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Luke

Chapter 5 - An Unconventional Intent
A Different Kind of Fulfillment (vs. 33-35)

Luke 5:33-35: And they said to Him, “The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.” And Jesus said to them, “You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? “But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.”

I've really enjoyed this study in the Gospel of Luke. Of course, come to think of it, I kind of like all the books. But this book in particular is telling me that nothing is as it seems; that we don't actually think right, and that which

you would perceive to be perhaps the way to go is not. As you begin to see God work, you realize that “Wow, my ways are not His ways. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His ways greater than mine.” And I come to that conclusion as we go, in particular in the Book of Luke, as we see the working of God and what He came for and what He's doing. It's truly an unconventional intent, isn't it? That Christ would come, not necessarily for the righteous.

In fact, if you pick up with me in Luke 5:32, it reads this way,

“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

That's pretty unconventional because I would think that if you were going to demonstrate the great righteousness of God before men and proclaim the great kingdom of God before men, that you would start with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the experts of religion, and yet these are not the ones. The ones that He calls are sinners for the purpose of repenting. Now, once again, repentance is a change of your way of thinking; the

changing of your mind. That's quite an ordeal when you consider that's a miracle in and of itself. I mean, it's far easier to heal a paralytic than it is to change his way of thinking and forgive his sins.

So, as we come to this chapter 5 in particular, we see in many respects this whole narrative explaining what it means to have your whole being changed. We have values, we have views that we take, we have beliefs that we live by, and with those beliefs we form this thing called an attitude. The attitude that we have is the way we feel towards something. So, we hear somebody say something and we respond by virtue of the attitude that we have, because we have certain values, we have certain beliefs, we have certain views that have permeated our being and infiltrated the way that we think. And because of this, we are actually led by those attitudes.

As we come to the end of the passage that we're looking at today specifically, we understand that there is a taste that we acquire for the things that we are drawn to.

What's bizarre, as we look in particular in Luke 5, we see that the religious people are having a hard time

understanding what Jesus is doing. In fact, they don't really understand why He's not falling in line with the way that they think. They have certain things that they do; fast and pray on certain times. It is very your ritualistic, systematic, "Why aren't you falling in line with this?" And Jesus gives the interesting example of, "Well, because it's a wedding. I mean, the bridegroom is here. We're celebrating something." And you get this feeling like we're talking about two different things. On the one hand, we're talking about duty and things that we have to do and that sense of law, that sense of responsibility, and the other is "We're just having a good time," and a change of heart by virtue of desires changing. It's a different kind of attitude. So, that's what we're going to be talking about today specifically.

How do you change someone's attitude about something? Psychologists will say the most difficult thing that you could ever do is to change an attitude, that in many respects, it's almost an impossibility. Jesus will talk to a rich young ruler. Matthew will actually call him young. Luke will make reference to the fact that he had a

lot of money. But he comes to Jesus and he says, "What good thing do I have to do to enter in?" And of course, Jesus goes through the laws. He says, "Well, I've pretty much done those things." He goes, "Well, I'll tell you what, sell everything you have. Give to the poor. Follow Me." And Scripture says he couldn't do that. Then Jesus turns and He looks at His disciples and He goes, "It's really hard for a rich man to come into the kingdom of heaven. It's like a camel through the eye of a needle." And they go, "Well, who can be saved? If rich people can't be saved, who can be?" Because I guess they figure you might be able to buy your way in, and you begin to realize it's impossible to change somebody's way of thinking when their views and their values is placed in money, and now the very thing that you've worked hard all your life for, He's asking you to completely give up. That's impossible. How do you cause somebody to think differently about that? I love the phrase that Jesus tacks on at the end, "With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible." And we begin to realize that a change of your heart, the change of my heart, repentance, the change in our way of thinking is a

miracle. It has to be. Scripture will tell us that there is a tilling of the soil, so to speak, as Paul will make reference to this in 1 Corinthians 3, and he'll say, "I planted, Apollos water, but it was God who caused the growth." That's a very interesting picture in which we're involved in the process, but we're not the ones that make it grow. I mean, that's a Divine act, a dead seed, and it grows. What happens? That's a God thing, and Scripture reveals to us over and over again that there has to be an efficacious and effectual work by God in order for us to change radically; in order for us to think differently. What Scripture then begins to emphasize, in particular, in this passage, is that change has to be so radical that it can't be attached to anything. I mean, it has to be a complete change. Jesus will say to Nicodemus, "You have to be born again." I mean, of course, Nicodemus had gone through all the schools, all the studies, has his degrees and pedigrees, and now he's a member of the Sanhedrin, and the thought is, "I'm almost there." And He goes, "Not even close. Born again." And you realize that it's like we're dealing with a whole new life.

The way that it would be put in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

It is this point that Jesus is going to be emphasizing, and it is this point in the context of the different narratives, in particular, the different situations that we see in Luke 5.

We see Peter, who is mending his nets, he's working hard with his nets. While Jesus is talking to the multitudes, he's focusing on business, and there is something in so many of us that our thought is, “God helps those who help themselves.” Which is not biblical, but it's oftentimes repeated. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't work hard. Scripture says work hard with your hands. Scripture says do your work heartily as for the Lord, but you and I aren't the ones that sustain us. You and I are the ones that are sustained by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. We're sustained by God. In Him, we live and breathe and have our existence. So, we believe this and we walk by this. Nevertheless, as we come to this passage, it's going to be reminding us that there are things that we are naturally drawn to because we grow up

with views and values and beliefs, and probably Peter was one that grew up in a household that you work hard, and you work hard enough, you buy a boat. You buy a boat and you have a business, and you go fishing and you sustain yourself, and these are all good things. But Jesus is in their midst, and He's proclaiming a gospel that is literally going to change everything and in order for Peter to be all in, he's got to throw down everything he's ever known and literally follow Him, which he will do within the passage. But I think it is an interesting point that what we have is somebody that is literally immersed in his sense of career, in his job and whatever, because he's mending the nets. "Why aren't you talking with Jesus? Why aren't you with the multitude? Why aren't you listening to the words?" He's fished hard all night; he's worked hard. He's got nets to mend, and he's got another day. He didn't make any money today; that means he has to work twice as hard tomorrow. And Jesus will come into his life and so change his life that even though Christ will have it to where he'll catch more fish than he probably ever has, he'll drop it and say, "I have no words to say" as he stands before God. There's a change in his life.

There's an individual that has lived selfishly all of his life, as somebody that pursued his own desires, and what did he get for it, but filth and pain, and as he comes before God with all of his leprosy, the only thing he can cry out is, "I need to be clean." And Christ cleans him.

Another becomes dependent upon all the people around them as the paralytic and his main concern is whatever they think, and God takes him totally out of his dependence and says, "Why don't you take up your bed and why don't you walk?" And everything has changed. I mean, think about how radically. This guy has been lying in bed all day and now he's walking with the bed. That's a radical change.

The same thing is going to be true as Jesus goes into the tax office with Levi, and here's somebody that thought that their life was pretty much over. He was an outcast of his own people. He was hated by all the Jews because he was a tax collector. He had basically become a traitor to his people. You've actually burned all your bridges. You're not going to come back out of that, are you? Not going to happen. Jesus walks in his office and everything changes.

“Come follow Me.” And he follows Him. In all of the celebration, all the joy, I mean, he can't contain it. He's got to invite his friends, and they all come, and they join in the celebration, the party, and then you have the party poopers that have to come in, and they go, “What are you guys having a party for? These guys are sinners.” And Jesus goes, “These are the guys that I came for. It's not you guys, it's these guys. See the joy on their faces? See the happiness? They want to be with Me.” And you could see the radical change in their lives.

One of the things I love about psychology is that, as I've often said, they develop and have developed throughout the years, great observational skills. They are lousy when it comes to fixing the problem, but they are really good at observation. One of the things that they did an interesting study about was the study of changing attitudes. How do you change attitudes? Because once again, it's always been an enigma to people that study the mind. How does the mind work? And they go into the whole cortex thing and stuff like that, which is futile in and of itself. But as they began to break it down, they began to realize that

there were certain things that could begin to break through a person's values and their beliefs and their views and the things that they hold onto and even their attitude towards something. There are certain things that begin to break through those and cause them to begin to change. I'd like to just mention four of them in particular that they mentioned.

Systematic processing. Now, systematic processing just put in very simple words, is basically a person sits down, and they hear a message and the message in and of itself has a content that convinces them. I oftentimes think of the word of God and of course, Scripture says, "How shall they hear unless they hear the message? How shall they know, how shall they believe, unless they hear the message?" So, you begin to realize that the message itself is being processed by some. They're listening to it, and they're going, "That content is something that is valuable." It begins to not only make sense to them, but to the point of causing them to use their mind to think through the process. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 talks about the fact of singing and praying, and he says, "When you

sing and pray, you want to pray and sing in the Spirit, but you also want to pray with the mind.” It's a very interesting text, isn't it? Believe it or not, God has actually created the mind too, and He wants us to use the mind. The message that He gives us makes sense if in fact you're desiring truth. As I was talking to somebody before the service, they said, “It's not a complicated thing. You're coming to truth. So, truth is obvious, transparent; it's absolute. There's no changing it. It's always been, but it's very simple. You just come and the way that we're saved is you come and all you have to do is admit the truth.” Are you perfect? No. Ok, you're not perfect. So, that's really easy to admit. Is God perfect? Is He holy? Is He just? Is He righteous? Yes. Ok, that's the truth. I'm good with that. So, if that's true, I'm not perfect, He is, then what do I need? A savior. I need somebody to save me because I can't be perfect. I can't do these things. So, I call upon the name of the One who calls Himself Savior, and He saves me. Not a complicated process. We hear this message, and we hear the love of God, and that's the second point.

People are drawn to that which stirs emotions. You're actually emotional creatures, and God uses these things within us. He wants us to feel deeply. In fact, you shall "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul." I mean, we're talking about emotion here; with all your might and strength. So, as you hear the love of God, you hear what He's done on the cross, it begins to move us, begins to motivate us. I could just imagine, and it seemed to really play a very strong role in one of the soldiers at the cross. Remember, as he seeing Christ and then he sees the way that Christ handles this, and he goes, "Surely this was the Son of God." So, that emotional response begins to stir within our lives and I personally think as you go into Luke 18, and you see that wonderful story of Zaccheus, which he's a very curious tax collector. He climbs up in a tree to see Christ, and once again, you have a Jew that was clearly on the outskirts and probably more so than any other of the tax collectors and Christ opens up and says, "I want to come to your house." And you can sense that sense of emotion by Zaccheus, "Really, my house? I can't believe this." I mean, it's just impossible to believe that he could be accepted by this Rabbi that is

healing people by doing these great works, and he's going, "I'm stopping. I'm not doing anything I've been doing before." And he literally changes his value system instantaneously. It's a miraculous thing that we see within the story of Zacchaeus.

So, they tell us that not only the systematic process of the reasoning and understanding of a message and not only the emotional based thing that comes into our life oftentimes, but the third is identification. Identification works fundamentally this way, that people are motivated by a desire to be like the one that they admire and love. It's one of the things that change people. I've seen guys that change. They fall in love with a girl, and I'm going, "You're doing that?" "Yeah. I never thought I would do that." But they seem to be motivated because of the person that they're around because they're so infatuated or they admire, or they love this person so much that they want to identify with them. One of the great passages there in Matthew 5 says, "Therefore, you're to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." When you see the glory of God, when you understand and comprehend the

grace of God, like Ephesians 5 says, “Be imitators of God and walk in love just like Christ,” and you realize, “I’ve fallen in love with the way that He is. I want to be like Him.” And it's that desire that begins to move us and motivate us to change the way that we were; no longer living like we live, but we want to be like Him, and a great change comes.

But the one thing that's common in Luke 5, and really, the last thing that is mentioned by the psychologist, I would say probably the most important, is that we find ourselves changing, when in fact there's cognitive dissonance. So, that's self-explanatory. I won't need to explain that again. But what he's talking about in this is that mentally you're feeling a discomfort; a discomfort in the sense of things not coming together. “Dissonance” would be another word for disharmonious. You're not feeling things are harmonious within you. You're feeling anxious about things. Things aren't working. The way that it works is, and let me just read this to you, it says, “People are motivated to reduce the dissonance in their life and are often willing to change their attitudes and beliefs if they

know that the change in their attitude and belief will bring about a sense of stability, predictability, competence and consistency. In other words, if they know that this change is going to make things better; if they can see this. Now, what's interesting about this whole theory of cognitive dissonance is this, that God brings that into our lives. Let me go back. Peter had a bad day. Peter had a frustrating day. He'd fished all night. He hadn't caught anything. He's a good fisherman. He's a skillful fisherman. He knows what he's doing. Cognitive dissonance. So, why aren't things working out?

Paralytic: "I'm going to go my way. I think I know what's best." And you find yourself a leper. There's something inside of you that's going, "Maybe I didn't make the right choice. Maybe the things that I chose were wrong."

Levi, how did you get in the tax office? I mean, there are things in our lives, decisions that we make, and we go, "If these things were true that we thought they were, how come I'm here?" And that sense of disharmony within our thoughts, "There's got to be a better way." This is a key point. "I've come to save sinners." Now, sinners are the

people that go, “I think I've gone the wrong way.” That's who sinners are. In other words, they admit it. Pharisees are still in the realm in which the consequences of their decisions have not come into play yet. But the sinners are going, “My life's a mess. I need some help.” And Christ comes in and He begins to move in their life, and they go, “I don't want to live the way I'm living right now.” And God says, “Good.” You ought to thank the Lord you see loved ones, and they're going through cognitive dissonance. They're rubbing their hands and their head, and they have headaches and all this stuff, “Why are things happening so terribly?” And I go, “Praise God.” God is working in their lives because at that point, they're beginning to look for something different, and wow is following Christ different.

It is at that point that we pick up in verse 36.

It says this,

(Luke 5:36) “And He was also telling them a parable...”

A story that really will convey this wonderful principle that He desires to convey. He was telling them a principle.

“... “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.”

Very simplistic. I'm not a seamstress, so I'm not really savvy upon these things. But what I do know is what Scripture tells me. The Scripture tells me that you don't want to sell new on with the old because things stretch. I remember a time where before they had preshrunk jeans. So, I remember that actually happening, but now they have kind of worked that thing out, but from what I understand you just can't put the old together with the new. That's fundamentally the point.

You come into this passage, and here again, it's all about context, and we see the Pharisees and the Sadducees going, “Why don't Your guys do what we do? Even John's disciples do, and this is what we do. This is our tradition. This is our habits. These are our values. These are our beliefs.” And Jesus goes, “You don't get it. Coming into the kingdom means you throw away all those things for the one.” It's kind of like a pearl of great price. You find a

treasure and you give up everything for that as it gives that wonderful parable. This is not like anything you've ever known before, and there's no way that the new can be mixed with the old. To be noted, if you look at the passage where it used as a phrase "old," it uses the Greek word "*palaios*," where we get "paleontology," which means really old. The study of paleontology. So, when He's talking about old, of course He's talking about these patterns of old that have just been on and there's just no way that you can blend the two. The fundamental interesting point is that you have the Pharisees trying to push their way of thought upon the new, and He goes, "You don't understand. We're having a celebration here. The bridegroom is here. We're having a celebration." They go, "No, we're in religion." He goes, "Yeah, that's what you don't understand. It's nothing like that." So, He begins to give this wonderful example. I believe, in some ways, what He's really describing is as well, that there's no way that you and I can change people. He uses the phrase, if you've noted, "no one". His point is you can't change. I mean, it's psychologists desire to change people. You can't. You can't change ultimately the values

of people. One thing that they did note, and I appreciate this fact, that they say compliance will oftentimes change people's behavior. That is to say that a person will comply like a child. If a parent says, "We're Republicans to the kid." The kid will go, "Ok." Because the kids afraid of either punishment or he's thinking, "Maybe I'll get a reward if I say it." But he's thinking in that term. So, it will change behavior, but what compliance won't do is change your attitude, and the kids still going to feel like, "Yeah, but maybe I want to be a Democrat." So, what we understand is that we're dealing with something that really is a divine act of God. God's going to use these things to prepare the soil. There's no doubt about it. But this is a miraculous act, and the problem that we oftentimes have is we think that by virtue of bringing something into people's lives that we can change their lives; maybe they'll comply with us; maybe they'll say, "Ok, I'll walk down the aisle." Maybe they'll do that to make you feel better, but was the attitude changed? The fact of the matter is no, it wasn't. So, what we did was we sewed new onto old, because there wasn't a drastic change, and what you begin to realize is what comes out

of that is a painful separation and divisiveness. Because ultimately, the person doesn't own it. So, as time goes on, they begin to buck it, and they begin to fight it all the way, and you have this interesting phenomenon in which this new patch on the garment or the new garment and old kind of come together.

It says, if you look at the end of verse 36, they “both tear”. You can put in the word “*schizō*,” where we get our word “schizophrenic”. It's actually the word there. But they both split and they begin to rend and divide and separate. It becomes a violent thing, a painful separation, divisive acrimony, and ultimately, if you look at the end of verse 36, incompatible. I mean, it started off so well.

We think of the great parable of the soils that's recorded in Mark 4, Luke 8, and you come into Luke 8, and he talks about this parable of soils and how you have all these different types of soil. Some receive the word with joy to begin with, but the cares of the world and the desires for other things; in other words, there wasn't a complete change. Jesus is going to emphasize within this passage that there has to be a total change. So, Peter will have to

leave his nets. The man that was leper, that was unclean is going to have to be clean. The person that was dependent is going to have to become independent. There has to be a total change. So, what ultimately has to happen is when you come to Christ, you have to be in a condition in which you don't want to go your way anymore. It is literally an all or nothing scenario, and Christ is proving this with this simple example of this.

Now, He goes on and He states this,

(Luke 5:37) “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins...”

We know that the whole process of fermentation actually makes them, and from what I understand about wineskins, they actually use like a goatskin. It's actually pretty good at hauling a lot of liquid, but they would pour it in there. If in fact it was new, then it has room to stretch. If in fact it's old, it's already been stretched. So, now you put new in that and it's going to burst, and that's what it says within the passage.

“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.”

It's an interesting picture to me of compromise. Because here again, the person is somehow trying to fit in their way of life. The fundamental point that he's getting at is that your old way of thinking cannot contain this new transformation of Christ. It cannot because it is so much a transformation that you literally have to die to all these other things and that's why Scripture will oftentimes use that. I mean, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, but now you've been made alive through Him. It's a whole different life. Born again, new creation; all of these things are conveying that this is not a patch job. This is not you somehow blending something and somehow trying to make it work, because if in fact you try to do that, it will literally ruin your ability to contain the joy of the Lord.

The new wine itself, specifically, Judges 9:13, Psalm 4:7, is making reference to joy. The joy that you have in Christ. Really, the love of Christ constrains me; it drives me to do the things that I do. “What is it that motivates you now?

Is it the law?" Well, it used to be the law. But now I died to the law, as Paul will say. "Now, why do you do what you do?" Because I want to. It's just fun to follow Christ. I'm following the Bridegroom. We're rejoicing. "You mean you're rejoicing to do the right thing?" Oh, yeah. I actually want to do the right thing. Well, that's a whole different way of living. If I in any way begin to try to mix that with "have to," it literally ruins the joy. I can't put the two together. I have to operate in the realm of that total change, and you can understand why the examples are given that are given in Luke 5. In every case, these are individuals that had given up wanting to do things their way. So, they were willing to give everything up to get this new way of life. The Pharisees are trying to do a patch job. They're somehow trying to make things better.

So, ultimately, here in verse 38,

(Luke 5:38) "But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins."

There has to be a total change, a total newness of life.

(Luke 5:39) "And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"

In the last phrase, “The old is good enough,” the word “good” is not what He uses; it's “*chrēstos*,” which is a reference to somebody that feels something is extremely pleasant or wonderful. Peter will use it in terms of the kindness of God; how pleasant it is and how wonderful. The point of the passages is that he has developed a taste for the old to where that's pleasant to him, and he doesn't even want to try the new. He just sits back there, and he goes, “You know what? Don't mess with my life. I'm comfortable in this old chair. I'm comfortable in the way that I live, and when you're talking new, it just hurts my head.” So, what the passage is saying is that there's a danger in, as Jeremiah would say, “settling on your lees.” There's a danger in being settled and feeling comfortable. Which you ought to give God thanks. You know all those times that you feel like you're being pushed out of your comfort zone? We use the phrase, “I'm being pushed out of my comfort zone.” “You know, I kind of like that old wine.” “No, no, let it go. I have something far better for you.” And it's you literally dying to yourself. Scripture is telling us that there has to be something magnificent that takes place in our life, something transforming in our lives

that actually move us into a whole different realm of thinking. That's not going to happen when things are going smoothly, and it's the grace of God that begins to come into our lives at the time that we realize, "I've missed the mark." Sinner. That's what the word "sinner" means. So, why does Jesus say, "I've come to save sinners"? Because those are the ones who say, "I've missed the mark. I've missed it." Other people are comfortable, they're feeling good, they go, "You know, I don't mind having a little of this joy with some of my old way of living." And we try to blend that. You want to know why sometimes people who profess to be Christians are very unhappy? I can tell you why. They're trying to blend. They're trying to mix their old way of living with that which God has called them to. Ours is a faith where you have to be all in. If you're not all in, you're going to be miserable, and God is calling us to joy.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and our requests before You today is that You change us. You change our way of thinking, our values, our beliefs, the views that we have, but most of all, our attitude towards You. We know that in our life we've developed certain tastes. There are things that we have done that have become habits. We feel comfortable with them; complacent with them; we settled for them. It is Your graciousness that brings difficulties in our lives. It causes us to see the reality; that our way, our decisions though at first seem to be pretty good, really end up pretty bad. When we begin to see it's not working, there's a kind of dissonance that happens inside of our heart, and we go, "There's got to be something more. There's got to be something better." And then we hear the message. The message makes sense, "Jesus Christ came to change my life to free me from bonds to open my eyes that were blind, to cause the lame to walk, to declare the favor of God. Wow, do I not feel the favor of God. Something happens, and I began to be stirred by the emotions of Your love for me. You love me that much? Unbelievable. How could that be? That You would die for me, a sinner? Boy, I want to be like

You.” And we call on His name. The Spirit begins to move, and ladies and gentlemen, you can't change your attitude by yourself, but He will, and as you confess Him as Lord, the Spirit will move in that speech. He'll cause it to be real, and the Lord will change you. Watch. Your way of thinking won't be anything like it ever was. You'll become a new person. If you haven't done this, we invite you to realize how horrific your decisions have been and how wonderful His are, and we're encouraging you, don't try to patch it. Make it new.