

The Gospel of Luke, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 7: The Leper, the Paralytic, and the Call of Levi

Luke 5:12–39

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The doctrinal weight of this lesson rests on the identity and authority of Jesus, and the teacher should feel how much is at stake. When Jesus tells the paralytic, “your sins are forgiven you” (v. 20), the scribes draw the correct theological conclusion: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (v. 21). They are right about the premise and wrong about the man in front of them. Rather than correcting their theology, Jesus confirms it and then heals the paralytic to prove that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (v. 24). This is one of the clearest assertions of Christ’s deity in the Gospel. The lesson must affirm, joyfully and without flinching, that Jesus claimed a prerogative belonging to God alone and then validated the claim with a miracle no one could deny.

A second doctrinal theme is the newness that Christ brings. The chapter closes with the bridegroom present, the new wine, and the old wineskins (vv. 33–39), images that point beyond fasting customs to the new covenant itself. Help students see that the forms and shadows of the Old Law were never permanent. They pointed forward to Christ, who fulfilled them and inaugurated a new and better covenant (Colossians 2:14–17; Hebrews 8–10; Matthew 5:17). Teach the cleansed leper’s obedience to the Law (v. 14) carefully: Jesus honored the Law while it stood, even as He was bringing the reality the Law foreshadowed. And be precise about forgiveness in our own age. Here Jesus forgives directly by His own divine authority. In the gospel age, the forgiveness He purchased is received as people hear the gospel, believe, repent, confess Christ, and are baptized into Him for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4). Do not let this passage be used to teach forgiveness apart from God’s appointed response.

This passage was also written to form the student’s heart, and the teacher should aim there as deliberately as at any doctrine. The leper teaches us to trust Jesus’ willingness, not only His power. The paralytic’s friends teach us to carry people to Christ. Levi teaches us what grace does when it lands: it leaves everything, follows, and throws a feast so others can meet the Savior too. Send students home both surer of who Jesus is and softer toward the very people, the unclean and the sinful, that Christ came to call. The One who reached across every line in this chapter is reaching for each of them still.

Question 1

Student Question:

When the leper begs, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean,” Jesus “stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean’” (vv. 12–13). Under the Law a leper was unclean and

untouchable, yet Jesus touches him without becoming unclean himself. What does this scene reveal about who Jesus is, about the nature of His holiness, and about the way He deals with people the world has cast aside?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open with the sheer isolation of the leper. Under the Law of Moses, a man with leprosy lived a living death (Leviticus 13:45–46). He tore his clothes, covered his lip, cried “Unclean,” and dwelt outside the camp. He was cut off from worship, from family, from the simple dignity of human touch. The man who falls before Jesus in verse 12 is “full of leprosy,” an advanced case, and yet he comes with remarkable theology: “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean” (v. 12). His only uncertainty is whether Jesus is willing.

Now slow down at the touch. Jesus “stretched out his hand and touched him” (v. 13). He did not have to. He healed others with a word and at a distance. The touch was deliberate. Under the Law, touching a leper made a person ceremonially unclean, but with Jesus the flow runs the other direction. His holiness is not a fragile thing that contamination spoils; it is a cleansing power that overcomes the defilement it meets. Where everyone else recoiled, Jesus reached out, and the man felt a human hand for the first time in years before he ever felt healing.

Draw out what this reveals about Jesus. Only the Holy One could absorb defilement without being defiled. His holiness is active and redemptive, not merely protective. This anticipates the cross, where the sinless One takes our uncleanness upon himself and we are made clean. The leper is a living parable of every sinner Jesus saves.

Note that Jesus then sends the man to the priest “for a proof to them” according to the command of Moses (v. 14). Christ honors the Law while it stands. He is not a rebel against God’s revealed word; He is the One to whom it points. Land the scene pastorally: there are people who feel as untouchable as this leper, sure that God could help others but not them. The hand of Jesus is still stretched out toward the people the world will not touch.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The holiness of Christ as an active, cleansing power rather than a fragile purity threatened by contact (Hebrews 7:26)
- Jesus’ willingness, not only His ability, to cleanse and save the outcast
- Leprosy as a vivid picture of sin’s defilement and isolation (Leviticus 13:45–46)
- Christ’s honoring of the Law of Moses while it remained in force (v. 14; Matthew 5:17)
- The compassion of God for those the world casts aside

Discussion Prompts

- Why does it matter that Jesus touched the leper rather than healing him from a distance?
- What does the man’s words, “if you will,” reveal about where his doubt actually lay?

- Who do you know who feels untouchable, and how does this scene shape the way you see them?

Question 2

Student Question:

After cleansing the leper, Jesus “would withdraw to desolate places and pray” (v. 16), even as the crowds pressed in and His fame grew. When demands on you increase and people need you, what is your honest pattern, and what does it say that the sinless Son of God made deliberate, repeated retreats to pray?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the first self-examining question, and the aim is conviction, not information. Luke notes that as Jesus’ fame spread and crowds gathered to be healed, “he would withdraw to desolate places and pray” (v. 16). The verb tense suggests a habit, not a one-time event. The busier the ministry became, the more deliberately Jesus pulled away to be with the Father.

Let the group feel the weight of this. If anyone could have justified skipping prayer because of urgent human need, it was Jesus. The needs around him were real and endless: lepers, paralytics, the demon-oppressed, the curious, the desperate. Yet He did not let the urgent crowd out the essential. He guarded his communion with the Father as the source from which the ministry flowed.

Turn the mirror toward the students. For most of us, busyness is the great enemy of prayer. When pressure rises, prayer is the first thing we drop, telling ourselves we will pray when things settle down. Help the group name their honest pattern. Many will admit that their prayer life shrinks exactly when their need for God is greatest.

Offer encouragement, not guilt. Jesus did not retreat because He was weak but because communion with the Father was His strength. If the Son of God needed to withdraw and pray, our own need is greater still. Press toward something concrete: a specific time, a specific place, a specific rhythm of withdrawing this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Prayer as the source and not the byproduct of fruitful service (Mark 1:35)
- The genuine humanity of Jesus, who depended on communion with the Father
- The danger of letting the urgent crowd out the essential
- The discipline of solitude as a means of grace in the Christian life

Discussion Prompts

- What is your honest pattern of prayer when life gets busy?
- Why do you think Jesus increased his prayer as the demands increased?

- What specific time and place could you set aside this week to withdraw and pray?

Question 3

Student Question:

Four friends tore open a roof and lowered a paralyzed man down to Jesus, and “when he saw their faith” Jesus said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you” (vv. 19–20). What does it tell us that Jesus addressed the man’s sin before his paralysis, and what does this teach about our deepest need and about the value of bringing others to Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Set the scene fully. A paralyzed man has friends who will not be stopped. The house is so packed they cannot get near Jesus, so they climb the roof, tear it open, and lower their friend down on his mat into the middle of the room (vv. 18–19). This is faith with calluses on its hands. Luke says that “when he saw their faith” (v. 20), Jesus acted. Their faith, not only the paralytic’s, moved Him.

Now feel the surprise of what Jesus says. Everyone in that room, including the man on the mat, expected the word “walk.” Instead Jesus says, “Man, your sins are forgiven you” (v. 20). He looks past the obvious need to the deepest one. The man’s legs were broken, but his greater problem was a broken relationship with God. Jesus heals from the inside out.

Draw the doctrinal point gently here, saving the heavy lifting for question five. Jesus is teaching us our true condition. Our most desperate need is not health, wealth, or comfort, but forgiveness. A man can be perfectly healthy and perfectly lost. The greatest gift Jesus gives is not relief from our circumstances but reconciliation with God.

Then honor the friends. Their persistent, sweaty, roof-wrecking faith brought a helpless man to the only One who could save him. This is a picture of evangelism and intercession at their best. We cannot forgive anyone’s sins, but we can carry people to the feet of the One who can. Ask the group who they are willing to tear a roof open for.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Forgiveness of sins as humanity’s deepest need, deeper than physical healing
- The power of bringing others to Christ in faith (James 5:19–20)
- Jesus’ insight into the true condition of every person (John 2:24–25)
- Faith expressed in persistent, costly action rather than mere words

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Jesus address the man’s sins before his paralysis?
- What does the friends’ effort teach us about bringing people to Christ?
- Who is someone you would be willing to go to great lengths to bring to Jesus?

Question 4

Student Question:

Jesus saw a need no one in the room had named: this man came for healing, but Jesus dealt first with his sin. Who in your life are you tempted to help only at the surface level, and how might Jesus be calling you to care about people's deepest need and not merely their visible problems?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question grows directly from the scene. Jesus saw a need that no one in the room had spoken aloud. The paralytic came for working legs; Jesus dealt first with a guilty conscience. He cared about the whole man, but He refused to stop at the surface. Use this to expose our own tendency to help people in ways that cost us little and change nothing eternal.

Help students see the two ditches. On one side is the error of caring only for souls while ignoring real human suffering, which Jesus never did; He healed the man too. On the other side is the more common error among comfortable believers, of meeting only the visible, manageable needs, a meal, a ride, a kind word, while never speaking to the deeper need for Christ. Jesus held both together.

Make it specific. Ask each person to picture someone in their life: a coworker, a neighbor, a struggling family member. It is easy to bring them a casserole and far harder to bring them to Jesus. We hide behind surface kindness because it feels safer and asks less of us. Yet love that never addresses a person's standing before God has stopped short of the deepest love.

Encourage without manipulating. Caring about someone's eternal need does not mean ignoring their present pain; it means refusing to pretend that present pain is the whole story. Challenge the group to name one person and one concrete step toward caring for that person's soul and not only their circumstances.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's example of meeting both physical and spiritual need without reducing one to the other
- The temptation to substitute surface kindness for genuine care of the soul
- Love that seeks a person's highest good, which is reconciliation with God (Matthew 16:26)
- The believer's responsibility to speak the truth in love and not only to be nice

Discussion Prompts

- Who are you tempted to help only at the surface level?
- Why is it often easier to meet a visible need than to address a spiritual one?
- What is one step toward caring for someone's soul, not just their circumstances?

Question 5

Student Question:

The scribes and Pharisees reasoned, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” and Jesus, knowing their thoughts, healed the man so they would know “that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (vv. 21–24). Were the scribes right that only God can forgive sins, and what is Jesus claiming about himself by both pronouncing forgiveness and proving it with a miracle?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson, and the teacher should give it room and handle it with both confidence and reverence. When Jesus says, “Man, your sins are forgiven you” (v. 20), the scribes and Pharisees react with horror and reason in their hearts, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (v. 21). The first thing to establish is that, on the level of pure theology, they were exactly right. Sin is ultimately an offense against God, and only the One who has been wronged can pardon it. No mere man, no prophet, no priest, can stand up and absolve a sinner before God by his own authority.

Now feel the force of what Jesus does. He does not retreat. He does not say, “You misunderstand, I only meant to encourage him.” Knowing their thoughts, which itself is a divine ability, He presses in. He asks which is easier, to say “your sins are forgiven” or “rise and walk” (v. 23). Anyone can say the first, because no one can see whether it happened. So Jesus will do the visible, verifiable thing to authenticate the invisible one: “that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the man who was paralyzed, ‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home’” (v. 24).

Drive the logic home. The scribes were right that only God can forgive sins. Jesus then forgives sins and proves it with a miracle. The conclusion is unavoidable: Jesus is claiming and demonstrating an authority that belongs to God alone. This is not arrogance in a good man; it is a clear assertion of His deity. The instant healing is God’s own seal on the claim. The man walked out carrying the very mat he had been carried in on, living proof that the One who spoke the word of pardon had the right to speak it.

Guard the students from a common misuse of this text. Because Jesus here forgives directly and by His own divine authority, some treat the verse as if forgiveness comes to anyone simply by a private moment, apart from anything God has appointed. But notice carefully: it is precisely because Jesus is God in the flesh that He can pronounce pardon this way. The same Lord who forgave here later told His apostles how that purchased forgiveness would be received once the gospel began. On the day the church began, when convicted hearers asked what to do, Peter answered, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). The forgiveness Jesus has authority to give is received as we hear the gospel, believe in Him as Lord, repent, confess Him, and are baptized into Him (Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27). His divine authority is the source; God’s appointed response is the way we come under it.

End in worship. The point of the miracle was that they “may know” who Jesus is. We should leave this verse not merely with a settled argument but with a settled awe. The man on the mat met the Maker, and the Maker forgave him. That same authority is the ground of our own hope of pardon.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The deity of Christ, who claims and exercises the divine prerogative of forgiving sins (vv. 20–24; Mark 2:7)
- The scribes’ correct premise that only God can forgive sins, turned into a witness to Jesus’ identity
- The miracle as divine authentication of Jesus’ claim to authority (John 5:36; 10:37–38)
- Jesus’ divine knowledge of human thoughts (v. 22; John 2:24–25)
- The title Son of Man as a claim to authority and divine dignity (Daniel 7:13–14)
- Forgiveness in the gospel age received through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ, not by faith only or a private moment (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4)

Discussion Prompts

- Were the scribes right that only God can forgive sins, and why does that matter?
- How does the healing prove the claim Jesus made about himself?
- If Jesus has the authority to forgive, how does the New Testament say we receive that forgiveness today?

Question 6

Student Question:

When the paralytic walked, the crowd “were all amazed and glorified God, and they were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen extraordinary things today’” (v. 26). When was the last time the works of God genuinely filled you with awe, and what tends to dull your wonder at what He has done in saving you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let this self-examining question breathe. When the paralytic stood up, picked up his bed, and went home glorifying God, “amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen extraordinary things today’” (v. 26). The whole room was undone by what God had done. The teacher’s task is to help students recover that capacity for awe.

Name the slow erosion of wonder. The crowd had seen something so far beyond the ordinary that they could only stammer. Yet many lifelong believers can recite the gospel without a flicker of astonishment. Familiarity dulls us. We have heard that our sins are forgiven so many times

that the words slide past without landing. The miracle in this room is not greater than the miracle of a forgiven sinner; we have simply stopped seeing it.

Probe what dulls wonder. Routine, busyness, treating grace as our entitlement, comparing ourselves to others rather than measuring ourselves against the holiness of God. When we forget the depth of the pit we were lifted from, the rescue stops amazing us. Awe returns when we remember what we actually were and what God has actually done.

Move toward rekindling it. Encourage students to revisit the moment they first understood their forgiveness, to read the gospel as if for the first time, to let the word “forgiven” sink in until it staggers them again. A worshiping heart is not one that has seen more, but one that has stopped taking the wonder for granted.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Worship and awe as the fitting response to the works of God (Psalm 40:1–3)
- The danger of familiarity that dulls our wonder at grace
- Remembering what we were apart from Christ as a guard against pride (Ephesians 2:1–10)
- Glorifying God as the goal of His mighty acts

Discussion Prompts

- When did the grace of God last genuinely amaze you?
- What tends to dull your wonder at your own forgiveness?
- How might remembering what you were apart from Christ rekindle your awe?

Question 7

Student Question:

Jesus called Levi, a tax collector, with two words, “Follow me,” and Levi “left everything, and rose and followed him” (vv. 27–28). What does the call of Levi teach about the kind of people Jesus calls, about the nature of discipleship, and about the response He is looking for?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Move to the tax booth. Tax collectors were among the most despised people in Jewish society, seen as traitors who collaborated with Rome and grew rich by overcharging their own neighbors. Levi, also called Matthew, sat at exactly such a booth when Jesus walked by, looked at him, and said two words: “Follow me” (v. 27). The same Jesus who touched the leper now calls the collaborator. Grace keeps crossing the lines.

Notice the totality of the response. Luke says Levi “left everything, and rose and followed him” (v. 28). Unlike the fishermen, who could in theory return to their nets, Levi’s break was nearly irreversible. Once he abandoned his post, his place would be filled and his lucrative career was

over. He counted the cost in an instant and walked away from it. This is what discipleship looks like: a decisive turning that holds nothing back.

Teach the kind of people Jesus calls. He did not recruit the religious elite or the morally impressive. He called a tax collector, and would soon insist that He came for the sick, not the well (v. 31). The gospel is for people who know they need a Savior. Levi's qualification was not his goodness but his willingness to rise and follow when Christ called.

Connect this to the response Christ still seeks. He is not looking for admirers who keep their distance but for disciples who follow. Following means reordering our whole lives around Him, letting His call outweigh our security. Press the group: discipleship is not adding Jesus to a full life but rising from the table and going where He leads.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's call to despised and unlikely people, showing the reach of grace (1 Corinthians 1:26–29)
- Discipleship as a decisive, costly break with the old life (Luke 9:23; 14:33)
- The grace of God as the basis of the call, not the worthiness of the one called
- Following Christ as the right and necessary response to His call (John 10:27)

Discussion Prompts

- What does Levi's response teach about the nature of discipleship?
- What kind of people does Jesus call, and why is that good news?
- What would it look like for you to truly leave everything and follow?

Question 8

Student Question:

Levi responded to grace by hosting "a great feast" so that a crowd of tax collectors and sinners could sit at the table with Jesus (v. 29). When God's grace touches a person, it tends to overflow toward others. Who are the people in your life that respectable folks avoid, and what would it look like for you to bring them near to Jesus rather than keep them at a distance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question flows from Levi's feast. Having been found by grace, Levi immediately threw "a great feast in his house," and "there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them" (v. 29). His first instinct as a new disciple was to gather his old crowd and put them in the same room as Jesus. Grace received became grace shared.

Help the group see the pattern. People who have genuinely tasted forgiveness want others to taste it too. Levi did not abandon his friends as soon as he found Jesus; he leveraged his

friendships to introduce them to the Savior. He used the table, the most natural place of fellowship, as a bridge. This is evangelism at its warmest and least programmatic.

Expose our tendency to insulate ourselves. Many believers, over time, lose contact with anyone who is not already a Christian. Our circles shrink to the safe and the respectable, and the very people Jesus came to call become people we quietly avoid. Ask the group, honestly, who are the tax collectors and sinners in their world, and whether they have any real relationship with them at all.

Push toward concrete love. Bringing people to Jesus rarely starts with a sermon; it usually starts with a table. Challenge each person to name one person on the outside and one ordinary act of welcome, a meal, a conversation, an invitation, that could become a bridge to Christ this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Grace received naturally overflowing into grace shared (2 Corinthians 5:14–20)
- Hospitality and friendship as bridges for the gospel (Luke 19:1–10)
- The danger of Christian isolation from the very people Christ came to seek
- Love that draws sinners near to Christ rather than keeping them at a distance

Discussion Prompts

- Who are the people respectable folks avoid that are part of your world?
- How did Levi use his friendships and his table to point others to Jesus?
- What is one act of welcome that could become a bridge to Christ this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

The Pharisees grumbled that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, and He answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (vv. 31–32). Then, when questioned about fasting, He spoke of new wine that cannot be poured into old wineskins (vv. 37–38). What is Jesus teaching here about why He came, and how does the picture of new wine and old wineskins point to the new covenant He brings, which cannot be confined to the old forms of the Law?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question gathers two scenes that belong together. First, the Pharisees grumble that Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners, and He answers with a memorable principle: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (vv. 31–32). The irony is sharp. There were no truly righteous people in the room; the Pharisees were simply blind to their own sickness. Jesus came

as the physician of souls, and only those who admit they are sick will seek the cure. Note the word repentance: Jesus calls sinners, but He calls them to turn, not to stay as they are.

Then comes the question about fasting and the parables that answer it (vv. 33–39). John's disciples and the Pharisees fast; why do Jesus' disciples feast? Jesus answers with a wedding image: "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" (v. 34). The bridegroom has come. This is a season of joy, not mourning. Something has arrived in Jesus that changes everything, and the old patterns cannot simply continue unchanged.

Now teach the wineskins carefully, for this is the doctrinal heart of the closing section. "No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins" (v. 37). New wine is still fermenting and expanding; it needs fresh, flexible skins. An old, brittle skin will split under the pressure. Jesus is saying that the newness He brings cannot be poured back into the old containers. The forms and shadows of the Old Law, the sacrifices, the ceremonial fasts, the temple system, were never meant to be permanent. They pointed forward to Him. He came not to patch the old garment but to bring something genuinely new.

Make the covenant connection explicit, with Scripture. What Jesus pictures here, the New Testament later spells out. The first covenant was a shadow of the good things to come; Christ established a new and better covenant that made the first obsolete (Hebrews 8:6–13; 10:1). The record of debt that stood against us, with its legal demands, He set aside, nailing it to the cross, and the festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths were a shadow of what was to come, the substance of which is Christ (Colossians 2:14–17). Jesus did not destroy the Law; He fulfilled it (Matthew 5:17). We do not serve God today by going back to the old forms but by living in the new covenant Christ inaugurated by His blood.

Handle the last verse honestly. "No one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good'" (v. 39). This is a wry observation about human nature: people grow comfortable with the old and resist the new precisely because it is unfamiliar, even when the new is better. The Pharisees clung to the old forms and missed the Bridegroom standing in front of them. The warning still lands. We can prize our traditions and our comforts so highly that we resist the very newness of life Christ offers. The call is to receive the new wine of the gospel with joy, not to cling to the brittle skins of what is passing away.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's mission to call sinners to repentance, not to affirm the self-righteous (vv. 31–32; 1 Timothy 1:15)
- Repentance as essential to the call of Christ, a turning and not merely an acceptance
- Jesus as the Bridegroom whose presence brings a season of joy (John 3:29)
- The new covenant in Christ that cannot be confined to the old forms of the Law (Hebrews 8:6–13)
- The Old Law as a shadow fulfilled and set aside in Christ, not as the believer's present standard (Colossians 2:14–17; Matthew 5:17)

- The human tendency to prefer the familiar old over the better new, and the call to receive the gospel with joy

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Jesus say He came to call sinners and not the righteous?
- What does the picture of new wine and old wineskins teach about the covenant Christ brings?
- Where might we be tempted to cling to the old and resist the newness Christ offers?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole chapter: a leper touched and made clean, a paralytic forgiven and raised up, a tax collector called and transformed, and the promise of a newness that will not fit inside the old. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth from Luke 5:12-39 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Use this final question to draw the whole chapter together. Luke has given us four scenes that move in one direction: toward a Savior who crosses every line to bring sinners home. The untouchable leper is touched and cleansed. The helpless paralytic is forgiven and raised. The despised tax collector is called and transformed. And the old forms give way to the new wine of the gospel. Every scene shows the reach and the newness of grace in Christ.

Resist adding new content here. The aim is integration and response, not another doctrine. Give students room to name what God has actually stirred in them: perhaps fresh confidence that Jesus is God in the flesh with authority to forgive, perhaps conviction about someone they need to carry to Christ, perhaps a renewed willingness to leave something behind and follow.

Press gently toward specificity. A vague resolve to be more devoted rarely changes a week. Ask each person to name one concrete truth from this passage and one concrete response they will carry into the coming days. Help them be honest about the cost, as Levi was.

Close by lifting eyes to Christ. The whole chapter has been about Him: His holiness, His authority, His mercy, His call. Let the final word be worship of the One who is willing, who forgives, and who still says to people like us, "Follow me."

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Integration of the lesson's themes: the deity and authority of Christ, forgiveness of sins, the call to follow, and the new covenant
- The transforming purpose of God's word, which aims at changed lives and not merely informed minds (James 1:22)

- Personal response, repentance, and obedience as the goal of studying Scripture
- Worship of Christ as the fitting climax of the passage

Discussion Prompts

- What single truth from this passage do you most need this week?
- What is one concrete way you will respond to what God has shown you?
- How has this chapter changed the way you see Jesus?