

## In the Game

Luke 5:17 – 26

### I. Intro

- A. **Question:** How many enjoy watching sporting events – whether in person, on TV?
- B. **Question:** How many only watch certain sporting events but not others?
- C. **Illustration:** I'm amazed when watching sports (more football, some baseball) how many players never get to play. They're under contract with their team, they get a paycheck, but they never get the opportunity to get on the field, or on the court, and play. Some of them end up being nothing more than "cheerleaders" for their team. Often ask myself why these players stay.
- D. Same said true for many in the church today; they're on the team of Christ, but by their choice they never get in the game – week after week they sit on the bench and never get out on the field; still getting their "paycheck" - heaven, and they're perfectly fine with that; and, they've become nothing more than "cheerleaders" for their "team" - their church
- E. Last week when Jesus sought after His disciples: Jesus didn't choose the best, He chose the willing; Jesus chose them, they didn't choose Jesus (as they would've normally when choosing a Rabbi to learn under); their call, and our calling, is to follow Him, to be with Him; in order to follow who have to leave things behind; finally, Jesus told His disciples they would become *fishers of men*, and we too are to be *fishers of men* – to spiritually reproduce – realizing that We are God's Method for reaching people willing to follow Christ
- F. Last week challenge – to identify one person, to commit to pray for that person, and with help and power of Holy Spirit to share Christ with that person in hopes they will choose to follow Christ as their Lord and Savior
- G. Today, unpack a little more about this one person that we're going to commit going "fishing" for to bring them to Jesus; today our eyes are opened that it's time for people of God in the church to stop being just cheerleaders and become players that want to be "in the game"
- H. **READ Luke 5:17 – 26**
  - i. **v. 17:** What Jesus is doing and what the religious leaders of the day were doing - *sitting*)
  - ii. **v. 18:** Men only bringing ONE man; didn't going around town saying, "Anyone who needs healing come and we'll take you to Jesus", to them it wasn't about bringing in masses
  - iii. **v. 19:** The men were determined to get their friend to Jesus despite any obstacles, or any potential excuse (the crowd)

- iv. **v. 20:** Obviously assume this man paralyzed wanted help, wanted healing, but not so obvious he also must have desired forgiveness why Jesus offers forgiveness first instead of physical healing
- v. **v. 21:** There were critics; always will be people in our lives that tell us “you can’t”; majority of time the person that tells us “you can’t” when it comes to sharing our faith is ourselves
- vi. **v. 22:** Jesus knows our heart, knows what we’re thinking, knows the excuses we’ve created for not being obedient to His command and to get “in the game” and start making disciples
- vii. Lastly, when we do what we must do, then step back and let God do His thing, get ready to be amazed

I. Points to make about the men who brought this paralytic to Jesus

II. **1 – They had a mission**

- A. When we set ourselves on a mission and purpose **it drives us** to make sure that mission is accomplished
  - i. These men were all focused on the same mission, they were all “in the game” together participating; wasn’t a select few
  - ii. **Illustration:** Myself and completing a specific task
  - iii. When Jesus came to this earth He had a mission: Luke 19:10 (NIV)  
10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
- B. Not only does mission drive us, but it **gives us direction**
  - i. If you have no mission, or if you abandon the mission you have, it’s not that there becomes no direction, but it ends up giving way to multiple different directions, everyone choosing their own path of choice; no common purpose anymore
  - ii. That’s why today churches are all over the place because they’ve lost sight of the mission that’s been set before us – *Go therefore and make disciples*
- C. **Question:** What drives you, what pushes you in life? Your job, your family, your financial well-being? If any of these are correct, you know you’d sacrifice anything to make sure it was done, right?
- D. **Question:** What drives you, spiritually speaking? What Godly kingdom dreams do you have? Any? Not just for living in the moment, but living for eternity?
- E. **Question:** Is it that some family member, good friend, neighbor come to know and follow Christ as their Savior? That they would sign on to become part of God’s team and want to be able to get “in the game”?
- F. Pastor quote: *If the size of your mission doesn’t intimidate you, then it’s probably insulting to God*

### III. **2 – They had expectation**

- A. **The problem with many of us as believers that when we ask the Lord for something on prayer we don't expect – almost as if our thinking is that if the Lord answers the prayer we've just been lucky – like the Lord only answers prayer once in a lifetime**
- B. **Their expectation – if they could only just get their friend to Jesus, can't imagine what Jesus could do in his life**
- C. **Question:** Where's our expectation for our unsaved family members, coworkers, classmates, neighbors? If we can just have a moment and tell them about Jesus and get them to Him just imagine the change that He can make in their life?
- D. **Sad, there's no expectation because many aren't willing to take the risk, and there is some risk – the risk of being rejected or looking like some kind of weirdo**
- E. **Leading of God's people into promised land fell on Joshua: Joshua 1:9 (NIV)**  
9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." ; meaning – *You're going to have to take a risk on me at some point Joshua!*
- F. **Hebrews 10:39 (NIV)**  
39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.
- G. **Question:** If we truly believe that we follow and serve a big God, why shouldn't we have big expectations? The men that brought their paralytic friend to Jesus had big expectations and Jesus met those expectations in a big way
- H. **Question:** When is the last time you took a risk on the Lord?

### IV. **3 – They had obstacles**

- A. **When these men brought their friend to Jesus, the moment they arrive they're met with an obstacle – they can't get in the door, it's crowded with people**
- B. **At this point, many of us would throw in the towel; the one person we want to share Christ with, immediately we see an obstacle (God doesn't seem to be "opening the door" or providing that opportunity), and so we give up**
- C. **Jason Gaston quote:** *For most believers, an "open door" is just Christianese for the path of least resistance; attitude – if God will open the door then I'll walk through it – how convenient that is*
- D. **But these men were going to do whatever it took – which meant putting their life, and the life of their paralyzed friend, most likely in jeopardy by**

climbing up on the roof, making a harness of some kind, and lowering their friend through an opening (crazy right – truly shows desperation in their hearts to get their friend help)

- E. Most who sit in churches each and every Sunday are not desperate enough to see people come to Christ that if the “door is too crowded”, we’ve run into a little inconvenience, then we give up
- F. If the Apostles had had this same attitude, half the New Testament would have never been written; their obstacle – flogged (whipped), beaten, imprisoned, shipwrecked (**Question**: Sound like an “open door”?)
- G. The times when it seems the door is closed, we need to find another opening – sometimes you might need to “bust the door down”, to do everything possible to bring someone to Jesus; Why so important – because you never know if us sharing Christ with them might not just be their very last opportunity for being able to hear it
- H. If there’s one thing you can be guaranteed on, whenever you try to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ with someone, you will encounter obstacles – and it will be Satan putting them there; don’t ever let Satan have his way when it comes to someone’s salvation

#### V. 4 – They got more than they imagined

- A. Not only did their friend get healed physically (that’s what they were hoping for) but he also got healed spiritually
- B. Many times we go to Jesus and expect the mundane – Jesus blessed me today with some rain or sun, Jesus gave me safe travel, Jesus kept me from getting the flu that’s going around (blah, blah, blah)
- C. When it comes to what the Lord can do through the powerful work of His Holy Spirit, don’t settle for the mundane when Jesus offers the miraculous
- D. Take a risk, ask God to do way more than you think is humanly possible – because God IS NOT HUMAN, He’s God
- E. If that one person on your heart and mind you think is too far gone spiritually, hopelessly lost, I challenge you to begin praying that God will melt their heart, and you break down whatever doors (obstacles) that Satan going to put in your way, and you out of desperation tell that person about Jesus, and then watch and be amazed
- F. **REFER v. 26**
- G. **Question**: Did you notice what happens in v. 27, 28? **READ v. 27**
  - i. A tax collector! Someone who most people would have written off; someone most people would have considered too far gone, hopelessly lost; **READ v. 28**

#### VI. Close

- A. **Jesus doesn't call us to go reach masses of people (we can't save them anyway, only the Holy Spirit can) – Jesus just calls us to go and be His witnesses**
- B. **Last week, heard that We Are God's Method for spreading the Gospel (Say it!)**
- C. **Question: What's your mission in this life? What's our mission as the church?**
- D. **Question: What's your expectation for accomplishment of that mission? What's our expectation as the church?**
- E. **Question: What are you doing about the obstacles? What are we as the church doing about the obstacles?**
- F. **Question: What are you waiting for? What are WE waiting for?**