

Jesus the Gracious Rescuer

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Date: 19 November 2023

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[0 : 00] But we are turning now to our Bibles this evening. We've been looking in Luke's gospel with Josh these last few weeks and we come to Luke chapter 5 and we're going to read together the whole of this quite long chapter. Luke chapter 5. If you need a Bible, there's some at the sides, some at the front and at the back. Don't be shy, go and grab one and turn up to the third book of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and chapter 5.

The last verse of chapter 4 explains that Jesus is preaching all around Judea and the synagogues and then on one occasion while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, Galilee, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land and he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing. Put out your word, I'll let down the nets. When they'd done this, they enclosed a large number of fish and the nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them and they came and filled both boats so they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they'd taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching men. When they brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him. And he charged him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded for a proof to them. But now even more, the report about him went abroad and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities.

[2 : 51] But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. On one of those days, as he was teaching Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, would come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed, a man who was paralyzed and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and they let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said, man, your sins are forgiven you.

The scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, who is this who speaks utter blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, why do you question in your hearts?

Which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven you? Or to say, rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.

And amazement seized them all. And they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, we have seen extraordinary things today. After this, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth.

[4 : 38] And he said to him, follow me. And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house. And there were a large company of tax collectors and others

reclining at the table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answered them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

I've come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And they said to him, the disciples of John fast often and offer prayers.

And so do the disciples of the Pharisees. But yours eat and drink. And Jesus said to them, can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them. And then they will fast in those days. He also told them a parable. No one tears a piece from a new garment or puts it on an old garment.

[5 : 43] If he does, he'll tear the new and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and be spilled.

And the skins will be destroyed. But the new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one, after drinking old wine, desires new.

But he says the old is good. Amen. And may God bless to us this his word. We'll do open once again to Luke chapter 5.

How thorough and profound is the salvation that Jesus brings to repentant sinners?

It's very easy for us to sink into holding a contracted view of the breadth and wonders of the salvation that Jesus offers. And if that's the case, Luke has good news for us.

[6 : 53] Luke wants to leave us in no doubt about the resplendence of Jesus' salvation, but also of the radical nature of his salvation. It's worth noting that chapters 5 and 6 very clearly go together.

You can see in 7.1, it's clearly a new section being marked at the end of these sayings, and he moves to a new place. But we're also by now very familiar with Luke's careful arrangement.

And at a glance, throughout these two chapters, we would note the repeated use of words about sin. But more than that, we can also see that they have matching structures, chapter 5 and 6.

Both chapters start with three episodes that begin with the same phrase. The ESV isn't particularly clear about that. But some of the older translations each begin, and it came to pass in 5.1, 5.12, and in 5.17.

Or perhaps some translations, or one day. One day, and these things began. And the same thing happens in chapter 6. It begins with three events.

[8 : 07] And after the three events, in both chapters, there's a block of Jesus' teaching, which ends with a parable in three parts. And so Luke clearly wants us to see the message of these two chapters as part of a connected message.

That's also worth noting at this point that chapter 5 begins with the authority of Jesus' words.

Chapter 5, verse 5, Simon listens to Jesus' word. And then we see what happens.

And then right at the end of the section, in 6:47, there's a note of caution about feeling to listen to Jesus' words. Luke is showing us Jesus' authority through his word to rescue thoroughly, but also to rule over his people.

And so in chapter 5, we begin with Jesus' gracious and thorough rescue. We see first in verses 1 to 26, the resplendence of salvation pictured.

The resplendence of salvation pictured. And Luke shows us that in three glorious pictures of salvation. The first in verses 1 to 11, the miraculous catch, in which we see that Jesus' salvation repurposes the sinner for service, granting fruitfulness in God's mission.

[9 : 29] This miracle takes place in Gennesaret, a well-known fishing town. Verse 1, faced with the crowds pressing in on him to hear his teaching, Jesus spots some fishing boats.

Verse 2, the fishermen had finished fishing, were washing their nets. And so verse 3, Jesus gets into Simon's boat and asks for his help to use it as a pulpit from which to preach to the crowds.

And then verse 4, when he finishes, he has a tip for Simon. He says to Simon, go deeper and put out your nets for a catch. Now, Simon was an experienced fisherman.

He had his own boat and in Gennesaret, a well-known fishing town. And there's a hint in verse 5 that Simon might feel a little bit patronized by Jesus' request.

We've toiled all night. There's nothing to catch. But because Jesus has said, Simon will do it. And look at what happens.

[10:34] Verse 6, so many fish are caught that the nets are breaking. Verse 7, another boat comes to help. But there are so many fish that they both begin to sink. This is a miraculous event.

So much so that verse 8, Simon falls down at the feet of Jesus, aware that he's witnessed a miracle. Verse 9, everyone was astonished. This was very clearly a miracle.

And so we shouldn't be searching for overly spiritualized applications from this about breaking with conventional wisdom in the business world to really produce a large haul. Now, the fishermen here aren't pictured as being stupid or doing the wrong thing.

Quite simply, this is a miracle carried out by the one whose word created and sustains the world. God has given us a world that is ordered and works. And coming to Jesus doesn't remove us from that.

This miracle happens in response to Simon lending his boats to Jesus. And I think Luke is showing us in that, that service of Jesus is never overlooked.

[11:40] Peter loans his boat for the purpose of Jesus' ministry. And Jesus' response is overwhelming kindness. Literally, the boats are overwhelmed at the number of fish that have been caught.

And I think Luke is just dropping into this event that new service, however small, of the Lord Jesus, new service of his ministry of proclaiming the victory of his kingdom to the world, new service in that is overlooked or forgotten by Jesus.

That isn't to say he'll make us millionaires. But there's a great encouragement here, isn't there?

When we give of ourselves to honor and serve Jesus in everyday ways, that's not a waste.

It doesn't go unnoticed. Whether it be by husbanding well, parenting sacrificially to see our children grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or whether it's in serving brothers and sisters when you're under the cosh and when you feel like the one who could do with being served.

Maybe there are some of us feeling burdened more than ever by our serving in church, serving that can seem unappreciated by others or unnoticed.

[12:52] Well, Luke's assuring us here, I think, that these sacrificial acts aren't taken lightly by the Lord Jesus. He's no man's debtor. His kindness sinks boats.

But here's the question. Why does Luke begin this long section with this miracle that the other gospel writers don't include? Well, look carefully at what happens to Simon.

Verse 5. Simon moves from calling Jesus master. He knows him. He's witnessed a miracle in his house in chapter 4. He knows he should listen. He moves from calling Jesus master to verse 8, calling him Lord.

Simon received an overwhelming experience of the generosity of the Lord. And what does Simon say? Well, it isn't, I'm a field fisherman.

No, verse 8. He's utterly humbled by Jesus' overwhelming generosity. Chastened, perhaps, at his indignation in verse 5. But now utterly aware of whose presence he's in.

[14:00] He says, depart from me, for I'm a sinner. How can I be in your presence? Simon knew Jesus already.

He called him master. But we ought to reflect on the fact that Jesus can blow us away, even if we've known him for a long time. And when he does so, what does that look like?

It looks like greater awareness of who he is, just how awesome he is, whilst at the same time how unworthy we are. Aren't those two things the healthy fruit of a deepening grasp of the Lord Jesus? Seeing ourselves in the true light, as we grasp more and more the might and majesty of the Lord Jesus, the kindness and kingliness of him and his rule. When that's the case, we can't but conclude that we are sinners.

And how on earth could one such as Jesus draw near to me? But, draw near he does. Notice Jesus' response to Simon isn't to cast him aside.

[15:09] It's to commission him. Why does Luke begin with this miracle that no one else gives airtime to? Because Luke's headline regarding Jesus dealing with sinners is that he rescues them to join with him in his mission to the world.

Look at verse 10. Jesus doesn't say in response to Simon, Oh, yuck! Away with you! He doesn't say, Oh, dear, I've misjudged you. Yes, you are a sinner.

Now, look at his tender, beautiful, gracious response. He doesn't deny that Simon's a sinner. Instead, he just says, Do not be afraid. From now on, you'll be catching men.

Now, of course, we know that Simon was to become an apostle, and that was a unique role. But Luke hasn't told us that yet. The apostles aren't appointed until chapter 6.

And here, Luke simply gives a picture of Jesus saving people for service. Jesus' salvation repurposes people for glorious service in his kingdom.

[16:16] Jesus doesn't leave us feeling morbid about our sin. When he draws near to us in salvation, he doesn't call us to ongoing introspection about how wretched a sinner I am. No.

He calls us to service. Listen to Ralph Davis. He says, There are some believers who can get verse 8 into their mouths, but can't get verse 10 into their ears.

Isn't it heartening to consider what Jesus' response was not? He doesn't say, I'll have to up sticks and start with somebody else. Jesus' comeback was, From now on, I have work for you.

Jesus doesn't throw his sin-riddled servants under the bus. He says, I think I can use you. I have work for you to do.

Jesus' salvation takes our emptiness and transforms us for fruitfulness in his kingdom. No matter our background, no matter the mess that we've made, he says, Don't fret.

[17:19] I can use sinners. So friends, when we feel terribly conscious about our sin, that doesn't make us useless in Jesus' kingdom.

Quite the opposite. Here with Simon, it is when he recognizes his sin that Jesus says, I can use you. And so, from verse 5, Toiling under the curse that was brought forth on work, Jesus brings fruitful purpose.

He expands our vistas beyond the daily grind of work, good and right as it is, yet loaded with frustration. He expands our vistas to see and to be part of something that ripples into eternity.

Verse 10, you'll be catching men. Well, that's the first wonderful picture of salvation.

The second, the miraculous cleansing, verses 12 to 16. And in that, we see that Jesus' salvation removes sin's separation, granting fellowship with God himself.

[18:27] Simon's instinct that is sin not to see Jesus depart from him is not wholly wrong. Sin does create a real and a significant barrier between man and God. And that's what we see here with a leper.

Now, you'll see in the footnote there that the word leper was used for a variety of skin diseases, not just about leprosy as we know it. And Leviticus 13 details that those who suffer these skin conditions would need to be completely isolated.

They should wear clothes that make plain their uncleanness. They would have to call out to anyone who comes close that they are unclean. Stay away from me, I'm unclean. They would be outside the camp, living alone, in all of their uncleanness, lest they spread it to someone else.

And so leprosy pictured very plainly that God in his holiness could not commune with those who are unclean, with those who are stained and tainted by sin.

Well, verse 12, there came a man full of leprosy. Or a better translation is probably, behold, a man full of leprosy.

[19:36] There's a hint of surprise to this. He should have been in isolation. What's he doing here? But here he is, and he comes in desperation to Jesus. Word had spread of Jesus' miracles and teaching.

And so likely this leper, who was not full of leprosy, thought that maybe, maybe, just maybe, Jesus can help me. But he isn't sure, is he?

He begs, and then verse 13, he says, if you will. I don't think the doubt here is about Jesus' authority or even Jesus' character. I think this is all reflective of the dreadful condition that this man was in.

Completely cut off from all contact, from all relationships, from all hope. Unloved and unlovable. Unlovable. And he says, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

And look at what Jesus does. He does two things. He reaches out and touches the man who'd been starved of contact. And he says, I will be clean.

[20:47] Jesus doesn't just command, be clean. He actually touches, just as he had done in Capernaum, where Luke was showing us Jesus' great patience, touching all. Compassion overflows in Jesus' ministry as much as his power.

He reaches out and touches. But notice, Jesus does have to make the man clean. He doesn't just excuse sin or ignore it. He doesn't say, oh, it's no big deal.

Everyone else should be touching you. No, he speaks words of cleansing. But he also reaches out in great reassurance to this man who'd only ever known separation to say that neither was communion and fellowship.

James Phillips says, what Jesus did here, the touch he gave the leper, is simply a parable of his incarnation in which he came in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, taking our sinful flesh, identifying himself with it, touching it, yet not being defiled in order to take its defilement away. The leper was the spreader of uncleanness, of pollution, but Jesus was and Jesus is the spreader of cleanness. His word transforms his cleanness, overpowers and subdues and eliminates all impurity.

[22 : 07] There's no better detergent and rinse-seed than the words of the Lord Jesus. His words tear down the barrier, the chasm that would otherwise exist between a holy and glorious Lord and wretched and wicked people.

So much so that Jesus can reach out and touch the leper. And so much so that God's spirit can really and truly join us to the Lord Jesus.

So that we can new and fellowship with God himself. So that God himself can really be present with us daily by his spirit and be present with us week by week here right now as we gather.

But how does it happen that we can move from separation to fellowship? Well, it's by coming to Jesus saying, if you will, you can make me clean.

That's real faith, isn't it? And what's Jesus' response? It's always the same to the sinner who comes to him with their sin. He says, I will be clean.

[23 : 17] Now some of us, I'm sure, will really wrestle with how on earth Jesus could ever use us. My mess is too big. Maybe you look around at other Christians and you're despondent because nobody else has your past, your addictions, your particular brand of folly.

No one has done the sin that you've done that's wreaked havoc. And everyone else seems to have it all together, but you are so conscious of your mess.

Maybe you feel like Jesus could never rescue you, never mind use you for his service. Well, listen to Jesus' precious words. He says, I will be clean.

These words are certainly precious to me in all of my sin. Jesus says, I will deal with it. Be clean. And this cleansed man then is sent to the priests.

Notice the law doesn't go out the window with Jesus. No, verse 14, go to the priest, carry through Leviticus' requirements, be certified clean, and be a witness to the priest that whilst they can deem people to be clean or unclean, be a witness that there is one, the Lord Jesus, who can actually cleanse people.

[24 : 37] The big point of this miracle is that in Jesus, those who are cut off from God, those who couldn't ever know relationship with him, could now be brought near in Jesus.

And so the man goes to make the offering, verse 14. And we've seen in previous weeks that Jesus' wilderness temptations were a kind of day of atonement before his glorious year of Jubilee.

And it's worth noting that the goal of the sacrificial system, all these sacrifices, the day of atonement, the sacrifice that was going to be made here, the goal of all these sacrifices and offerings was so that God could dwell with his people and have real communion with them, that he could eat with them.

And Luke is telling us that in Jesus, that fellowship and communion can now be known like never before. That's the miraculous cleansing.

Thirdly, the miraculous cure, verses 17 to 26, we see that Jesus' salvation rescues his people from sin's slavery, granting forgiveness from God himself.

[25 : 50] In verse 17, Luke uniquely records that the teachers of the law were sitting around from all of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And this term for teachers of the law is used only once in the Gospels and it's right here.

And it's Luke making clear that gathering to Jesus were the professors of theology for the professing church of the day. And verse 18, in the midst of all this, suddenly some men bring a paralytic to try and reach Jesus.

Verse 19, they need to be inventive and persistent to find a way. And then verse 20, Jesus notices what they've done and look at what he says.

Having spotted the faith of the men, Jesus says to the man, your sins are forgiven you. Now before we get to the explosiveness of Jesus' words, notice the best of friends are those who take their

loved ones, those who take the ones they care about who are in need and have a lack to the place where Jesus is, to the place where Jesus speaks, to the place where Jesus ministers.

Notice, it was their faith that prompted Jesus to arise faith and forgiveness in the paralytic. The ministry we have with friends and loved ones is an important one.

[27 : 14] It's something to think about, isn't it? Do you trust that your faith might be the means of Jesus bringing salvation to your loved ones? When we care enough for our friends and have confidence enough in Jesus to bring them to him, he can powerfully work to rescue them.

Well, verse 20, Jesus' words to this man, your sins are forgiven. Jesus is dealing first off with the paralytic's real need, not his physical paralysis, but his slavery to sin.

Jesus' words aren't to say that you will be forgiven or you can be forgiven. Jesus himself actually forgives this man.

The standout point here isn't that forgiveness was possible. There was a whole sacrificial system that enabled and promised forgiveness. That isn't new. The shock here is that Jesus personally was the one who has authority to forgive sin here and now.

Of course, the theology professors are tied in knots by this blasphemy. They have one of two conclusions that they can reach.

[28 : 26] Is Jesus divine or is he deceptive? They say, God alone can forgive sins. Notice Jesus' words to the theologians.

What's easier to say? Is it easier to say you're forgiven or get up and walk? They question Jesus and what authority he can forgive.

But Jesus' response was to prove that his words aren't empty. If he had simply said your sins are forgiven, who would know if it was true? But by saying get up and walk, Jesus proves that he's either divine or deceptive.

And surprise, surprise, at Jesus' command, the man gets up and walks. And so this miracle of healing confirms the truth, verse 24, that Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins.

The theologians are faced with a stunning reality. Better Bible handling won't ever heal the sick. Greater clarity on their theological arguments won't forgive sin. But here before them was one who could do both because it was God incarnate.

[29 : 42] Now, we mustn't read to find a connection here between sickness and sin. Jesus holds them separately. The healing happens to make plain that he has authority.

The man was already forgiven before he was healed. But this miracle does picture that Jesus' salvation deals with the enslavement of sin and it deals with it now.

in front of their very eyes on earth, not far away, not ethereal, not at the last day of judgment, but right in front of them was one who could forgive sins and release from bondage.

Jesus' salvation offers forgiveness and release now. Jesus had authority on earth to forgive sins and of course it won't be until the last day that we will finally see that reality and be seen to be fully and finally vindicated.

But, by faith now, we really do know forgiveness. It is ours now. Jesus really can release us from the power of sin.

[30 : 52] And so, Jesus' salvation, we've seen, grants forgiveness for sin. It restores us to fellowship with God and it repurposes us to be fruitful for Christ's kingdom.

We've seen the resplendence of salvation pictured. But Luke goes on in verses 27 to 39 to show us the radical nature of sin, the radical nature of salvation proclaimed.

The radical nature of salvation proclaimed, verses 27 to 39. Jesus' salvation enacts deep and radical change in the believer. Those who truly encounter Jesus for who he is have their whole lives transformed.

And Luke shows us this by using two different descriptions of Jesus, the doctor and the bridegroom. So, first, the doctor. Do you see verse 31? Jesus is the physician come for the sick.

And he's not come just to put a plaster on a cut finger. No, verse 32, the sick are those who are riddled with the deathly disease of sin. And so, Dr. Jesus calls and cures a tax collector, verses 27 and 28, Levi.

[32 : 13] Now, tax collectors were the lowest of the low in Jewish thinking. Tax collectors were collaborators and facilitators in rooms ongoing occupation of Israel. They were extortioners.

But here we see Levi's call is simple and beautiful. An outcast as far as the professing church were concerned. But at Jesus' command, a saved sinner set apart for service.

But as that happens and as is so common, where there is a great work of salvation that sees rescue coming to undeserving sinners, there will be some who grumble with a sense of indignation, just as the religious leaders of the day do in verse 30.

See what they're saying? Jesus, what are you doing with these people? Ugh! These people who deserve nothing. These people who are a stain on the world.

It lurks within many a heart to feel smug about the sins of others whilst being dim to one's own state.

[33 : 23] But wonderfully, Jesus isn't like that at all, is he? No, verse 31. Jesus has come for the sick. Do you see, he is the doctor, but he hasn't come to heal ailments.

He's come to the spiritually sick, to sinners, to bring a cure that brings new life to those who otherwise are indelibly marked by death. The Lord Jesus does not shy away from sinners.

He doesn't keep his distance from the filthy. He keeps his distance from those who have no need of him. He doesn't come for the so-called righteous. The self-righteous religious have no need for Jesus, so they think.

Dr. Jesus comes to heal the sinner, and heal the sinner he does. And notice that Jesus' cure is always accompanied with his power to transform. Look at how this played out for Levi.

His old life was left behind, life of sin and emptiness, and it's turned around 180 degrees. Instead of taking from people, verse 29, what does he do?

[34 : 32] He gives to people, gathering all kinds of the morally derided for a great feast, so that they could recline with Jesus. Levi gathered those he knew, those who were like him.

That's all we can do, isn't it? We can only bring those we knew to the Lord Jesus, that's what Levi did, but those we knew we really can bring to the Lord Jesus. Levi's life is transformed.

Now he gives what he has so that others can receive the healing balm of Dr. Jesus. Remember the down-to-earth repentance that John the Baptist spoke of in chapter 3?

It was all pretty much about money, wasn't it? And that's what we see here. Levi goes from taking to giving, and he pours out his wealth into Christ's mission.

He joyfully invests his life and wealth in the kingdom of God. Friends, Jesus' work of salvation within us opens up our homes and our wallets for him and for others.

[35 : 39] One of the great evidences of Jesus' wonderful healing at work in a believer is generosity of heart and wallets to the Lord, to his work, and to his people. Our wallets and our homes oughtn't to be beyond the reach of Jesus.

Dr. Jesus brings healing that produces consecration. Levi gives his life, his home, his means for the use of the Lord Jesus. But more than that, Jesus brings healing that produces communion.

Levi feasts in joy with Jesus because of what he's received. And this is where the bridegroom comes in. Because Jesus' cure is an experience of a new and renewed sense of joy, sorry, because Jesus' cure is an experience of a new and renewed sense of joy that is from beyond this world.

There can be great rejoicing in it. That's what's behind Jesus' response to the religious leaders.

They have another sickeningly pious and miserly question in verse 33.

Everybody else's disciples fast. Notice they fast often. But the reality is there was only one fast laid out in the law in Leviticus 16.

[36 : 59] It was to be once a year. Isaiah tells us that fasting was a means of displaying sorrow over sin. They asked Jesus, why don't yours fast?

Where is our recognition and reward for being more serious about fasting than even you? Indeed, we see later on in Luke chapter 18, don't we? The Pharisees go to the temple and thank God that he isn't like that poor tax collector over there because I fast twice a week.

Meanwhile, the tax collector can't look up. He instead beats his breast in sorrow over his sin, crying out for mercy. Well, when someone cries out for mercy, what should be the response when that mercy is received?

It should be rejoicing, shouldn't it? Celebrating that a wonderful and miraculous work of God has brought forgiveness to the filthy, cleansing to the corrupt. But the self-righteous, those who see no need for Dr.

Jesus, will only ever cling miserably to their self-righteousness. What about our fasting? Verse 34, Jesus said, the time to fast isn't when the bridegroom is present.

[38 : 21] The time to show sorrow for sin isn't when Jesus has just rescued you. When salvation enters your house, it isn't a cause of sorrow, but rejoicing. There will be a time of sorrow, says

Jesus.

The cross was to come and his people would share in his tribulations. But now, when salvation has walked in and turned everything around, that's a time for rejoicing.

Jesus is saying, you don't have a birthday party without cake. You don't celebrate a ten-year wedding anniversary with a few leaves of salad. No, it's fillet steak and the best of wine.

Levi's response is the obvious response. Jesus, the bridegroom, had walked into his life and brought radical salvation to him.

And a feast was the most fitting thing in the world. Only the grumblingly self-righteous could miss that. Friends, if our Christian lives are marked by dreary introspection and fixation on every sin that we've committed, Jesus says, I've come to heal the sick and we should take him at his word.

[39 : 33] There's a time to rejoice and celebrate the forgiveness that Jesus brings to us because he is both doctor and bridegroom. And a day is coming when we will gather at the great wedding feast.

A day when we will know by sight that all of our sin is dealt with forever. And we'll know the complete joy of being in God's presence fully and finally. You see, Jesus' salvation isn't just a little top-up to life.

It isn't an add-on. I don't know about you, but I find it terribly annoying the constant updating that one has to do on one's phone. Software updates, app updates, patches for all these different things.

Well, Jesus' salvation isn't simply a little update that fixes a few bugs. No, it's something that affects us to our very core, to the root. Because Jesus is the fulfillment of all prophetic expectation.

That's what we really see in these last verses. Jesus isn't like a little patch of cloth that you stick onto a hole, verse 36. He isn't just a teacher with a new interpretation of the law to add some more fasting on.

[40 : 47] Levi wasn't suddenly called to do better, to follow the latest skewing of God's law like the Pharisees like to do. Levi wasn't upgraded, he didn't have a few bugs ironed out, he was transformed.

Because Jesus' salvation creates a new man, a new heart, a new purpose, and a new cleanness. Because a new era has dawned, the year of the Lord's favor through the victory of God's kingdom, where the fullness of all that was promised and spoken of has arrived.

The age of promise with all of its shadows, its temple, priests, and sacrifices, good as they were, that age gives way to the age of fulfillment, where the curse could actually be undone.

And the glory of God's kingdom could and would fill the whole earth through the one who would fully and finally deal with sin. The bridegroom himself has arrived, the one that all these things always spoke of.

And so it would be mad to try and cling on to the shadows, or worse, to say to the great sin doctrine bridegroom, what about my fasting? No, Jesus' salvation radically transforms a new man, a new heart, a new purpose, a new cleanness, because a new era has dawned.

[42 : 10] To try and be like the Pharisees, patching pieces onto their old clothing, a bit of extra fasting, or to cling on to the rituals that spoke professionally instead of taking hold of the fulfillment.

Verse 36, that's like ruining a new pair of trousers to fix an old pair. You end up with two that are ruined. Or it's like verse 37, ruining both new wine and old wineskins.

No, Jesus' radical salvation creates a new man, a new heart, a new purpose, and a new cleanness. A key step in salvation history is before then. All the priests and sacrifices would give way to Jesus, the one they always spoke of, the one that they participated in, but also anticipated.

The age of fulfillment is here. And so Jesus' people will know a complete transformation from emptiness and frustration to fruitfulness for Jesus' eternal kingdom, from separation to fellowship with God through Jesus, from sin's slavery, to forgiveness right now through Christ.

A salvation that takes grim and godless tax collectors and sinners and makes them generous gospel servants, that makes the sick well, that turns sorrow and sadness to rejoicing.

[43 : 33] And so, verse 39, there's a choice, new or old, as long as we keep sipping the old wine, that's all we'll ever want.

As long as we keep Jesus at arm's length, as long as we try and hide our disease from him, as long as we hold up our self-righteousness, what about our fasting? As long as we do these things, we're sipping the old wine that we've acquired a taste for.

And to do so is to remain riddled with the disease of sin and without hope of the radical transformation that Jesus promises and produces. Old or new, I doubt that the paralytic or the leper or Levi were dying to get back to their old lives.

They tasted the new wine, the fulfillment. The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Jesus says, I will be clean.

And Jesus says, fear not. From now on, you'll be catching men. Let's pray. Gracious Father, grant us your grace.

[45 : 05] so that nothing would ever get in the way of receiving fully from Jesus the wonders of all that he's accomplished. Renew your joy in your Son and fit us ever more for your service.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.