Draw a line to Pharisees in verse 21 and say, "Like us." This is who we are. We generally think we are following God; we think we're okay. We have come to check out this Jesus: we watch in skepticism, we mutter among ourselves and we are asking just who He thinks He is! The Pharisees—and we—are right: only God can forgive sins. So, do the logic: If only God can forgive sins, and this Jesus just forgave that man's sins, then that means this Jesus thinks He is....?

PP#7: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

22 Jesus recognized what they were discussing and responded, "Why do you fill your minds with these questions? 23 Which is easier—to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

24 But so that you will know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins”—Jesus now spoke to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, get up, take your cot, and go home.” 25 Right away, the man stood before them, picked up his cot, and went home, praising God.

But wait! Just *saying* He forgave his sins doesn’t mean it’s true, right? And this is why Jesus then heals the man physically. Which is easier, to say “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Get up and walk?” Well, Jesus’ point is that *both* are impossible for people! And right there, in verse 24, is where Jesus explains why He is healing people physically. His physical healings are empirical proofs that He offers spiritual healing. Both are unimaginable, but we can see Jesus doing the one. That’s visible evidence that He can do the impossible, and therefore also the invisible. By the way, notice in verse 24 is the first mention in Luke of Jesus referring to Himself as the Son of Man, that messianic reference of being God’s presence on earth. Jesus uses it when it becomes obvious He’s God!

PP#8: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

26 All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, “We’ve seen unimaginable things today.”

The people—I love how this version puts it—“were besides themselves in wonder.” They were filled with awe and glorified God. Here is what we were doing: marking the miracles God does changes our outlook and attitudes. When we call God’s blessings to mind, our hearts are turned to Him. We join with the people and say, “We’ve seen unimaginable things today!” I’ve made this our memory verse, so we will practice doing this each day.

PP#9: *Image for our forgiveness coming through Jesus, but not using an image of a cross*

But the unimaginable things they’ve seen, mind you, are not just the physical healing of the man. They also include the spiritual healing that they just saw proof of. And this is what I was saying earlier: when we recall God’s blessings in our lives, we normally recount the physical blessings: family, healings, wealth. But we often take for granted the greater blessing: our spiritual healing. Jesus comes not to grant us physical blessings, but to look at us and say, “Your sins are forgiven.” This is so much greater, isn’t it? I wonder if we are a bit too much like the Pharisees, also, by focusing too much on our daily lifestyles, even as we think of our blessings. So, a key takeaway here for us is to see Jesus as the Son of Man: the promised Messiah, our Savior, our spiritual healer.

PP#10: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

27 Afterward, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to Him, “Follow me.”

28 Levi got up, left everything behind, and followed him. 29 Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them. 30 The Pharisees and their legal experts grumbled against His disciples. They said, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Well, we don’t know how the Pharisees and Scribes reacted, but Luke is not done with their story. It carries over into the next. Look at verse 27. Jesus is still calling His special 12 followers,

the 12 Apostles. Draw a line to Levi and in the margins write, “Matthew, see Luke 6:15 & Matt. 9:9.” Like Simon Peter, Levi’s name is changed after he chooses to follow Jesus. Levi the tax collector is the Matthew the Apostle who wrote the Gospel of Matthew. Tax collectors were hated and considered uber-sinners because they collected taxes for the Romans and fraternized with them. They also often abused their position and extorted inflated fees. The word “tax collector” was synonymous with “ungodly” or “sinner.”

Verse 27, “Afterward, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me.’” Now, there’s a full sermon here, too. Jesus calls the sinful to follow Him. There is hope for us! We can leave behind our former life of sin. Jesus wants us, sinners as we are! But Jesus also calls us away from our lives of sin and to a new path of discipleship. Powerful sermon. I may have preached it once!

And notice *the change* it brings in Levi! Verse 28, “Levi got up, left everything behind, and followed Him.” Wow! Such transformation! Verse 29, “Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them.” Kind of like Zacchaeus. Being free of the emptiness of your sinful life is the best news in the world! We often count our material blessings, but Matthew had that and was still empty. Jesus offers Him forgiveness and inclusion into God’s family. This bring Levi the greatest joy! And he wants to share it with his other sinner friends! See? Not keeping Jesus’ transformation to himself.

“30 The Pharisees and their legal experts grumbled against His disciples. They said, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’”

So, we are supposed to identify with Levi, but we are also still identifying with the Pharisees and Scribes. The story is still about them! Again the contrast: radical transformation in Levi, but no change in the Pharisees. Application: do you struggle with including unsavory people in God’s family? Aren’t there people you would just as soon stay away? Aren’t you better than they are? They’ve made their choices. But Jesus invites them in!

How would you answer their grumbling? Why does Jesus eat with bad people? Remember back in the previous chapter when Jesus quoted from Isaiah 61? Jesus came to bring liberation to those who are trapped, right? It’s received by people who *know* they are trapped.

PP#11: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

31 Jesus answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. 32 I didn’t come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.”

Verse 31, “Jesus answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. 32 I didn’t come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.” It’s not that the Pharisees are righteous and the tax collectors are sinners. Jesus is saying that people need to recognize that they are spiritually sick before He can heal them. The Pharisees and Scribes don’t see themselves as needing God’s grace, so Jesus can’t heal them. We may have been Levi, but when we become Matthews—or Pharisees—we must not forget how much we still need God’s forgiveness. A danger of rule-following is taking pride in it, and then seeing ourselves as better than others. An example just might be how we view people who do not wear masks or get vaccinated. Too soon?

Matthew is now a disciple. The lame man is forgiven. But the Pharisees are still not.

Now, in all fairness, I, like the Pharisees, would also be watching Jesus pretty closely. Does His life match the Scriptures? Does He show holy living? How about His followers?

PP#12: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

33 Some people said to Jesus, “The disciples of John fast often and pray frequently. The disciples of the Pharisees do the same, but your disciples are always eating and drinking.”

34 Jesus replied, “You can’t make the wedding guests fast while the groom is with them, can you? 35 The days will come when the groom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.”

Verse 33, “Some people said to Jesus, ‘The disciples of John fast often and pray frequently. The disciples of the Pharisees do the same, but your disciples are always eating and drinking.’ 34 Jesus replied, ‘You can’t make the wedding guests fast while the groom is with them, can you? 35 The days will come when the groom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.’”

The people notice that they don’t look like they practice a number of the Scriptural practices of godliness. Now Jesus did, mind you, but not in the public eye. The reason, you see, is that Jesus is not a rabbi or prophet, who merely teaches the practices for how to become more holy. He is Himself God; He is Holiness itself. And when you are with Jesus, it’s always a celebration! Heaven’s going to be a big party! But after Jesus went back to heaven, the disciples engaged regularly in the usual religious practices, too.

PP#13: Luke 5:17-39 (CEB)

36 Then He told them a parable. “No one tears a patch from a new garment to patch an old garment. Otherwise, the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn’t match the old garment. 37 Nobody pours new wine into old wineskins. If they did, the new wine would burst the wineskins, the wine would spill, and the wineskins would be ruined. 38 Instead, new wine must be put into new wineskins. 39 No one who drinks a well-aged wine wants new wine, but says, ‘The well-aged wine is better.’”

Verse 36 “Then He told them a parable.” Draw a line to “parable” and note, “First parable in Luke.” We’ll come back to that in the future. “No one tears a patch from a new garment to patch an old garment. Otherwise, the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn’t match the old garment. 37 Nobody pours new wine into old wineskins. If they did, the new wine would burst the wineskins, the wine would spill, and the wineskins would be ruined. 38 Instead, new wine must be put into new wineskins. 39 No one who drinks a well-aged wine wants new wine, but says, ‘The well-aged wine is better.’”

PP#14: *Images showing old and new goat wineskins and a new patch tearing an old garment*

In Jesus’ day, wine was often carried in goatskin sacks. But wine expands as it ferments, so new, pliable wineskins were used for new, fermenting wine. Old, dried-and-set wineskins would tear as the wine fermented. Jesus is saying that He is bringing a new, updated version of God’s Word, a fresh teaching of the Good News. The Pharisees don’t see Jesus as real wine, the true Messiah, and think that God must do things always the same way as before. But Jesus, who is still true wine, but fresh and new, comes to lead them in a new discipleship: not to the tired and empty *word* of the Law, but to the living relationship of following Him. New fabric will shrink when washed, and new fabric doesn’t match the faded. Don’t ruin the new to fix the old! We need a new receptivity for God’s new working. A new receptivity, like the sinners who know they need God, and the tax collectors. Yet

we usually prefer the old wine, the familiar, the comfortable, that which tastes better to our sentiments. Draw a line to “well-aged wine” and write, “the old Jewish way.”

PP#15: *Image(s) for “Taste and see that the Lord is good!” -Psalm 34:8 and “See, I am doing a new thing.” -Isaiah 43:19*

Luke ends the section like he began it: about the Pharisees and Scribes: about us! They have a hard time leaving the familiar behind and embracing the new. Yet those who know they need God embrace Jesus so much more readily. This whole chapter is about discipleship. Peter, Andrew, James and John left their boats to fish for people. Matthew leaves his life of selfishness to follow Jesus. Lame sinners hear their sins forgiven and are healed. But Pharisees and Scribes stay stuck in their self-righteous wineskins.

We have seen such unimaginable things. I’m not talking about the lame man healed. I’m talking about the sinners redeemed. Can we, dare we, perhaps, taste the new wine? Can we open ourselves to the awe, become beside ourselves with wonder, and glorify God? When we open ourselves to Jesus and His way, then we look at our own transformed lives and say, “We’ve seen unimaginable things today.”

Amen.

PRAYERS/HOLY COMMUNION/OFFERING: Pastors David and Dan

Prayers

Holy Communion

Song: *Oh Give Thanks! (Psalm 107)* -Sanctify

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

Wednesday night: Meal & Grow Groups

Feb. 9 Staff - Menu (ham, cheesy potatoes, corn)

Feb. 16 Keintz - Menu: Baked chicken alfredo

Feb. 23 Nancy D. - Tater tot hot dish

Mar. 2 Sue L - Soup Bar (Ash Wed.)

Next Sunday’s message: The Son of Man: Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

Read ahead: Luke 6:1-20

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, ‘We’ve seen unimaginable things today.’” -Luke 5:26

BENEDICTION -Pastor David

POSTLUDE -Sanctify