

Luke 5:17-26
“Scribes and Men”

(Introduction.)

Last week we began a new sermon series called "A Better Way: Living in the Gospel". We are studying the Gospel of Luke. We are all always looking for more ways to live a meaningful life. But what we really need is a gospel that is even better than those good things. We will study the Gospel of Luke, especially the contrasting pairs of Scriptures. Let us clarify what the gospel is, what it means to live the gospel, and what it means to walk by faith.

Why did I decide to do this sermon series...? The Grace Church Planting Network, which serves an urban, gospel-centered church planting movement, holds regular movement meetings with church planters and pastors to encourage each other. I was preparing for one movement meeting to learn about gospel theology.

I then realized that the author, Luke, may have intentionally placed the story of the rich young leader in the second half of Luke 18 and the story of Zacchaeus in chapter 19 to be read in a comparative and contrasting manner. Both the young leader and Zacchaeus are rich. One is well behaved and the other is a gangster. It was the gangster Zacchaeus who believed in Jesus and was saved, while the morally upright man did not believe in Jesus. They are both rich, but they are in stark contrast, and from this we can see what the gospel is all about.

Then I also noticed that the same kind of pairs are found throughout the Gospel of Luke. One after another, we find the old priest Zacharias and the young girl Mary, the town elder and his close friend sent to Jesus by the centurion, the sisters Martha and Mary, the two prodigal sons, the two robbers crucified on either side of Jesus, and so on.

For example, in the pair of Zacharias and Mary we saw last week, the biblical language itself (the message the angel Gabriel spoke to each) is very similar, yet their responses are the exact opposite. They are written with the obvious intent to compare and contrast.

Luke 1:13,14 "But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.'"

Luke 1:30-32 "And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.'"

He tells them, "Do not be afraid," calls out their names, prefaces them with grace, and declares that they will give birth to a son. The names are announced as John and Jesus, respectively. The nature of the children is revealed, John brings joy and Jesus is the Son of the Great and High God. Exactly the same format! But the reactions are diametrically opposed.

Today's Scripture, as we have just seen, is not written to compare and contrast as clearly as it was last week. However, the scribes and men who appear before Jesus are a very interesting

pair to compare in their attitudes and beliefs. The contrast is especially apparent in light of the cultural and religious environment of the time.

Luke 5:17-26

We will focus on two points from this passage. First, we will look at the wonderful work of Jesus among the contrasting scribes and men. Jesus offers forgiveness of sins, heals the sick, and restores individual lives and society. Rediscover how beautiful and powerful the grace of the gospel of Jesus is.

And second, compare and contrast the way of life of believing in Jesus, comparing the scribes and men, and close up the fullness of God's power in the love that works through faith. In doing so, let us learn how each of us can believe and live the gospel.

1. Forgiveness of sins and holistic restoration

The opening verses of today's Scriptures, verses 17-18, reveal the context in which Jesus performed grace. The author, Luke, emphasizes that the episode of Jesus' miraculous healing took place among people with conflicting reactions: the Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had already begun to harbor ill feelings, and the sick and men who came to Jesus in expectation.

First, in verse 17, the Pharisees and teachers of the law who came to watch over Jesus are emphasized. Then, in verse 18, the faithful men who brought the sick man are talked about. Verses 17-18 are a description of the situation, and at the center of it is the statement, "Jesus was healing the sick by the power of the Lord." So it is as if he is implicitly asking, "Which people do you resemble, the scribes or the men?"

Furthermore, apart from these two types of people here, there is also a third party. It is the "multitude. They are the crowds that had gathered to hear Jesus' teachings. They are clearly portrayed as those who hinder the healing of the sick. The multitudes are interested in Jesus. They were attentive to his teachings. Unfortunately, they were preventing the men from bringing the sick to Jesus.

Because when the sick were brought in, they should have been kindly minded and made way for them so that they could be brought before Jesus. They did not do so because to the people of that time, the infirm were regarded as God-forsaken and unclean. He was not pitied but looked down upon very much. He did not need to be taken into consideration in the community.

However, in Jesus who heals men, the power of the Lord, the power of God, is at work. Immediately before, in verse 16, we read, "Jesus Himself retreated to a lonely place to pray." This is a very good thing. Jesus is retreating from popularity and reputation. It means that He is simply trusting in God and working according to His will. The reason Jesus is able to perform salvation in love even in the face of opposition, abuse, and persecution is because He trusts in God and God Himself is working His almighty power in Jesus.

Then Jesus declares the forgiveness of sins with authority over the sick man brought to him by the men (presumably his friends). He healed the sick. He even restored them to the community. Jesus' healing, deliverance, or salvation is a manifestation of grace that restores all of our minds, bodies, and social relationships.

After the forgiveness of sins is declared in verse 20, this healing event is interrupted by the quibbling of the scribes. So it would be easy for us who read this to think of the forgiveness of sins and the healing of the sick as if they were two separate things. Or we may tend to interpret it as if Jesus here gave only the forgiveness of sins, and understand the healing of the sick as a sign of the forgiveness of sins, added later.

But originally Jesus may have been trying to bring the salvation of the Kingdom of God to this sick person by proclaiming verses 20 and 24 in one breath. In other words, it goes like this. 'Friend, your sins are forgiven. I say to you. Get up. Take your bed and go home.' This is an event that fits perfectly with Jesus' ministry.

Jesus quotes from Isaiah in Luke 4:18, 19, 21. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." "And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

We see three aspects of the salvation that Jesus brings to us. They are the forgiveness of sins, the healing of the body, and the restoration of community. The forgiveness of sins for the restoration of our relationship with God is the core of salvation, or salvation as a whole. This is because sin, which is separation from God and disobedience to God and unbelief, is right in the middle of our brokenness and has a negative impact on everything we do.

And Jesus is the Savior who brings not only healing of heart and soul, but also physical healing and resurrection. We are not created with a mind and a body, because God created us as a being of mind and body. The mind affects the body, and when the body is in pain, the mind is also in pain. Jesus gave forgiveness of sins and healing of the body in an instant, but now that He is in heaven, He will give us His resurrection body at His Second Coming, when He will come to us again. So we will have to wait a while longer, but the gospel will bring holistic restoration.

Furthermore, Jesus regenerates our community - not simply our relationships, but the whole world. Jesus tells the man healed of the gout to go home. He is no longer unclean. He is a person who displays the glory of God. He has been sent home to rejoice in God and to serve his community in love. His presence clearly testifies to the reality of the gospel of Jesus.

Therefore, those who witnessed the forgiveness of sins and the healing of diseases, or holistic salvation, were amazed at the fulfillment of what had been prophesied in Isaiah. And just as Jesus himself said in Luke 4, "Today this word of Scripture has come true."

5:26 And all the people were greatly amazed, and glorified God. And they were filled with fear, saying. We have seen marvelous things today."

Jesus is speaking to you. "Listen to me. If you believe in me and take hold of me, I will truly fill you. If you disobey me, I will always forgive you. For I am the only Savior who can do so."

2. Living the gospel

Why is it that so many people cannot believe in such a wonderful message? How can the reality of Jesus' salvation as described in the Bible be ours? The key lies in the attitude of the heart of the "scribes and men".

The Pharisees and scribes harbor doubts about Jesus' authority to proclaim the forgiveness of sins. They kept God's Word (the Law) well. They wanted the law to be done right in their daily lives so that God would be pleased and His excellencies would be revealed. Therefore, they were respected and held in high esteem by the people. In other words, they had confidence in themselves as leaders of society.

In Luke 5:21, the Scribes and Pharisees were having various thoughts. "And the scribes and Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"

My brothers and sisters, this idea of theirs is certainly a valid one. Only God can forgive sins. And they judged the words and deeds of Jesus based on their own correct knowledge. One scribe had come all the way from Jerusalem, but not because of personal interest. It is telling that the Jerusalem authorities had already launched a formal investigation into Jesus. They have authority and they are righteous people. They were also valued and respected by the people.

In contrast, what about the men who brought the sick to Jesus? Unknown to them, they came to Jesus (motivated by love and friendship) only to ask for the healing of their sick friend. They were in despair. They knew they were weak and helpless. They came to Jesus knowing that nothing in the world could fix it.

In other words, they were humble enough to admit their own weakness and insufficiency. The Bible teaches that this kind of humility, a faith that acknowledges and repents of being a sinner, realizing one's own unworthiness before God, and relying solely on Jesus, is the pathway to salvation.

In Luke 5:31, Jesus replied to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Not being humble enough and seeing yourself as righteous prevents you from believing. Righteousness does not require Jesus. Self-confidence and pride are the reasons for rejecting the Savior. See that Jesus Himself humbled Himself, that He followed Himself to the death of the cross, and that in that humility is salvation.

Recently, the concept of "time performance," which emphasizes productivity per hour, has been attracting attention. Cost performance (cospa) expresses "effectiveness (satisfaction) for the time spent" and "the idea of getting as much good as possible in as little time as possible. It is not bad. It is a good thing.

According to one survey, one in three people in their 20s to 60s and nearly half of those in their 20s say they have "watched movies, dramas, and other video content at 'double speed. Many people want to speed up their lives, but according to another survey, nearly 70% feel "pressed for time," and nearly 50% say that feeling is "stronger" than before. The report sounds a warning against the "productivity trap," in which "the more efficient you are, the busier you become. (Asahi Shimbun DIGITAL)

It is right and good, but it also causes people to suffer, hurts them, and creates strain in society. Because it is right and good, and because it produces good results, it is difficult to let go of. In exchange, it produces illness, depression, addiction (e.g., smartphone addiction), etc.

My brothers and sisters, therefore, we who are broken because of sin need a true Savior. We need the authority and forgiving power of the One who is the Son of God. But to humble ourselves and believe in order to accept this One does not make us "weak". It is usually ridiculed that believing in religion is something weak people do.

I urge you to look at the "men" who appeared before Jesus. It is not often that we see such a courageous and bold attitude and action as these men. They went up on the roof of someone else's house and pulled off the roof tiles. What a nuisance! An enthusiast riot! I would like to criticize them severely, but there is no account of this turn of events. But this is not described, because the boldness of their faith was desperately needed at that time. The people said, "Today we have seen an amazing thing. They praised God, praised Jesus, and rejoiced over the wonderful event.

The faith of the men worked out of love. The Bible does not say, and I am speculating, but perhaps the healed man himself and the men repaired the house and testified to the reality of living the gospel. The gospel of Jesus gives us both humility and boldness. May you all embrace the more excellent way and live the gospel.