

OBEDIENCE TO THE MESSIAH

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus called His followers to exercise faith in Him in such a way that they would draw others to place their faith in Christ as well.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 5

+ **SETTING:**

Jesus is on the move. On the heels of Jesus's Capernaum declaration that He must go to other towns, the backdrop of His ministry has turned to the seaside. People are still pursuing Him, but the winds of the crowds seem to have changed from an affinity toward sensationalism to an eager desire to learn more about God and the purpose of Jesus. From the banks of the sea, He will perform another miracle, but this one will be in the context of everyday life. Jesus not only has power over demons and disease, He can also direct creatures of the sea and the eternal trajectory of souls.

DAY 1

READ:

Luke 4:38–5:3

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 5:1-3

NOTES

As we follow the ministry of Jesus, it is evident that He had many followers. Throughout the Gospel accounts, there are many mentions of Jesus's attempts to find a moment to be alone after a day full of people's requests. The wonders and miracles of Jesus certainly warranted the gathering crowds. But Jesus discouraged the sensationalism. He didn't seek to be a celebrity to congregate around. He came to be a Savior to depend on.

Even today, it is easy for people to get caught up in the performance aspects of gathering. Whether it be a dynamic new preacher or the fancy new stage lights, it is tempting for churchgoers (both leaders and attenders) to get caught up in the entertainment value of church. Currently, courses and books abound on how to gather crowds and influence people—many of which are specifically geared toward Christian leaders. While it can be helpful to make some modifications to provide a more welcoming environment for newcomers, many times we can go overboard.

When all was said and done, those who sought Jesus for His salvation message, not His healing skills, stuck around. Nowadays, there are still those who seek the flashy and fun over the substantive and salvific. However, aesthetics of the service are momentary, and as trends shift, eventually the latest and greatest will not be enough to keep those people who crave "better." The message of God, however, is timeless and life-changing. It's God's Word alone that can draw souls in and keep them coming.

What do you value most about the services and ministry of your church?

DAY 2

READ:

Luke 5:1-11

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 5:4-8

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #73: IMPUTATION

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Romans 4:6).

Perhaps this point in time—the one where Jesus defied all fishing wisdom and logic—was the instance when Peter first placed his faith in Jesus as Lord. Maybe this was the moment that the fisherman went from spiritual death to life. But God had even more in store for Peter, and transformation didn't happen overnight. Peter, like each of us, was on a journey of growing closer to God. He incrementally saw Jesus more clearly as he continued to follow Christ. In just a few short minutes, Peter went from seeing Jesus as Master—a man of due respect—to declaring Jesus as Lord—a man whom he would do anything for. However, he still had a ways to go in his walk with God.

It's easy to think the men and women we encounter in Scripture had it all figured out. But they didn't. They stumbled. They failed. Not one of us "arrives" upon conversion. We all have growing to do. After all, it was Peter who rebuked Jesus about His plans, only to be rebuked himself (Matthew 16:22-23). It was Peter who snoozed instead of seeking God through prayer just moments before the Son of God was betrayed (Matthew 26:36-41). Most notably, it was Peter who, out of fear and cowardice, denied Jesus three times as the arrest and trial of Jesus played out (Matthew 26:69-75). Yet God also used Peter as an integral part of establishing His church. God doesn't wait for us to be perfect before He unfolds His plan. So, let's embrace our messy journey, lean on the power of God to use us, and seek to know Him more and more clearly as we go.

What are some ways you can move forward today and trust that God can use a work in progress like you?

DAY 3

READ:

Luke 5:1-11

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 5:4-6

NOTES

On its best days, credible facts, compelling logic, and correct reason guides our society. Education and upbringing (and the School of Hard Knocks) have equipped us to make intelligent, rational decisions. This is especially true in our vocation. Whether our job consists of manual labor, processing data, or caring for people, every job involves training, regulations, and inspections to ensure we know how to complete tasks correctly. Deviating from the well-thought-out and proven plan is a difficult feat.

Simon Peter likely grew up on the water, pulling up nets full of fish. He had a system that worked. The local sea was as familiar to him as the back of his hand. Simon Peter discerned daily where and how to find and catch fish. So when Jesus told Peter to put out to sea and put down his nets, Peter knew within every fiber of his fisherman being that this was a waste of time and resources. Yet he trumped his logic with his mustard seed of faith, and he obeyed.

God may call us to do something antithetical to our training, experience, and logic. Scholars don't call God's work and plan the "upside-down kingdom" for nothing. Obedience to God often may seem illogical in the world's eyes. Following in faith may not make financial sense. Christian discipleship does not always fit within the world's definition of success. Living a life of worship to God will lead us to make decisions others will mock.

May we have the willingness of Peter to obey the Lord of lords, even when what He leads us to do makes no practical, fiscal, or logical sense to the world.

Who might you talk to this week to help you keep an eternal perspective and better obey the call of God on your life?

DAY 4

READ:

Isaiah 6

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Isaiah 6:4-8

NOTES

VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Calling is not a sacred privilege reserved for a select few, conveyed through some mystical manifestation. The call to leverage your life for the Great Commission was included in the call to follow Jesus: ‘Follow me,’ he told them, ‘and I will make you fish for people’ (Matt. 4:19). So you can stop waiting on a mystical moment, a wet fleece, or a quiver in your liver. You’re called.”¹

—J. D. Greear

Throughout the Old Testament, we have records of special, visible appearances of God to humankind. Known as theophanies, these were more than a mere God sighting. They were life-changing experiences filled with purpose, in which God typically provided a glimpse of His glory and plan. Human beings rightly responded in fear and worship. Occasionally, God commissioned the person with a new purpose or task, often attached to a promise.

Here in Isaiah 6, we can witness this pattern. God appeared to Isaiah and allowed him to see the Lord on His throne while receiving worship from heavenly beings. In response, Isaiah declared his sin-stained status. Because he saw the holiness of God, this caused Isaiah to see his sin more acutely. With this admission of sin, God provided forgiveness and cleansing to Isaiah. Then the Lord charged Isaiah with a significant task to bring the word of the Lord to His people—a message of warning and a call to repentance. This would prove to be an important moment in the life of Isaiah.

This pattern of theophany can also be seen in the New Testament. From the miracles of Jesus to the visions that came to the early church, God continued to approach His people, reveal His character, and bring clarity to His plan.

We also experience the special presence and commissioning of God. Instead of arriving in burning bushes, dreams, and pillars of light, God dwells within every believer in the Holy Spirit. Additionally, He has given us the council of His plan through the written Word of God. We don’t need to wait for God to arrive in some special way for us to know who He is or what He wants us to do. God’s glory and power are readily accessible within us. He has made His plan clear. Let us respond, as Peter and Isaiah did, in humility, submission, worship, and obedience.

What part of God’s commission and commands will you work on being more obedient to this week?

DAY 5

READ:

Luke 5:1-11

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 5:5-8

NOTES

The perspective of a child is much different from that of an adult. When asked, “How old is your mother?” most preschoolers seriously state ridiculous ages (such as 11 or 78). Some kids think the moon is a big, heavenly night-light. Millions believe that Santa visits their homes on Christmas Eve to eat cookies and leave them presents. An adult understands that the moon has no light of its own and parents are the ones who eat the Christmas Eve cookies and place presents under the tree. Grown-ups can usually guess someone’s age within a small margin of error. Most of us can look back and point to a moment when we realized that the world we had in our mind’s eye was nowhere near reality.

Unfortunately, false perceptions and wrong facts about God don’t always end in childhood. Many still see Him as distant and disinterested, ignorant and impotent. Similar to how we can remember the moment we learned that the Easter Bunny wasn’t able to lay chocolate eggs, there are times when our perspective shifts about who God is. Maybe we thought He had been silent in a certain situation and long wondered where He was and what He was up to. Only later did we uncover that He had been perfectly orchestrating the best-case-scenario that exceeded our wildest dreams.

How we view God matters. God knows all, sees all, and is all-powerful. So when we have a chance to trust in His view of things instead of our own, let’s humbly remember that He is God, and we are not.

How has your view of God grown over the past year, and what can you do this week to further your understanding of who God truly is?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“Man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself. For (such is our innate pride) we always seem to ourselves just, and upright, and wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, of our injustice, vileness, folly, and impurity. Convinced, however, we are not, if we look to ourselves only, and not to the Lord also—He being the only standard by the application of which this conviction can be produced.”²

—John Calvin (1509-1564)

POINT 1: Disciples are called to act in faith (Luke 5:1-4).

Jesus asked a _____ request of Simon, perhaps to gauge his obedience in light of a larger request to come. Those who are _____ with little will be _____ with much.

? **When we obey God, what is that saying about our understanding of Him?**

Jesus’s commands, indeed the commands of Scripture as a whole, may seem unwise or _____ to us, but they are worthy of our _____ nonetheless.

POINT 2: Disciples are stirred to confess in faith (Luke 5:5-8).

The commands of God may be beyond our understanding, but they carry the _____ and _____ of Christ, our Creator and Sustainer.

? **What are some reasons we have to trust the wisdom of God and obey His commands?**

When encountering the holiness of Jesus, the Son of God, true faith leads us to _____ and acknowledgment and _____ of sin.

? **Why would encountering holiness cause us to see our sin more clearly?**

POINT 3: Disciples are invited to follow in faith (Luke 5:9-11).

KEY DOCTRINE #73: IMPUTATION

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or _____ to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's _____ was imputed to us (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of _____ as belonging to them (Romans 4:6).

The call to follow Jesus comes with a _____ to join in His work of sharing the _____ of salvation by faith in Jesus.



What are some ways believers participate in the mission of catching people with the gospel?

MY RESPONSE

Because we have been made holy through the work of Christ, we yield to the ongoing work of the Spirit in changing us to live according to our new identity so that others might see God's power at work in and through us.

- **HEAD:** What steps will you take so you can be confident about how God is leading you and then be faithful in obedience?
- **HEART:** What are some wonders you've seen God accomplish lately for which you will praise Him?
- **HANDS:** What will you change in your life this week in order to be a better fisher of people with the gospel of Jesus?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Here is a holiness that comes to sinners. Rather than going away, Jesus says, 'Join me.' Here is a holiness that uses a confessing sinner in its mission. Here is holiness that not only calls the sinner but commissions the sinner to become a fisher of men. Here is holiness so stunningly beautiful it causes a man to leave everything for its sake. It gives the former sinner a new purpose, direction, and call."³

—Thabiti Anyabwile