

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### MASTER OF MERCY

**Luke 4:40-41** *When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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The Sabbath ended at dusk. Religious rules said that nobody could be healed on God's special day. But after Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law in her house, word was out. At sun-set, sick and demonised people were brought to Jesus. Whatever their problem, they believed that He would be able to deal with it. Jesus was not just a specialist in reducing high temperatures; He confronted a wide variety of illnesses, personally laying His hands on each person - and they were all healed.

But the demons sought to confront Jesus, to make a scene and draw attention to His Deity in order to goad jealous religious leaders into taking action against Him. However, Jesus knew their motives: He spoke sternly to the demons, silencing their mockery and driving them out. What mercy He showed to so many suffering people! What power in His words, and what kindness He showed to those who had no hope of relief or release!

Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and for ever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). Nothing takes Him by surprise; everybody is precious to Him and nobody is treated as an irrelevance. He is not fazed by unusual illness or by unruly demons. He has the power to deal with all of them. But the healing ministry of Jesus was not to win Him support (in the end most turned away from Him); nor was it primarily to satisfy people's needs. He was demonstrating that He was the fulfilment of Messianic prophecies, and the only authority able to dethrone Satan and to undo his bad works (including sickness and death, see [1 John 3:8](#)).

Some people still come to Jesus demanding that He shall fix their problem. There is little worship or commitment to Him; many just want to continue living an ungrateful life. And some did that in the gospel accounts ([Luke 17:1 2-19](#)). But Jesus is still the Master of Mercy. All who call on His Name will be saved ([Romans 10:13](#)). All those who come pleading for mercy are rewarded by grace which is even greater than mercy. Yes, until Jesus returns, everybody will die of some problem or another; even those in the gospels who were healed, eventually died. But whether or not the Lord allows healing, the truth remains that He is the Master of Mercy. There is no kinder or more powerful person than Jesus. He can heal or sustain through suffering; He can deny Satan liberty or provide grace to withstand evil attacks ([2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)). It is right to bring our own needs and those of others to Him for action; and it is godly to give thanks for His mercy however He chooses to answer the prayer.

**Prayer:** *Most merciful Lord. Thank You that Jesus still has all power and authority and can deal with everything that concerns me, my friends and colleagues. Forgive me when I doubt that truth, and also forgive me when I presume that You must carry out my prescription for healing my life. Help me to have the humility to bring everything to You, and honour You in my heart by being willing to accept the method, route and timing You choose so that my real need is met and Your glory is magnified. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### THE PRIORITY OF TELLING THE TRUTH

**Luke 4:42-44** *At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (NIV)*

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Jesus had demonstrated His power to heal and expel demons. But early the next morning, He left Simon Peter's house, disappointing new crowds of sick people who were desperate for His touch. Somehow they found out where He was, but He seemed to shrug them off and tried to move on. To some it might have seemed strange that He did not want to exploit His popularity. Others would have been bemused that the 'Master of Mercy' seemed no longer to be interested in healing the sick. What had happened overnight to change His mind, some might have said?

Of course, Jesus had not changed. His heart was still full of compassion, but healing was not His mission. Even if He had spent every day healing throughout a natural lifespan, many sick people would have remained unhealed; and some healed people would have died of other diseases. No, Christ's mission was not to fix the imperfections of earth but make the imperfect people ready for heaven.

Mercy ministry remains an important part of the infrastructure of the gospel. But while it validates the gospel, physical healing does not save people from hell. Jesus knew that only His death could provide the way of salvation. Unless people knew why Jesus came to die, and how that act was the centrepiece of God's rescue plan, there would be no gospel to believe. That is why Jesus made preaching His priority. So, He taught in the synagogues explaining from the Old Testament Scriptures who He was, what God loved and hated, and why He had to die.

Nobody should like being ill. But some think that health and prosperity are the only things that matter. Wrong! Most important of all is to be forgiven, loved, cleansed and accepted by God. [1 Timothy 6:6&9](#) says, "*But godliness with contentment is great gain. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*" Healthy bodies and bank accounts will not get us to heaven, but believing the gospel of God's grace will. That is why Jesus wanted to preach the gospel.

Today's church falls seriously short of its purpose if it fails to do the same. Have you thought that many people are more likely to hear the gospel from a believer in their workplace, than in the church they never attend? So please share [www.crosscheck.org.uk](http://www.crosscheck.org.uk) with your friends and colleagues; whatever their earthly trouble, they need a heavenly home. And believing the gospel is the only route ([Romans 10:14-15](#)). It is not just a nice idea. It is vital for their eternal destiny.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord God. Thank You for the person who introduced me to Your Words of Truth, so that I might believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Thank You for all those in my workplace. May I want to do good to them, helping in whatever way I can, but realising that their greatest need is met by Christ alone. So, please help me to be responsible to share the truth of the gospel, praying that my friends and colleagues will be willing to hear You speak to them, and that they may respond by welcoming Jesus In His Name. Amen.*

#### NOTHING ACCIDENTAL

**Luke 5:1-3** *One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret [Galilee], with the people crowding round him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 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. (NIV)*

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Jesus was quite intentional about who He wanted to be His first disciples. Today we start the account of how He called Simon (Peter). This fisherman already knew Jesus; the Master had stayed in his house at Capernaum and healed his mother-in-law. But Simon was still going about his usual business - mending nets and preparing the boat in the daytime, ready for fishing at night. Jesus deliberately chose that particular shallow bay, where the boats were partly hauled-out, to teach the crowd.

As the crowd increased, Jesus moved back towards the water's edge. Then He stepped into one boat: Simon's. Jesus took command and asked him to anchor some meters away from the shore. This provided the ideal preaching platform as the water and the background hills would have reflected the sound of His voice like an amphitheatre. But of all the people listening, Jesus wanted to ensure that one pair of ears heard every word: Simon's!

None of these 'co-incidences' were accidents. Nothing Jesus does is random, or accidental. He had fully intended to call Simon, so first Jesus wanted to make sure that the fisherman was listening. Although Jesus was speaking to everybody, He was especially talking to Simon; and the healing at his house was all part of the plan. Now Simon could not escape. With water all around him and the need to safeguard both his boat and his self-invited guest, Simon had the added pressure that everybody was looking at him, as well as at Jesus. Jesus had got him to listen.

Today as then, Jesus meets people where they are, at work and at home. Those meetings are part of God's strategy to win the hearts of those He has chosen. Often, as in this story, the encounter with Jesus grows as people meet Christians at work, in leisure or over a meal. They may not understand the Master's plan but Jesus intentionally draws them to the place where they can hear His Word. For some that may be months or even years down the trail. But it all starts somewhere. God chooses the places and times when He arranges His people to be available for hospitality, acts of kindness or compassion, a word of encouragement or message of hope in times of trouble. But then, Jesus wants to follow-through so that the individual can hear and receive the Word of truth. It may be a believer at work, an email or internet presentation like [www.crosscheck.org.uk](http://www.crosscheck.org.uk), a church service, mission or radio/TV programme. So pray today, wherever you are: ask the Lord how He might use you to be a part of the chain of events which will win another disciple for Jesus.

**Prayer:** *Wonderful Lord, who desires that all shall hear Your Word and live. Thank You for the people/events/leaflets/books by which You got me to want to hear Jesus speak to me. And thank You that although He is always speaking to many, He caused me to listen and respond to You. Help me to appreciate the great privilege, of showing Your care and to sharing Your gospel to those You want to reach. May I be alert today for Your promptings so that I will recognise the opportunity to be Your co-worker in drawing others to my Saviour. In His Name. Amen.*

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### WORKING WITH POWERFUL WORDS

**Luke 5:4-8** *When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 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." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to 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. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (NIV)*

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Simon has just hosted the preacher, Jesus, who had used his boat as a pulpit to address the crowds. The Master selected Simon's boat because, although he did not know it, he was chosen to be a disciple. The word 'disciple' does not mean 'follower' as many think; but 'learner', and true learning is always practical. It is not enough for disciples to be present or to hear (like many who sit in church!); it is essential that they learn what they have heard by putting the teaching into practice.

That was the next phase of Simon's spiritual education. Fish often go deep in the heat of the day; even the previous night had been a fishing disaster as none were caught. Simon was the expert, and Jesus was from the unrelated trade of carpentry. Nevertheless, Simon was willing to accept instruction from Jesus despite protesting that it would be useless to fish that day. He had learned that Jesus' words were packed with authority. He had enough faith to put the nets out; a real sign that he had learned something about Jesus.

When a huge shoal of fish swam into the nets, a number of things happened. The fishing gear was at breaking point so James and John were signalled to come over in their boat to help. As so many fish came aboard, both boats became overloaded to the point of almost being submerged. Then Simon Peter realised something: he had admired Jesus, listened to Jesus and gone along with what Jesus wanted him to do ... but he did not believe Jesus. He had no idea that any fish would be caught, let alone two boats-full. But that episode taught the fisherman (and his brother Andrew, and friends James and John) that Jesus had knowledge, authority and power. To believe in Jesus was to enter a whole new wonderful world.

Many of our friends, and even ourselves, may respect Jesus, and even do a few of the things He asks of us. But do we believe that Jesus will fulfil whatever He has said, especially if it is humanly impossible? 'Believing in Jesus' is a whole-person commitment to receive God's Word and do it, even if logic and experience try to shout down the Lord's voice. As we read the Bible, we find challenges that are bigger than our human resources: the question is, when we obey the Lord, will He act in power? Real disciples will say, "Yes"! Converts or even church-goers fall way short of the mark if they refuse to become disciples. And don't forget that because discipleship is a learning business, all that is required is the willingness to learn to trust Jesus, and to demonstrate it in practical obedience.

**Prayer:** *Almighty God. Thank You for Your words of power; and for helping me to learn to start believing in You. Help me, especially at work, to believe that You are not only interested in me, but also my fellow believers, non-believers and the welfare of the workplace itself. May I learn to trust You more, and to encourage all at work who want to live for Christ to do the same. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **SURPRISE, SURPRISE**

**Luke 5:8-11** *When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 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 catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. (NIV)*

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This passage should surprise us. First, Simon Peter caught a shoal of fish but then describes himself as a 'sinful man': then Jesus is kind to the self-confessed sinner and makes him the first disciple! What is going on?

Well, Simon Peter did not really believe any fish would be caught. He protested to Jesus and then put out his nets to demonstrate that Jesus did not know what He was talking about. In fact, it was Peter who was out of order. That was proved when so many fish came aboard the two boats that they were in danger of being swamped by the waves ([Luke 5:4-7](#)). Peter's conscience was now working overtime. He had not believed Jesus. Although he accepted the authority of Jesus and obediently let down the nets, he thought nothing would happen. In other words, the fisherman realised that Jesus was right and he was wrong ... and that is the basis on which sin is charted. Sin is rebelling against Jesus in deed, word or thought: and Peter knew that his thoughts were not worthy of the Master so he begged Him to go away.

So why should Jesus want to take him on as a disciple? Surely the Christ would not choose sinners? Well, He does - at least sinners who admit it (and implicitly ask for mercy). Of course, everybody is a sinner, but all those who confess their mess will find pardon. Jesus not only accepted Peter's admission of failure, but He also selected him for Divine service as a disciple. Interestingly, only those who admit they are not right, are made right; but those who think they are right, are excluded from the privilege of being with Jesus.

Many think that Christians have got everything right. No! In fact, you cannot become a Christian unless you admit that even your best efforts are rubbish ([Philippians 3:7-8](#)). Christ does not seek clever people with amazing ability: He wants self-confessed sinners who make themselves available to His grace and mercy. None of us can ever be good enough for God, but those who admit their sin and believe in Jesus will be saved. Perhaps this truth is not well understood by your friends and colleagues. Maybe they even think you are so much better than them and that they could never earn God's favour. If so, they need the truth. You are no better than them: if there is a difference it is that you have taken your sin to the cross of Christ and you have been forgiven. But that can be true for them too. So, don't leave them in the dark - tell them that Jesus welcomes confessing sinners, broken people, failures and outcasts. But they will need your encouragement to come to Jesus, because they may believe they will be rejected - instead they will be welcomed!

**Prayer:** *Gracious God. Thank You for convicting me of sin by Your Holy Spirit, so that I could come to You and be made clean. Forgive me when I forget what a great privilege is mine. And forgive me if I ever give the impression that You love me because I try to be good. Help me to share the truth that only You are good and that You welcome all those who confess their sin. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### HEALING TOUCH

**Luke 5:12-13** *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." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. (NIV)*

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Leprosy was terrifyingly bad news. The Bible uses the term 'leprosy' to include a variety of skin conditions which God knew could spread from person to person. [Leviticus 13](#) reads like a dermatological textbook, so that the priests (who were also the public health officers of Israel) could make a diagnosis. But there was no effective treatment, no antibiotics and no steroids. The only action that could be taken to stop the disease being passed on, was isolation. In Jesus' day too, lepers were not allowed into town, could not live with their families, were not allowed to join in public worship. If they walked down the road they had to cry out, "Unclean, unclean", to warn travellers not to get close to them.

Leprosy became a picture of sin. Like sin, there was no known cure; it ruined the individuals, cutting them off from family and fellowship, and excluding them from God's house. They became beggars who could not support themselves, and their best efforts were met with rejection. There was simply no hope or comfort except the company of other lepers. Enter Jesus: who has come to save sinners. Although it is impossible to observe the process by which Jesus forgives a person's sins, He used the physical example of leprosy to demonstrate that He was the Saviour. And it was a potent illustration, for the man was covered in disease.

This leper did not shout out "Unclean!" He believed that Jesus had the answer to the problem, and wanted Him to come close. He begged Jesus to listen, and asked if the Saviour was willing to deal with him (nobody else wanted to). Jesus did come close; so close as to touch the leper, thereby making Himself unclean. He declared that He was willing to heal and commanded the disease to go. And the man's skin was restored to normal.

That is how Jesus treats sinners who dare to abandon their isolation and come to Him. He sees them through love instead of disgust. He comes close to all who ask for mercy and cleansing, and He alone has the power to forgive sins. Instead of rejection, self-confessed sinners find acceptance and a welcome from Jesus as His real power takes all their sin away. See [www.crosscheck.org.uk](http://www.crosscheck.org.uk) to know more. Like lepers, many people today would love to be forgiven and to start a new life, but they are ashamed, afraid God will reject them. Quite the opposite!! If that is true for some of your friends or colleagues at work, do tell them the good news!

**Prayer:** *Loving Saviour. Thank You for saving me! Thank You for being willing to take all my sin upon Yourself so that I might be forgiven. Forgive me when I forget how much it cost You, and when I forget to tell others that You want to forgive their sins too, and welcome them into Your Kingdom. Give me such a picture of Jesus daring to touch the leper, that I may never assume anybody is beyond Your reach. In Your Name. Amen.*

**W@WLuke67**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **NO ADVERTISING**

**Luke 5:14-15** *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." 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. (NIV)*

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A leper had just been healed. But Jesus wanted no credit, and certainly no advertising. However, He instructed the man with new normal skin to go to the priest to certify that the disease had gone, then to offer the sacrifices required under Moses' law to complete the cleansing ([Leviticus 14:1-32](#)). So the man and the law were satisfied by Jesus.

News like that was just what ordinary people needed. With no social security system, no health service and no income support in case of illness, Jesus was seen as the only reliable answer to every need. And so many more travelled to find Him and to beg Him to transform their lives. They listened to His preaching about God's kingdom and believed that He was God's answer to them.

In part, advertising relies on a few excellent features to sell the whole product; and those good points must be presented in the best light. Jesus did not need any of that. Everything about Jesus was excellent; there was nothing wrong with anything He said or did. No hype was necessary, nor were 'satisfied customers' asked to go round canvassing the support of others to His cause. When God is at work, His work is perfect and wonderful in its timing and appropriateness. There is a natural integrity that attracts honest observers. Our best witness is not so much in our exaggerated claims of how prayer has been answered, as in the transparent satisfaction of our daily lives. People who are at peace, because of Jesus, radiate their contentment despite terrible turmoil in their circumstances. When needy people see that, they will seek-out Jesus; and they will not be disappointed by well meaning but inaccurate advertising.

**Prayer:** *Holy God. Thank You that You are true in all You say and do. Please forgive me when I exaggerate even what I believe You have done, in order to make You sound more impressive. You are amazing and magnificent in every way: so please teach me to live a quiet life and to be satisfied with what You give to me so that my contented life may radiate the peace of God, and attract honest seekers to find the Saviour. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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**W@WLuke68**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **SPACE TO PRAY**

**Luke 5:15-16** *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. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (NIV)*

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Most busy people have little time away from the job. The pressure of 'things to get done', opportunities 'not to be missed' and 'disasters to avert' is constant. Jesus knew what that was like. With so many ministry opportunities and obvious popularity He made the right decision. Stop and pray!

Jesus often went away from the crowds, out of the towns and even away from His disciples, so that He could spend time alone with His Heavenly Father in prayer. Of course He cared about people's needs, but would not let them control His agenda. Jesus knew His primary mission was the salvation of souls through His self-sacrifice on the cross and knew that nothing must deflect Him from arriving at the cross on time. Meanwhile, His teaching ministry explained the Saviour's role; and His healing and exorcism ministry demonstrated that He had full authority over sin's curse and Satan's terror. But every day He only wanted to do what was agreed with Father God ([John 14:31](#)). That is why He prayed.

Those isolated prayer-times were not for Jesus to de-stress after a busy time, but to pre-stress His soul by loading Himself with the Father's love and wisdom. The same is true for every Christian. Without the Father's love we will shrivel inside; without His wisdom we will be foolish outside; and without prayer we will have no confidence that God is alongside. Too busy to pray ... that is far too busy. So whatever your schedule, don't just break into activity; break out with your Father to receive His love, wisdom and the confidence that you are working together with Him. Pray too for your friends, and the business of your workplace, that God may be glorified.

**Prayer:** *Father God. If Jesus needed to spend time alone with You, how much more do I! Please forgive me when I think that I can rush through the day without committing it all to You, and receiving Your love and wisdom. Help me to place today into Your hands, to ask for Your advice and learn how to accept what You say. Most of all, I do need to know that You love me, and I need to learn to love You best of all: so please help me to make the time to pray and find a place where we will not be disturbed. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### COMPLACENT OR PERSISTENT

**Luke 5:17-19** *One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. 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. (NIV)*

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Jesus had become a major focus in the region of Galilee. The religious leaders were starting to feel under threat and wanted to find a point of weakness to exploit so that He could be discredited. Word had even spread to the capital, Jerusalem, and theologians came to check out what Jesus was saying and doing. However, the sick and demonised knew they had found someone who cared about them, and had the power to heal.

Imagine the scene: religious academics were sitting there listening to Jesus' teaching, but a paralysed man could not get in. The 'holy men' were interested, but the sick man and his friends were insistent. The man was taken up the outside steps onto the roof by friends who stripped away a section of roofing. They made a hole large enough to lower the man by ropes attached to his stretcher - right in front of Jesus. They knew that only Jesus could heal, and they were not going to be put off. Meanwhile, the Pharisees were waiting to scrutinise the next comment from Jesus' mouth.

These two attitudes remain in today's marketplace. Some are desperate for Jesus, or at least hungry to find the truth about Him. Others are cynics or sceptics who have already made up their mind that, at best, Jesus is an irrelevance; at worst He is dangerous. The fact remains, those who seek Him, find Him to be all that He claims to be. Those who are determined to ask in faith, get answers ([Matthew 7:7-8](#)). Meanwhile those who ridicule Jesus and His people remain encased in their darkness and cannot see the Light of the world ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). So do not be discouraged by the cynics - pray for them. But do encourage the seekers with God's Word - they may find [www.crosscheck.org.uk](http://www.crosscheck.org.uk) helpful. And for yourself, never forget that the Lord does meet with those who seek Him with all of their heart ([Jeremiah 29:13](#)).

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank You for not being far away, and for being willing to help all who seek You with a true heart. Forgive me for times of complacency, when I should have been persistent; and for times of grumbling when difficulties came and I stopped seeking Your wisdom. Help me to keep pressing on with You, trusting that You will hear and answer. And please help my friends who apparently have little hunger for You, that You will awaken their hearts to the life and love in Jesus. And when others ridicule me, help me to understand that they did that, and worse to Jesus. May I learn to forgive them, praying for their eyes to be opened. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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#### FAITH REWARDED

**Luke 5:20-23** *When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." 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?" Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" (NIV)*

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Jesus does not play games. When the paralysed man was lowered through the roof by his friends, they were serious about getting the sick man to Jesus. They would not have taken all the trouble to remove a large piece of roofing, or risked the anger of the house owner, if they had not believed that Jesus would heal. Faith, as always, is not just a pious thought but a total confidence in God - not letting anything get in the way of coming to Jesus.

But the religious leaders were not pleased, especially when Jesus saw faith in action and pronounced forgiveness of sins. They did not even need to speak - Jesus knew their critical thoughts. Although they rightly believed that only God can forgive sins, they did not believe that Jesus was God in a human body. So He was about to demonstrate that He had God's power in making the man walk home, carrying his bed.

Every workplace and community is full of critical thinking. In one way it is right to question in order to find out the truth. However, there is a basic evil spirit of criticism waiting to arise in each of us which wants to disbelieve (and disobey) any authority; especially the authority of Jesus. We don't even have to say a word because the Lord knows if we really trust Him or not. He sees those who deliberately or negligently let things get in the way of trusting Him. He easily distinguishes those who want to score cheap religious points from those who are earnest in seeking Him. As [2 Timothy 2:19](#) says, "*The Lord knows those who are His,*" and, "*Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.*" Our faith must shape our lifestyle, or it is not faith at all. That is a primary contrast to the critical spirit of the age which roams through every workplace and community; those who trust Jesus submit to His authority.

**Prayer:** *Powerful Lord. Thank You that You know everything, even the hidden things and words that have never been spoken. Please forgive me when I have joined the world's chorus against the authorities You have placed over me, or protested against Your divine wisdom in my life. Help me to learn how to follow Jesus, by submitting to His Word and making every effort to remove the obstacles that stop me from bringing my weakness to You for healing and forgiveness. And may my witness of trusting Jesus in the workplace encourage all those around me who are seeking after truth. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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**W@WLuke71**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **FORGIVEN IN PERSON**

**Luke 5:24-26** *But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . . " He said to the paralysed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today." (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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All the paralysed man knew was that if he could get to Jesus, Jesus would do the rest. Lowered down through a hole in the roof, he became the focus of attention until Jesus said that He personally forgave the man's sins. Religious protocol was upset, only God could do that! They watched Jesus' next move very carefully. He was not covered by their criticism; indeed He made a point of proving that He had authority which they did not.

Linking forgiveness of sins with the man's sickness (a result of the curse on sinful humanity) Jesus commanded the man to get up from his stretcher-bed and go home. The man obeyed, free of all that prevented him; because Jesus had lifted the curse of sin off him. Everybody, including the now-mobile man were amazed. Wonderfully, their criticism melted away and even the cynics could not stop themselves praising God for what they had seen and heard.

Despite much sickness in the world, and death which is inevitable, our greatest need is not of healing but forgiveness. That is not to say that God's power of healing is not real, but that every healed body will eventually die, unless Jesus returns first. Although it is easier to cover up our sin than our sickness, our sin needs forgiveness more. That is because our bodies are mortal but our souls are immortal, destined for either eternal life or judgement. The Bible says that the road to forgiveness starts with admitting we need help we cannot get, and without it we have no hope. That is why we come to Jesus, because He has proved that He has power over sin's curse. [1 John 1:9](#) says, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" So, admit your need, and the impossibility of being made spiritually well unless Jesus does it for you. And if others ask about being forgiven, you know what to tell them (see [www.crosscheck.org.uk](http://www.crosscheck.org.uk) for more details).

**Prayer:** *Loving Lord. Thank You for making it possible for me to be forgiven, through the sacrificial death of Jesus for me. Help me to always remember the cost of my forgiveness: it was the life-blood of Jesus. Please forgive me all my sins, my rebellion against Your grace and my pride which keeps me away from Your mercy. I simply place myself in Your hands; I cannot get clean by myself. Because of Your love, please put away my sins, and enable me to be able to function properly as a child of God. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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**FOLLOWING BY COMMAND**

**Luke 5:27-28** *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, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Tax collectors had a bad reputation. They took their pay as a sort of informal 'commission' from the tax payers. Nobody knew quite how much they ought to pay, and everybody suspected that the revenue officers were corrupt. Their social stigma placed them with prostitutes as the most despised people in society. No religious leader would be seen in their company. But Jesus knew that He was their only hope, and so He ate and talked with them.

Levi, his name indicates that his parents were from the priestly tribe, had not lived up to their expectations. But Jesus knew this cheat and He summoned him to join the team of disciples. Instead of counting the money and securing his financial future, Levi left it all behind as he obeyed the command of Jesus. Although many people drifted in and out of the travelling group of supporters, most of them gave up except the twelve appointed disciples ([John 6:66-71](#)). Each of them had heard the command to leave their old way of life and join with Jesus; and they obeyed.

Today many are drifting in and out of churches, thinking that it might be a good idea to experience religion; as though God awards points for trying to be good. Discipleship is not about following a crowd of friends into church, but hearing the command of Jesus and obeying. Christian faith is not something which we try to copy from others, but is a positive reaction to knowing that Jesus is calling and commanding obedience. Inevitably that will involve leaving corruption behind, whatever the cost. Christians are disciples by royal command, not personal preference. In [John 15:16](#), Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last." If you have heard His call to repent of sin and submit to His authority, have you obeyed? It is the only way to peace and purpose.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank You for deliberately calling people to obey Jesus. Please forgive me when I have refused to obey Your Word, clinging on to what suits my agenda. Please speak to me so that I can make the responsible choice of obeying You, leaving all else behind and following Jesus. For His Name's sake. Amen.*

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**THE JOY OF REPENTANCE**

**Luke 5:29-32** *Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 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'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (NIV)

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Jesus had commanded a corrupt tax collector to leave his old life and become a disciple. Levi's immediate obedience was evidence of his repentance. We do not know how long he had been wanting a way out, but we do know that when Jesus called him, he responded with joy - released from a rich but empty way of life ([1 Peter 1:18](#)).

Such joy had to be shared. Levi invited many former colleagues, and other social outcasts, to a lavish banquet so that they could meet Jesus too. But the huge party attracted religious criticism: surely, holy people keep away from unholy sinners, the Pharisees complained to the disciples. But Jesus turned their argument on its head: isn't it right for sick people to go to a doctor? Their illness does not corrupt the physician; but his knowledge can bring healing. Jesus said that His job was not to entertain those who thought they had no problem, but to command sinners to repentance.

It is the same today. Many religious people do not think they need Jesus. At the same time, many others are desperate to be made clean; they want to change but do not know how. When one of them receives Jesus, it is the ideal opportunity to share the joy of repentance with work colleagues. A meal often provides the ideal opportunity to speak about Jesus; and a large party gives relaxed time for an evangelist to be heard. Self-righteous religious people may not want an invitation, but for spiritually hungry, sin-sick and world-weary colleagues - it may be the opportunity they have been waiting for. Certainly Jesus is still calling sinners, and wants them to know the huge relief of repentance, forgiveness and acceptance by God. Don't forget that the people you work with are not just cogs in some organisational machinery, but they are loved by Jesus who wants them to know the joy of repentance.

**Prayer:** *Holy God. Thank You that Jesus came to seek out sinners like me. Thank You for speaking to me and for urging me to repent and receive Your forgiveness. Although many of my friends and colleagues do not want to show any weakness, You know those who are longing to find peace with God. Please forgive me when I have ignored their spiritual needs, or presumed that they would not listen to You. Help me to take godly initiatives so that Christ may be heard, and weary souls may find rest in Jesus. In His Name. Amen.*

**W@WLuke74**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **THE JOY OF BELONGING**

**Luke 5:33-35** *They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking." Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast." (NIV)*

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One thing was obvious about Jesus and the disciples - they enjoyed life and loved people. But that was a sharp contrast to the religious leaders who enforced many restrictions in the guise of 'pleasing God'. Their attitude was mournfully dutiful, sending outward signals of holiness, even if they had no relationship with God. One set of rules was about fasting. This was intended to be a normal part of submitting to God, and praying for His purpose to be revealed and fulfilled. It was not wrong, but it had a specific purpose in moving people's focus away from themselves onto serving God, while waiting for Him to appear and claim His people.

So why did Jesus' disciples not fast? Because Jesus was God! He did not encourage them into funeral-like religious practices in the hope that God might come one day ... He had come! In the same way that a wedding is a celebration of two people who now belong to each other, Jesus set the disciples free to celebrate His awesome love and power; and their joy that they belonged to Him. Whatever fasting and praying they did was not for social display or religious approval, but a private matter before God.

Of course, as Jesus said, He would leave them (until the second coming) and they would fast in those days. Nevertheless, they were not left alone, because the Holy Spirit would come to them ([John 14:15-21](#)). So today, those who trust in Jesus should enjoy the living presence of God, and also hold onto the promise of the physical return of Jesus. Either way, we should experience the joy of closely belonging to the God who made us and redeemed us. Fasting is never appropriate as a way of winning points for God's favour: but it is useful as an aid to personal prayer. However, as Jesus said in [Matthew 6:16-18](#), "*When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*" So, you do not need to make a show of religious practices at work: but we all need to prepare in private so that we can celebrate our joy of belonging to Jesus, in the workplace and community as well as in the church.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank You that I can belong to You because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, through Your indwelling Spirit. Forgive me when I have allowed even religious expressions to obscure the joy of Your presence; or when I have served You merely out of duty. Please restore to me the joy of my salvation so that I can be a beacon-light of Your love in my community and workplace. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### ALL NEW

**Luke 5:36-39** *He told them this parable: "No-one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no-one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'" (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Some people see religion mainly as a prop, crutch or help in difficult times; a psychological addition to normal life or a part of the social fabric providing a structure to life. And for many, their religion is just that. Today we read the parable of clothing and wineskins in which Jesus says that the new will not mix with the old. The point He was making was that He had not come to patch up people's lives or all the inadequacies of the Jewish law (it was unable to make anyone good enough for God), but to bring new life which could not be contained by religious rules.

True Christians are not religious (having to fulfil rites and a code of ethics in order to be acceptable to God). Everyone who has repented of sin and received Christ as Saviour has God the Holy Spirit living in them. His dynamic personality is so different from a powerless legal framework of religious dos and don'ts. Christ's powerful energy ([Colossians 1:29](#)) is refreshingly new. He brings grace, forgiveness and righteousness to unholy sinners at no cost to them: which is totally unknown elsewhere.

Some people think that they can 'bolt-on' Jesus to their existing lifestyle or religious beliefs, or have Him as an insurance policy. Wrong! As somebody has said, "If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all!" When He is welcomed as King in our lives, all other authorities have to submit to Him, or go away. Many would like Jesus to fix the problems which they cannot solve; but He is not a travelling spiritual mechanic. He is your Maker, Redeemer, Shepherd, and Lord - He will transform your whole life if you let Him; and when that happens nobody wants the old way back again. As [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" That is a much needed message for this world, weary of trying and failing to get better. It is just what some of your colleagues need to hear: so please tell them!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord God. Thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to live in me when I submitted to the grace of Christ. Forgive me when I fail to allow You to transform my life, or when I limit Your grace through my pride or stubbornness. Your new life is so amazing! Help me to be unashamed of the gospel when talking with my friends and family; and may they see how much You have changed me. For the sake of the glory of Jesus. In His Name. Amen.*

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#### ***FIT FOR PURPOSE***

**Luke 6:1-5** *One Sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields, and his disciples began to pick some ears of corn, rub them in their hands and eat the grain. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

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Christless religion always reduces relationship with God to rules. Of course, before Christ, apart from a few people who God filled with His Spirit, it was not possible to know Him personally. The Old Testament Law was clear about what God loved and hated, and how sacrifices could atone for unintentional sins; but there was no dynamic relationship with Father God. Without that personal fellowship, religious people compile rules for life; assuming that by keeping them, God's wrath will be appeased - the more intense that belief, the more rigorous the rules. It happened in Jesus' day with Pharisees adding many regulations to God's law ... and it still happens today.

Jesus brought a breath of fresh air. He said that God designed the Sabbath; a law which protected and provided for people. Nobody is designed to be a perpetual motion machine! We are also designed to worship God (and not our work or ourselves). So the Sabbath was one day away from work in order to be refreshed in body and in spirit - hearing God's Word and worshipping Him. But that relational purpose was obscured by legal definitions of what 'work' meant; to the point that rubbing grain in the hands to remove the husk and have a snack while on a country walk was declared illegal! Jesus pointed to ([1 Samuel 21:1-9](#)) where David's men were very hungry. Although the only bread available was specially consecrated and reserved for the priests, it was given to the group of bodyguards.

Of course, it was God who first defined the Sabbath ([Genesis 2:2-3](#)). So Jesus asserted His Deity by saying that He had the right to define what is acceptable to God on His special day. Because He is the Creator, He knows what is 'fit for purpose'. He knows when we are personally fulfilling the reason He placed us here; when we are in real relationship with Him and working with Him for the sake of His glory. Every day at work or at home is a divine assignment to work with God; so we must be careful that we do not constrict His plan for our daily lives by little rules which He has not given. At the same time, we must not be so arrogant as to ignore what the Bible clearly commands. God wants us to be 'fit for purpose': His Word and His Spirit will guide us securely and show us how to interact with our Maker.

**Prayer:** *Holy God. Thank You for showing me, in the Bible, what pleases and displeases You. Forgive my small-mindedness, trying to keep myself 'spiritually safe' with my religious or personal rules when You have not commanded them. Forgive my 'spiritual shortcuts' to holiness when at the same time I am out of order with You and not living the life You have planned for me. Forgive me also for making up what I think will please You, while ignoring what You have clearly written in the Bible. Please help me to grow in a proper dynamic relationship with You so that my life will be fit for the purpose You have intended for me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

**W@WLuke77**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **HATING JESUS**

**Luke 6:6-7** *On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shrivelled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Jesus went to 'church' (synagogue) to teach, but religious leaders came to criticise Him. They did not have open minds to receive the message from God, to help them understand why the Old Testament prophets wrote about Him. Instead, their hearts were hard; they had already decided that Jesus was an intolerable threat to their authority and power structure: He needed to be removed ... legally, of course, and that was why they scrutinised all His words and actions.

We do not know if they 'planted' the disabled man in the congregation, but they certainly thought that he might attract Jesus' compassion. If so, and Jesus healed him, then they would be able to report Him to the religious court for breaking the Sabbath law by 'working'. How perverse! They came to church to find fault with the preacher and use His compassion as a means of accusing Him. They did not care about the man with a paralysed hand.

Christless religion (that is, religion which is not devoted to worshipping and serving the Lord Jesus), will always behave in the same way. Jesus is a threat to those who do not love Him; He is an obstacle to their pride and power. It should never happen in the church of Jesus Christ: but it does, if people forget that Jesus really is the Lord. Helpful structures for serving Christ, become power-bases for personal politics. Ministry then becomes submerged under non-Jesus agendas. In the extreme His Word is dismissed by 'wise thinkers' who invent 'modern ways' which He will never own. Meanwhile, those who speak out for truth are criticised, or worse, as it was for Jesus.

Every believer needs to be alert to the danger of pretending to be on God's side while disagreeing with God's Word about Jesus. Christian leaders are especially vulnerable. And if that is true for them, pray for those who think they speak for God but have no hope in Christ. It is sobering to read that Jesus was more generous to His executioners ([Luke 23:34](#)) than to the religious leaders ([Luke 11:37-53](#)).

**Prayer:** *Sovereign Lord. Thank You for sending Jesus to tell the truth and to open the way to life for all who will believe in Him. Please forgive me when I harden my heart against Your Word and push Jesus away from His throne in my heart. Forgiven me when I criticise Your love and compassion, and fail to rejoice when Your blessings come to others. Give me a heart which is eager to hear You and swift to obey You, and may I delight in your wonderful works and daily submit myself to Your authority. I also pray for those whose hearts are hard against Jesus: please open their eyes to see Him. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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#### LESSONS IN GRACE

**Luke 6:8-11** *But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" He looked round at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Jesus knew that the religious leaders were hoping He would heal this man on the Sabbath day so that they could accuse Him of 'lawbreaking', and they were not disappointed. Of course, Jesus is never fooled by anybody; He knew what they were thinking, and it was not God honouring - they needed to know the truth. He also knew that His disciples needed training in how to deal with this sort of confrontation. So, He met the challenge head-on, in full view of a packed synagogue showing His authority over everything dysfunctional as the man's hand instantly gained strength and movement, resuming its full size as the wasted muscles were renewed.

As so often, He answered critical thoughts by a public question, "Is it right to do good on God's holy day?" The answer had to be "Yes". But if they said it, they would have admitted that Jesus was right and they were wrong. There is no record of any answer, except to collectively express their anger, presumably verbally with hostile body language. What a strange thing for clergy and theological administrators to do in 'church'! They had such little regard for that place of worship, or the Son of God who they should have worshipped: they simply proved that they worshipped themselves as they discussed how to dispose of Jesus!

Jesus is not a convenient "Yes-man". He knows that everybody is a sinner (including religious people) and that no one will know the truth unless God reveals it to them. So He taught the theory and practical lessons in one session. The right response would have been awe, and worship, repenting of wrong thoughts and proud hearts. But instead they hardened their hearts. On the other hand, the disciples learned from this lesson that they must not burden the Early Church with unnecessary rules ([Acts 15: 28-29](#)). So what about us? It is essential to take God's lessons seriously (that is how we learn), and ask Him to search our hearts ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)) so that we can root out anything which is offensive to Him. Then we will be able to teach others and be more effective for Christ in our church or workplace group.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank You for teaching every sinner who is willing to listen and learn. Please forgive me when I have been stubborn in resisting Your Word, or even wanting a totally different way from Yours. Help me to develop more of an appetite to learn from Your Word and to be softer hearted in my worship - appreciating all of Your grace to me. I want to be able to help others; please show me how I may best share the lessons You have already taught me. For Your glory's sake. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

#### PLANNING AHEAD

**Luke 6:12-16** *One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (NIV)*

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In business, teams are important. It is said that everybody brings something special to the table and makes a unique contribution. However, Jesus selected His team of raw recruits in a night of prayer. They were chosen to learn ('disciple' means learner or pupil) ... when they tried to be creative executives they failed ([Luke 22:31-34](#)). However, after their three years of training and then being filled with the Holy Spirit, they were sent out to be the leaders of the early church ('apostles' means 'sent ones'). That is, apart from Judas Iscariot.

We know quite a lot about some of these men; of others we know very little, but the Lord had a place for them all even though ministries are largely unsung in history. Interestingly Jesus chose some men from the same family (James and John; Andrew and Peter) or business - fishing or civil service. Some were good team players, others were individualists like Matthew. But why choose the traitor? Partly it was to fulfil prophecy, ([Psalm 41:9](#); [Zechariah 11:12](#); [John 6:64](#)); partly it was essential leadership training to contend with false apostles ([2 Corinthians 11:15](#)), false brothers ([2 Corinthians 11:26](#)) and false prophets ([2 Peter 2:1](#); [1 John 4:1](#)); and partly to teach that God's purposes are fulfilled despite or even through opposition. As disciples, they saw Jesus moving forward with the gospel; rigorously proclaiming and defending God's truth in the face of error. As apostles, they had to do the same. They learned to rely on what Jesus said, so that they would recognise how the Holy Spirit would use the Scriptures and lead them into mission despite the difficulties.

Today's Christians needs good leaders. Many will have learned competences in business. Some will be team players; others have a special role in mobilising God's people. But irrespective of personality type, spiritual leadership requires an inner conviction of God's call into what is humanly unknown. All of us are in God's training camp. He never wastes any of our past experiences, but uses them to mould us into the right shape for His service. We are not the foundational apostles, but God has chosen each of us to send into the situations for which He has trained us; but knowing we still cannot do anything without Him ([John 15:5](#)). So, wise believers keep looking out for God's appointments at work, in church, at leisure, when travelling; even when we encounter opposition. Those He calls, He intends to use!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank You that You specially select Your people and then equip them for service; proclaiming, confirming and defending the gospel in the face of hostility. Whatever I think of myself, thank You that You know why You have chosen me. I believe that You have been equipping me to serve in Your kingdom. Please stir my soul with Your Word and fill me afresh with Your Holy Spirit, so that I will be able to recognise the work You have set for me each day, and do it with Your help. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

**W@WLuke80**

## **Word@Work from BeaconLight**

### **POWERFUL ATTRACTION**

**Luke 6:17-19** *He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

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Lots of people wanted to learn from Jesus; they called themselves 'disciples', which means learners or pupils. However, the Master had selected just twelve of them to be on His apprentice training course - they would become the foundational apostles ([Luke 6:12-16](#)). From now on, Jesus would be teaching and healing many of the crowd who came to Him, but, at the same time, He was training the future leaders of the Early Church.

News about Jesus travelled fast. Soon, people were arriving in Galilee from all parts of Israel, from the religious south to the cosmopolitan coastal region in the west. They came because they had a problem they could not fix, a need which propelled them to seek help from Jesus. It was the first time that the disciple-apostles had witnessed anything like it - whatever the disease, Jesus healed it. The most powerful demons were expelled. Nobody who came to Jesus was disappointed. Everybody went away clean and free from their old problems; nobody remained a hostage to sickness, sin or Satan.

What was Jesus doing? Showing compassion and using His Divine power, certainly; but also demonstrating to the Twelve that He had more power to give a clean new life, than disease or demons could spoil. It was important that they understood that Jesus was Lord of all, if they were going to proclaim His total supremacy as the church grew and spread all over the Roman Empire.

Many people are curious about Jesus today. The gospel from your mouth, with your testimony of His power in your life, is an essential part of witnessing for Christ. Knowing what Christ has done for you, should give you confidence to share with those who want to learn. People want to know, "Does Jesus really have the power to save me?" They may not ask that question directly, but their questions and probing into your Christian life is because they want to know if Jesus can meet their need and satisfy their hearts. So be bold, yet humble. They do not need spiritual super-salesmen; just satisfied customers! If you know the power of the gospel in your life, don't be afraid or ashamed to tell others at work or with your neighbours. Don't forget, the gospel is still the power of God to save people ([Romans 1:16](#))!

**Prayer:** *Almighty God. Thank You for revealing Your grace to me in the Gospel. Thank You for its powerful effect in bringing me to trust in Jesus. Please forgive me when I have hidden Your light so that a needy world cannot see the truth. Help me to be strong and courageous to present my delight in Your salvation, and show others how they can also be healed in their souls. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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