

## **6 Surprising Things**

*Luke 5:1-32; 2 Cor 4:16-18*

### **1. The crowd was pressing in to hear the word of God**

- a. The Greek word here means to “crowd around” or “press upon him”.

Gathered around the “Lake of Gennesaret” (the Sea of Galilee), why were they so urgent, insistent? Eager to hear Jesus. The Jesus of the miracles? They wanted to hear what Jesus had to say!

- b. Not likely amongst Australians! Although there is more curiosity – conversations last night at a party about Christian belief – people just a little intrigued about what I am on about as a minister.
- c. Is it likely amongst us? Are we “eager”, do we “crowd around” to hear the words of Jesus?

### **2. Peter says “Go away from me Lord, I am a sinful man”**

- a. A surprising way to put it. Not just “I didn’t believe that was possible”, or just “WOW! That was impressive”, but it produced in Peter reflection on his own character and a spiritual observation.

Such perception – he was “sinful”. While his boat was a floating pulpit Peter wasn’t too worried. When Jesus tries to instruct Peter in areas that are Peter’s domain, he is not too happy, but begrudgingly agrees out of a sense of obligation or possible embarrassment to disagree so directly with this new Rabbi. The miracle of fish shows Peter has misunderstood the extent of Jesus’ rule – his capacity is not just preaching, but he has control over the very area where Peter felt most confident. Having seen this comprehensive display in Jesus’ miracle, Peter sees it for what it shows in **him** – lack of faith, unworthiness, uncleanness, sinfulness – and the holiness of Jesus.

- b. I would have been lacking in faith too, but not so self-perceptive!
- c. Are you? When you see Jesus do you recognise your sinfulness and need for repentance?
- d. I don’t think Peter actually wanted Jesus to leave him, but he is really throwing himself on Jesus’ mercy. And Jesus responds by telling him not to “fear”, because from now on he will be catching people for the kingdom of God.

### **3. Peter, James and John leave everything to follow Jesus**

- a. Everything? The boats chock-a-block full to sinking point with fish! Imagine what the workers and the crowd would say?
- b. This sort of full-on commitment to discipleship is, if we are honest, quite scary (“take up your cross and follow him”? – an on going sacrifice).

We are comfortable, often, with God affecting the “religious” part of our lives. But this call on those early disciples, seen also in the encounter with Levi (called Matthew elsewhere) the tax collector,

is that faith in Jesus carries with it a commitment of *life*. A life change, a being born again” that reorients our lives.

When my mum asked when I became a Christian to maybe be a little less “full on”, even then at 16yrs of age I knew what it meant - “its all or nothing mum” was my reply.

What does God want you to give up that would get in the way of being a fully devoted disciple of Jesus? How are you going with what this means?

#### **4. Jesus touches the leper**

- a. I would at least have had gloves on! People would have recoiled. Urk!
- b. Shows the love of Jesus, shows he can heal, shows loving people is important. For this man had not just lost his health, but his livelihood, his friends, contact with family. For a man who has lost human community, this touch not only heals but also restores him to relationships with other people.  
Jesus was not afraid of being made “unclean” himself.
- c. He was willing!

He is willing to heal you... for a purpose... so that you can follow him. We see Jesus’ priorities in the next surprising thing.

#### **5. Jesus forgives the sins of a paralysed man**

- a. Not a surprise? But forgiving his sins... and then he pauses. Why not heal him first?
- b. Jesus is making two points –
  - i. Jesus is the Lord! He has authority to forgive sins – something only God has.
  - ii. Forgiveness is more important than physical comfort or healing. As 2 Cor 4 says

2 Cor 4<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.<sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.<sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

My visits to Kevin Parkinson... and others who are dying.  
I cant heal them! Maybe God will, but I don't have that insight into their lives.  
Make sure people are forgiven and have eternal life!

But this view of life doesn't and shouldn't wait to be expressed only when you are facing death! Its eternal life, a relationship with God that matters! And that good news, that grace of God, is available now! Today. Don't leave getting sins forgiven sorted out until you think you are about to face death.

Don't shy away from saying – “knowing Jesus is the most important thing in your life!” More important than money, kids or grandkids in a good school, more important than your superannuation or your savings, more important than your health!

People say, “if you don't have your health you don't have anything”. Jesus might reply – “if your sins are forgiven you don't lack anything! In this life or the one to come.”

- iii. We are to have an **eternal** focus – but do we, can we, live this way?

## **6. Jesus hangs around with drug addicts**

He wants to spread the good news of the kingdom. He goes where the sinners are. This is a surprise to his culture.

In calling one of his disciples from one of the worst groups of “sinners” in that time and culture – a tax collector (maybe to us like a drug addict or prostitute) he shows that his message of salvation, forgiveness, healing and the transforming work of the HS really is good news to all - to the outcast, to those on the margins of society, who indeed are “sinners...” but who are not so far away that they are beyond the reach of God's grace.

He is accused of “eating with tax collectors and sinners” (they can't bring themselves to say “prostitutes”) and clearly dismisses their contempt by the response - “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”<sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

People who look down on other's morality and compare themselves with them, rarely think that they might have to repent. Comparing yourself with someone who is less morally “right” is looking in the wrong direction – trying comparing yourself with a holy God! Then you see your need for forgiveness – and rejoice that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance!

## **Conclusion**

1. People were pressing in to hear the word of God. Do we?
2. Would we have the spiritual awareness of Peter?  
Would you have had enough spiritual discernment to see Jesus as holy, you as needing forgiveness? How do you respond now? Throw yourself on God's mercy?
3. Are we prepared to leave everything to follow Jesus?
4. Are we overwhelmed with the love and grace of Jesus? (like the leper would have been)
5. Do we think forgiveness of sins is the most important thing in this life?
6. Do we think we need forgiving or are we too proud?

Is the news good for you?

## Amen

### 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

### Luke 5:1-26

<sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

<sup>12</sup> While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

<sup>13</sup> Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." <sup>15</sup> Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

<sup>17</sup> One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. <sup>20</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>21</sup> The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>22</sup> Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? <sup>24</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” <sup>25</sup> Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. <sup>26</sup> Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.” <sup>27</sup> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, <sup>28</sup> and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. <sup>29</sup> Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.