

Lesson 2 The Surprising Jesus

Appetizer: The Jesus we meet in Luke's story had a wonderful unpredictability. The people of his day thought God loved good people; he showed a God who loved sinners. They thought God liked sad faces; he showed a God who created joy. They thought God was bound up in tradition; he showed a God who desired freshness. Luke 5 illustrates what an early Christian missionary told the king of England when he asked what they could expect if they followed this new faith: "Your Majesty," he replied, "you will find surprise after surprise ----- and every surprise is good."

Main Course: Read Luke 5:17 – 26.

1. Try to imagine the scene. As the paralyzed man is lowered through the roof, how do you think each of the main characters feels (the sick man, his friends, the onlookers, the Pharisees and teachers of the law vv. 17-19)?
2. How does Jesus surprise everyone in dealing with the sick man (v. 20)?
3. The teachers criticize Jesus for promising forgiveness, since only God has that authority (v.21). What is Jesus' response meant to show (vv. 22-26)?
4. Read Luke 5:27-32. Why is it surprising that Jesus calls Levi (vv.27-28)?
5. Why is it even more surprising that Levi follows?
6. When Levi throws a party for his friends, the religious leaders criticize Jesus for eating with "sinners" (v. 30). How does Jesus' picture of himself as a "doctor" challenge their view of God?
7. Later Levi, also called Matthew, wrote a Gospel in which he called Jesus a "friend of sinners." What tension might exist between being both a "friend" and a "doctor"?
8. Read Luke 5:33-39. When Jesus is criticized for not making his disciples fast (v. 33), he describes himself as a bridegroom (vv. 34-35). What does this say about his relationship with his followers and how he wants them to be?
9. Again Jesus uses picture language to make his point (vv. 36-39). What do the new cloth and the new wine symbolize?
10. What do these illustrations say about how Jesus makes people and things new?

Dessert: What is your overriding impression of Jesus in this chapter?