Session 8 Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee (Mk. 1-2; Lk. 4-5)

1. Jesus in Galilee: Headquarters in Capernaum
   1. In this session, we look at Jesus’ ministry in the Galilee region that lasted about 18 months (from the autumn AD 27 to spring AD 29). Luke gave an overview of Jesus’ ministry (4:14-5:11) and how   
      He interacted with His opponents (5:12-6:11) and His disciples (6:12-49).

*Well, tonight we are looking at session eight in our series on Studies in the Life of Christ. Mostly we are going to be in Luke 4-5. Mark 1-2 is the parallel passage to Luke 4-5. So you are covering the same territory and the same stories in Mark 1-2 and Luke 4-5. I have chosen to focus mostly on Luke 4-5, though I will add a few details from Mark that are not in Luke.*

*In this session, we are going to look at Jesus’ ministry in the Galilee region. In our last session, He was down south in Jerusalem. That is where He began His ministry, down there for some months. Now He has come up north to the region of Galilee. Of course, Nazareth is where He grew up, which is in the region of Galilee. Capernaum is in Galilee. Most of Jesus’ ministry was in the Galilee region. So it is that we are looking at about an eighteen-month period covered by these chapters here.*

* 1. Jesus was initially received very well in the synagogues in Galilee, especially after the people heard of the many miracles that He had done recently while in Jerusalem (Jn. 4:45).

14Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. (Lk. 4:14-15)

45So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. (Jn. 4:45)

*It begins in Luke 4:14. He returns in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. In other words, He is coming back home. He went down south—fully God but living as a Man—He went down south and was baptized in water by John, and the power of the Spirit came on Him, as a Man, to anoint Him in His humanity in His messianic office. So He went through the temptation with the power of God, having heard the audible voice of God. Now He is coming back home to begin ministry in His own region, the Galilee region. Now He is in the power of the Holy Spirit. Miracles are now going to be happening after thirty years of silence. Now it is going to be a continual three-and-a-half-year period after His anointing, or a three-year period, with the miracles and all the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit.*

*Just imagine the excitement! The son of Joseph, the carpenter, the young Man, went down south, then He came back up. They heard about Him doing some miracles when He was down in Jerusalem. So, in verse 14, He returns in the power of the Spirit. This is a new look at Him. I mean it is a new story about His life. Nobody has seen this part of His life. News about Him went everywhere. “Joseph’s son, He is back, the carpenter’s boy. He has got power in His life. What happened? I do not know. Something with John the Baptist down south.”*

*Verse 15, He taught in their synagogue. Again, this was brand new. It is His first teaching experience in terms of going to the synagogue being anointed as the Messiah. Everybody is praising Him or glorifying Him. Now it is a great beginning, and we are to learn a lesson by this great beginning because Jesus is a realist. He knows that though it begins exciting, with people’s excitement, with people being excited, He knows it is going to go sour pretty quickly.*

*One of the problems that we have is that we get some good momentum, some good things happen in our life, and we are imagining that for the next ten, twenty, thirty years it is just going to stay good and get better. Well, in the ministry and the life of Jesus it did not work that way. There were tremendous advancements, then tremendous opposition and resistance against Him. He knew that would take place. We learn by the pattern of His life that when great things happen often that means there is going to be a counterattack of the enemy that is going to come fiercely. We do not lose heart, we do not think God abandoned us, but we set our soul, we set our heart to persevere, knowing that the breakthroughs have counterattacks and challenges of the enemy.*

*Going back to John 4:45, John puts it a little bit differently. “When He came to Galilee,” John said that all the Galileans were excited just because they saw the things He did down in Jerusalem a few weeks earlier. They heard, they saw the miracles. They went down for the feast, for Passover. They thought, “Wow, what do you know, a guy from our area! This is a whole new thing here!” So they went back home and said, “Hey, that kid is amazing! I do not know what happened, but something big is happening in His life.”*

* 1. Jesus healed a royal official’s son (Jn. 4:46-54). The nobleman was mistaken in thinking that Jesus needed to leave Cana to travel the 15 miles to Capernaum to heal his son. If the nobleman believed that Jesus was God, then He could have spoken the word and healed him. It was 1 pm (the seventh hour), so if he had left right away, he could have been home at 6 pm that night.

46So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee…And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum…47he…implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs…you will by no means believe.” 49The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!” 50Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him….51And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, “Your son lives!…52Yesterday at the seventh hour [1pm] the fever left him.” 53So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household. (Jn. 4:46-53)

*In the latter part of John 4, John describes only one episode of His Galilean ministry. Then we will go back over to Luke and Mark, as they will pick it up and develop it.*

*So Jesus comes back, John 4:36. He comes back to Cana of Galilee. Remember He was in Cana the first time when He did the miracle at the wedding, but it was a miracle that nobody knew about. It was a silent kind of deal. I mean the waiters knew, but the party did not know. Jesus slipped out of town, so it was a miracle that mostly went unnoticed.*

*Well, He is back in Cana again. He is going to do another miracle, and it is going to be the same sort of thing. It will mostly go unnoticed because He is going to speak the Word and someone is going to be healed fifteen miles away. The people in His immediate area do not even know the miracle happened. Jesus is content. So He began there with His first two miracles that were kind of nondramatic in terms of creating a big stir of excitement to the people around Him.*

*Verse 46, He came to Cana of Galilee. There was a nobleman, and his son was sick in Capernaum. Now Capernaum is about fifteen miles from Cana. It is all up north in Galilee; Galilee is the region. The nobleman implored Him or begged Him, “Come down to Capernaum and heal my son. He is absolutely at the end, and there is no hope for him without a miracle.” He is asking this young man about whom this new story going around that He does miracles because people saw Him down in Jerusalem. He pleads, “Come walk fifteen miles, and lay hands on my son,” because from Cana to Capernaum was fifteen miles.*

*Jesus gives him a gentle rebuke and says, “Unless you people see signs! I mean you have heard about the miracles, the testimony of what I did in Jerusalem, but until you see them with your own eyes, you will not believe Me, will you?”*

*This nobleman is desperate about his son on the verge of death. He tries again verse 49, “Come down”—make the fifteen mile walk—“and lay hands on my son.”*

*Jesus might have thought, “Well, let’s try it a different way.” He said, in essence, “I am going to tell you the time and distance does not hinder Me at all because I am God.” He says, “Your son is healed.” Basically He was communicating, “I am not going to walk fifteen miles, not because of the inconvenience, but because I have authority that is greater than time and distance. I do not need to go. If you believe who I am, you will know I do not need to go.”*

*The nobleman must have thought, “I never heard anybody talk this way before,” because Jesus gave him a little rebuke in verse 48 and now was saying, “You heard the stories. Now believe who I am. Open your heart.”*

*Verse 50, He said, “Go your way.”*

*For the man this was a decisive moment. He said, “Okay, okay. You know, okay, I am going with that.” Verse 51, “Now as he was going down,” and actually this is the next day. When you read the whole story, it is the next day. In other words, this nobleman so believed Jesus that he did not walk home that moment to go make sure his son was healed. He says, “You know what? I am going to finish my business then. I believe you. I am going to spend the night here even though it is only fifteen miles.” It was a three- or four-hour walk. He could have gone home that day because Jesus told him this about the seventh hour, one o’clock in the afternoon. The guy thought, “I so believe Him, I am just going to go ahead and finish my business that I am here in Cana for, and then I am going to go home. I am going to have peace and know that my son is healed. I am just going to go there to that place of belief.”*

*You know, sometimes that is how the Lord wants us to respond. He says to us, “I said it. Believe it. Peace be still to the storm in your heart. Go about your business knowing it is finished, it is taken care of.” That is what this nobleman does.*

*Verse 51, as he as walking these fifteen miles, a three- or four-hour walk, on the way there he meets a group from his team back home Capernaum.” They say, “Your son lives.”*

*He asked, “When?” Verse 52, “When did it happen?” They said, it was about one o’clock yesterday, the seventh hour, one o’clock. Remember that because they start counting at 6:00am in the morning, the seventh hour is 1:00pm. The fever just suddenly left. The father knew that was exactly when that young man from Nazareth said it. He must have thought, “I am so glad I believed Him because I only had His word.” Often all we have is His word. We have no signs, no feelings, no anything. We just have His word. Often that is how He wants us to respond.*

* 1. Jesus’ first recorded message was given in Nazareth; Jesus declared that the Spirit was on Him (Lk. 4:16-21; cf. Isa. 61:1-2). The favorable year of the Lord referred to the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8).

16He came to Nazareth…as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day… 17And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book,   
He found the place where it was written: 18“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives…19To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” 20Then He closed the book…And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing…” (Lk. 4:16-21)

*Now He goes from Cana to Nazareth. He goes to His hometown. He is anointed now. It is His first time back home since the power of God is on Him. Remember, He has always been God. He had never ceased to be God, but He is never displayed His deity. So the folks back home, even after thirty years they did not know this about Him. He had always lived in the limitations of His humanity. Now He has the Holy Spirit touching His humanity, and it is a whole new game. It is a whole new situation.*

*He wants to go back home and give them the first opportunity to respond as a city. So He goes to the whole city by walking into the synagogue, Luke 4:16. Now we are again moving between Mark 1-2 and Luke 4-5. I am just going to tell the story going back and forth because they are both telling the same events. He goes to Nazareth, His town. The power of God is on Him. I mean He has got to be excited, but He knows that town. He knows that they are cynical and they are not responsive to God. They have a form of being devout, but they are not really responsive at the heart level, and He knows this. He knows this is going to be a challenge.*

*So He goes into the synagogue. It is the Sabbath. Verse 17, “He was handed the book of Isaiah the prophet.” You see, often the leader of the synagogue would have different people from the community read–give a reading and make a few comments. And the news is buzzing around about Jesus. So He comes in, and the leaders say, “Hey, Jesus, good to have you back. We are hearing big stuff about You. Hey, would You do the reading today?”*

*Jesus says, “Yeah, I would love to.”*

*So they hand Him the book of Isaiah. Jesus must have thought, “Perfect,” because each book was a different scroll. The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament were on twenty-four scrolls. So Jesus was probably thinking, “Good, you handed me Isaiah. Perfect.” He opened it, and He found the place. He went right to Isaiah 61. It is His story. He had probably read and thought on Isaiah 61 thousands of times through His teen years. He got to the place in Isaiah 61, the famous verse 18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.”*

*I can just imagine Him saying, “The anointing is on Me. I was with John the Baptist a few months ago, and now the power is on Me. The power of God is on Me.”*

*They are thinking, “Wow, this is cool! Home boy makes it big in Jerusalem.” Really they are excited, one of their own, because nothing big ever happened in Nazareth. Nazareth was that town where people cannot wait to get out of high school to move away from. No, for real! Nazareth had that negative reputation of not going anywhere. So they thought, “Wow, one of our guys!”*

*He said in verse 18, “The Spirit has anointed Me. It happened at My baptism a few months ago. Here is what I am going to do the rest of My days: I am going to preach to the poor.”*

*They are thinking, “Man, we know that verse in Isaiah 61. That is amazing! You are going to do some of that.”*

*Jesus is thinking, “No, I am not just going to do some of it. I* ***am*** *that!”*

*They do not get this part yet because it was like if one of us said that we are really into Isaiah 61 and that the Lord is blessing us with that. We would go, “Cool, what a great testimony!” So far that is all they think is happening.*

*He goes on, “He sent Me to heal the brokenhearted. I am about healing broken hearts.” Beloved, the anointing of the Holy Spirit on Him 2,000 years ago and even when He rose from the dead, ascended to the Father, and released the Spirit upon the Church, is about healing the broken heart. It is about healing your broken heart, and it is about the Lord using you to heal the broken hearts of others. God is in the “healing-the-broken-heart” business. This is one of the reasons the anointing has been released to the human experience. It is to proclaim liberty to captives. Jesus proclaimed liberty to many who were tormented by fear and demons, many. He liberated them spiritually and emotionally.*

*He said, “I am here”—verse 19—“to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” The “acceptable year of the Lord” in the Old Testament language was the year of salvation, the year of Jubilee when all the debts were forgiven, the new beginning. It is the acceptable year; it is the year of favor.*

*They are thinking, “Yay!”*

*Again, it would be like someone you know is really devout, and the Lord has visited them, and they are saying, “This is what I am going to be doing.”*

*We would say, “Cool.”*

*But Jesus means “****I am*** *this” in the absolute sense. Not just one of many participating in this anointing. Verse 20, He closed the book. Everybody was looking at Him because they have heard the stories of what happened in Jerusalem. They heard the stories, even what happened in Capernaum with the nobleman’s son. In a minute, He is going to say, “You are heard what I did in Capernaum. I healed that guy from fifteen miles away.” The story was already getting around.*

*Everyone is looking at Him, “Okay, the anointing is on you. Okay.” They are looking at Him, and I imagine they are smiling.*

*He says, “Today this scripture is fulfilled.” What they probably think He means it that today this scripture is going to have some fulfillment. They do not know He is the Messiah, the One and only.*

* + 1. Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2a about the ministry of Messiah emphasizing the power of the Spirit and focused on the good news. Jesus did not read *“and the day of vengeance of our God”* in Isaiah 61:2b. This is a reference to the day of the Lord or Great Tribulation judgments.

*Now it is interesting that, as He read Isaiah 62, notice He read verses 1-2, but only half of verse 2. He did not read the rest of verse 2, very significantly. He read the part about being anointed and the focus on the good news. The people in Nazareth loved it. But He did not read the second part of verse 2.*

*When you go back to Isaiah 61, and you read the second part, it goes on, “and the day of vengeance I am releasing that too.” Jesus does not say that part because He is not going to do that until the end of the age. You see, the day of vengeance is the day of the Lord’s judgments in the Great Tribulation with the global unprecedented judgment upon the Antichrist and his empire. It is when the Lord is literally cleansing the earth from evil; that is the day of vengeance. The day of vengeance is a good day for believers. It is a day when God confronts sin on a global level in a radical, comprehensive way: the day of vengeance. He did not add that part of the verse because, while for 2,000 years there have been moments of that, the day of vengeance is an eschatological hour, meaning an end-time hour. It is those final years before the coming of the Lord and involved in the hour of His coming.*

* + 1. The present day—the “today” (4:21) is the promised time of salvation or favor (2 Cor. 6:2).

*Verse 21, “Today this scripture is fulfilled.” We are living in the 2,000-year period called “today.” Paul the apostle referred to this in 2 Corinthians 6, saying that we are into the “today,” as in it is now. Yes, we are believing God for a breakthrough. One of our assignments in the Lord as a house of prayer is that with many, many other groups across our nation we are contending for a third great awakening. I mean a massive breakthrough in our nation of the Holy Spirit. We are contending for breakthrough. That is part of our assignment, and that is part of our DNA.*

*Something dynamic, something bigger than before is coming. Though we are contending for something bigger, some people make the mistake in the contending for something big and historic: they let go of the today. You see, for 2,000 years “today” is the day of the anointing. We can get breakthrough in our individual lives. We may not get breakthrough in the nation, we may not have an historic revival, but we can have our own life touched. Today. For every believer, it is today. So, though I am believing God for a lot of breakthrough tomorrow in our nation, and the nations of the world actually, I never want to let go of pressing in with faith for today, for my own heart to get touched, to lead people to Jesus, to see people filled with the Holy Spirit, people to be healed* ***today****, not in just the great revival. I have seen people let go of today while they are contending for tomorrow. I have seen a lot of people so rejoicing in today that they do not contend for tomorrow. I want to do both. I want to press into today with gratitude and faith, but I do not want to ever let go of the vision of the historic breakthrough that I do not think is far away.*

* 1. Jesus was rejected in Nazareth (Lk. 4:22-30)

22So all…marveled at the gracious words... 23He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb   
to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum [Jn. 4:46-54],   
do also here in Your country.’” 24Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine…26but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” 28So all those in the synagogue…were filled with wrath, 29and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill…that they might throw Him down the cliff. 30Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. (Lk. 4:22-30)

Verse 22, so far so good. They are going well, listening. They are thinking, “Hey, you are anointed! Today it is fulfilled. Man, we are going to see big stuff. We heard what You did in Jerusalem. We heard about that nobleman in Capernaum for whom You healed his son. You did not even go there! You just spoke it and the power hit that kid. Come on, Man! Let’s do it! We are here!”

* + 1. Jesus found favor with them as long as He only spoke positive words (4:22). His claim to be anointed by God did not offend them since they had heard of His miracles (4:23). But quickly they rejected Him (4:28) when He spoke as a prophet—revealing the condition of their heart.

*It starts well, until Jesus the Prophet starts speaking, because Jesus is now going to touch the real issues in their hearts they are not dealing with. They do not like this part. He makes four statements. So far everything was positive. Liberty, broken hearts, the poor, the anointing, I am here, it is happening, yes. Suddenly He shifts. He is going to talk about something, He is going to make four negative statements, because He is going to talk about where their hearts really are. What these statements are really about is God’s sovereign leadership.*

*See, they are thinking, “You are a Nazareth boy. Nothing good happens in Nazareth, but you are back home. Man, maybe we are going to make this the New Jerusalem, the new revival center! Maybe this is it.”*

*Jesus would say, “No, no, no! My Father is sovereign. Though you think as this city you have a claim on Me because I grew up here, I am loyal to My Father. His ways are different than everybody’s ways.” He starts off with a proverb that insults them. He says in verse 23, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal Yourself.’”*

*There was a proverb that was going around in that day which was, “Physician, heal your own limp.” So it’s as if they were saying, “Jesus, get things right with you and this town. I mean let’s get right here. You fix things here, and get connected to us, and then we will go from there.”*

*So this is a little bit of a negative beginning because He is saying, “No, I am not going to be your boy here. That is not what is going to happen.”*

* + 1. ***Do also here***: Jesus refuted the mistaken idea that Nazareth had a special claim on Him since He was raised there. They probably felt they should see special miracles.

*Then He goes on, “I know what you are saying, ‘We heard what happened in Capernaum when the nobleman’s son was healed from fifteen miles away. Yeah, we heard that. Maybe You will do great things here in Nazareth.’” He says, “No, I am not going to do it that way either.”*

* + 1. Jesus used two examples from Scripture to show how the God of Israel crossed all barriers to aid foreigners who believed, while rejecting Israel who did not believe. Gentiles, like the Phoenician widow and the Syrian leper, who believed were more receptive than unbelieving Nazareth (1 Kgs. 17:12-24; 19:10, 14; 2 Kgs. 5:1-14).
    2. Proverb: “Physician, heal your own limp!” (Genesis Rabbah 23:4) or “If you can fix others, please first fix yourself.”

*Third statement, He says, “I say to you no prophet is accepted in his own country.” He was saying, “I am talking prophetically now. I am talking about issues that are going to touch your heart because you really have an animosity against God you do not even know about. I am going to bring it to the surface, and you are not going to like Me.”*

*They are looking at Him thinking, “Well, wait a second! Man, what is going on here? Do you think you are some hotshot or something?”*

*His response would be, “No, I think the sovereignty of God is what I am committed to, not to your hometown sentimentality. That is not what I am committed to.” He says, “I want to tell you,”—verse 25, it really gets negative—“back in the days of Elijah”—that was almost 1,000 years before Christ—“there were a lot of widows in Israel, right?” They nod. “There the heavens were shut up for three-and-a-half” a drought that is in 1 Kings 18; it is a well-known story of the drought in the years of Elijah.*

*They are nodding, “Yeah, a lot of widows were really suffering, Jewish widows, great famine.”*

*Verse 26, “But to none of those widows did God sovereignly send the prophet of Elijah, but He sent him to a widow in Sidon”—and that is up north, Phoenicia. He sent him to a pagan country, to Gentiles, to people that were pagan. God sent mercy outside of Israel to the Gentiles.*

*They are thinking, “Oh, we do not like that! We do not like God helping the Gentiles when we want help.”*

*He goes on, “Well, a few years later”—verse 27—“with Elisha”—the next guy after Elijah. Elisha came right after him, as most of you know—there were many lepers in Israel. None of them were cleansed in the days of Elisha, but one guy who was a Syrian, the captain of the Syrian army.” The Syrians hated Israel. The Syrians were attacking Israel and bringing destruction. God healed a leper who was the captain of the Syrian army.*

*They are thinking, “We really do not like that.”*

*You know it would be like in World War II, a prophet in France saying, “What if God wants to bring blessing to France by touching the Nazis in Germany?” I mean it was that kind of intensity.*

*They are thinking, “Who do You think You are?”*

*He is saying, as it were, “You do not understand, I am the Messiah.” It is the same message He had to His mother. “I am under the sovereignty of God, and things are different now. I am not your little guy. That is not how it is working. I am God, and I am under the authority of My Father. Will you want My leadership if I do not do it the way you want, in your timeframe and your way?” That is really what He is saying.*

*The people in Nazareth said, “No, we want You if You are going to be our guy and we are going to be a new revival center. If it is going to get exciting, we want You.”*

*Jesus would say that it does not work that way because God’s ways are so different. So, as I read this passage, I wonder, what if God leads us differently? What if we go through bigger challenges before bigger breakthroughs? What if God in His sovereignty is leading in a way in perfect wisdom, will we say, “No, we are only in it if it gets exciting and easy. Then we are in it. If it gets hard and there is a delay, we are out.”*

*Maybe they were thinking, “You bless the bad people over there, the people who should not get blessed, from Sidon and from Syria, the Gentiles, the pagans, the enemies. You cannot bless them and not bless us.”*

*The Lord would say, “I am the leader. I know what I am doing.”*

*Well, in verse 28, they got really mad, filled with wrath, and rose up. They wanted to take this hometown boy, the favorite, and throw Him over a cliff. I mean they meant it! Jesus grew up with them. They were the elders when He was a boy, and others were the young men His age. They are so angry at Him. All He did was say, “If God is sovereign and does not do it on your timeframe and the way you want, will you still follow Him?” He spoke as a prophet, and their agendas and their basic mistrust of God’s leadership came to the surface with anger.*

*Verse 30, “He passed through the midst.” They were going to throw Him off the cliff, and by the Spirit of God and God’s sovereignty He walked through them, maybe even stared right at them. They must have thought, “I do not know how He did it, but He walked through the crowd and got away.”*

* 1. Jesus settled in Capernaum instead of Nazareth or Jerusalem (Lk. 4:31; cf. Mt. 4:13-17; Mk. 1:14). Capernaum was 20 miles from Nazareth. The cycle of initial excitement began again in Capernaum as the people were astonished at His words later rejected Him as in Nazareth (Mt. 11:23; Lk. 4:22). Nazareth was about 1,200 feet above sea level; Capernaum was about 700 feet below sea level.

31Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. (Lk. 4:31-32)

*Now He goes down to Capernaum. You will notice when you are reading the Gospels that they are always “going down” to Capernaum, because Capernaum is right next to the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee, by the way, has four different names, but it is the same Sea of Galilee every time. Four different names because of the thousands of years of Jewish history and different people and different reasons, so they have different names for these locations.*

*He goes to Capernaum, verse 31, and He settles there. He decided He was not making Jerusalem His headquarters nor Nazareth. He chose to go to Capernaum. The reason He went to Capernaum—I do not have this on the notes—is because Isaiah 9 said a great light would shine in Naphtali and Zebulun, and that is where Capernaum is. That is the area prophesied by Isaiah where Jesus would actually base His ministry for a season, so that is why He is in Capernaum. It was God’s perfect design.*

*Capernaum is 700 feet below sea level because where the lakeshore is. I mean, it is way down deep, and all the surrounding area is like 500 feet above sea level or 1,000 feet. Nazareth is at 1,200 feet. Everything goes downwards to Capernaum. So every time you read it, you will notice the expression, “went down to Capernaum,” because it is really low there.*

*Well, the old cycle is going to happen again. He is in Capernaum. Capernaum is so excited! Undoubtedly they have read Isaiah 9 where it says in essence that He is going to base His ministry there, if you read it and read between the lines. Isaiah said He would be a great light that would shine in that area. So He is there, and they are so excited. Verse 32, astonished, wow, miracles, power!*

*They do not realize Jesus knows that in a number of months they are going to turn on Him, too. Because, while people want His power and His blessing, they do not want His message. His message is that He wants the Father’s agenda to happen. The Father’s agenda is not politically correct in man’s thinking. What the Father thinks is best for cities and nations and where He is leading history, the way He is bringing history to freedom, none of us would choose that. We would choose an easier path. The Father knows exactly what He is doing.*

*So everywhere Jesus went, they liked Him for a minute because of the power and the blessing and the presupposition that things were going to get really easy and fun. Then His messaging came out, and they said, “Ugh, bah-humbug! We are not interested in Your power if this is what You are going to promote, this kind of ideology.”*

* 1. Jesus’ first call of the four fishermen—Peter, Andrew, James, and John by the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum (Mk. 1:16-20; cf. Mt. 4:18-22). Notice the instant response of these four disciples.   
     Jesus’disciples did not regularly travel with Him in ministry until around the autumn of AD 27.

16And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee [Capernaum], He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea…17Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” 18They immediately left their nets and followed Him. 19When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James…and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets… 20He called them, and they left their father Zebedee…with the hired servants, and went after Him. (Mk. 1:16-20)

*Well we are moving from Luke over to Mark. Remember Luke 4-5 and Mark 1-2 are both covering the same time period. It is Jesus’ first call of the four fisherman, the four main fisherman. They were all partners, two sets of brothers. Peter and Andrew were brothers, Peter the older brother. James and John were brothers, James the older brother. They all worked together in Capernaum in a fishing business together.*

*So, in Mark 1, Jesus calls them two times. He met them back in John 1 a few months earlier. They were getting acquainted, but He had not called them to be His disciples. They were kind of hanging around, like, “Hey, could we hang out with You more? You know You are amazing.”*

*Jesus says, “Well, we will get there. We will get there.” Now this is the first time He called them, Mark 1:16.*

*He saw Simon and Andrew, those two brothers. Notice they are casting a net into the sea, because in a minute He is going to call them again. You are going to notice it in different situations. This time Andrew and Simon are casting a net into the sea. Jesus says, “Follow Me.” In verse 18, the real point is instant response. Of course, they had been thinking about it for some months because they have known Him and had been in conversation with Him probably more than anybody else. I mean quite a bit.*

*They were still keeping their profession as fisherman, though they had been thinking about it. When Jesus, verse 17, actually made the call, verse 18, instant response. Now when the Lord calls you to a challenging assignment—I do not mean to just something new and exciting, but even something that is challenging and even going to be hard because this is going to be a very hard assignment—Is there a yes in your spirit? Most of you in this room say, “Yes.” You do.*

*I am saying, “Lord, I want whatever assignment You give me. I want it.”*

*The assignments that He gives us always have challenges in them, and they always have work in them. They always have setbacks in them, but they have breakthroughs and they have goodness in them as well. I like that verse 18, the point of this first calling, immediately they respond.*

*Then verse 19, Jesus walked a few yards further. The next set of brothers, James and John, were mending the nets. So Simon and Andrew in verse 16 were casting the nets, while James and John were mending the nets. Notice this because in the second calling we are going to see in a minute in Luke 5 that is not what they were doing. It is a very different setting, so it is two different calls. There are very different points of emphasis in them.*

* 1. Jesus taught in the synagogue and healed a demoniac in Capernaum (Mk. 1:21-28; Lk. 4:31-37). Jesus rebuked demons and then silenced them. He did not allow His Messiahship to be proclaimed prematurely and not by demons so that the leaders could not claim that demons promoted Jesus.

21Then they went into Capernaum…on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught… 23Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” 25But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” 26And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27Then they were all amazed…saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” (Mk. 1:21-27)

31Then He went down to Capernaum…33there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon …35And when the demon had thrown him…it came out of him and did not hurt him… 37And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region. (Lk. 4:31-37)

*He is still in Capernaum. Verse 21, these four guys have said yes to Him. “We are with You.” But they have not given up everything. They said, “Yes, we will follow You anywhere,” but they are still going to work the next day thinking, “We don’t exactly know how this works because You are based in our town. So, we are going to get up and still do our fisherman stuff because You just live down the road here. We can be with You throughout parts of the day.”*

*Verse 21, He is still in Capernaum. He enters the synagogue. Right in the middle of the service, verse 23, a guy starts screaming out with a demon. Verse 23, he cried out, “Let us alone!” Suppose you were in the synagogue service and one guy stands up, “Let us alone! let us alone!” We would be saying, “What? Are we bothering you? Is something wrong?”*

*“What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?”*

*The leader of the synagogue is thinking, “You know, I knew with this young guy things were going to get a little interesting around here.”*

*They are screaming at Jesus in the church service, “Did You come to destroy us?” The demon says, “I know who You are! You are God!”*

*Now Jesus does not want demons affirming His deity because, down the way, the enemies are going to say, “The demons are promoting You; you guys are working together. You must have some deal with them. You have them as Your promo team.”*

*Jesus is saying, “Shut up.” I was going to say, “In the name of Jesus, shut up.” He probably did not say that. Verse 25, He rebuked him. You see, we can rebuke a demon. We do not have to scream at a demon; we do not get the demon to listen because of our tone. We get the demon to listen because we have the authority of Jesus. The day we are born again we can use the authority of Jesus. Many people do not use it. We rebuke demons; that is what we do with them. We rebuke them when they are tormenting somebody, and we rebuke them when they are tormenting or challenging us. We rebuke them. We do not endure the storm; we rebuke them.*

*Verse 25, He told the demon to be quiet. He told the demon spirit to come out, because some demons are inside of people. Some demons are alongside of people, tormenting them, and some are inside of people.*

*Someone might ask, “How do you know which?” I say that I do not care if they are close by or in. We want them out, far away, no matter what! In the name of Jesus, far away and be done! Though demons can come back over and over again, so it is not always just a one-time challenge. I want you to know that we rebuke demons in people, around people, tormenting us.*

*Demons can talk through people. We can tell them to be quiet. I have been in a number of deliverance sessions over the years. The first couple of times, you know, it was all us young guys in our twenties, and we are casting demons out. The demons are speaking, “Argh-urgh-uh-ragh-ragh-uh.”*

*We were just so interested in what they were saying, wondering, “How do you know that?”*

*Okay, do not hold conversations with demons. You always tell them to shut up because they are going to lie no matter what. Well, here they are actually telling the truth, but they are telling the truth to hurt Jesus’ purposes because they want the people to think Jesus is in league with them somehow. Even though He is casting them out, they are suggesting that somewhere there is some connection.*

*Verse 26, the unclean spirit had convulsed him. That means the man had the physical manifestations of a convulsion. That happens sometimes, but the man was getting set free. You find out in Luke 4:35 that earlier in this very same story it says that though the demon threw him, “it did not hurt him.” So the convulsion that the demon caused actually did not hurt the person when, in the name of Jesus, the demon was being driven out.*

*Jesus did not want His Messiahship proclaimed prematurely, because the Jewish people in that hour had a view of what the Messiah was, which was a political deliverer from Rome. It is true that He is a political deliverer ultimately at the second coming, but He is first a spiritual deliverer, setting people free from guilt of sin, compromise, spirit of lust, demonic activity. He is a spiritual deliverer. Israel did not want a spiritual deliverer; they wanted a political deliverer. To them, that term, Messiah, meant revolution against Rome with weapons.*

*But Jesus did not promote this, because He was saying, “No, that is not where we are going. Yeah, I am going to do that when I come the second time. I am going to come against the kings of the earth, and I am going to kill them. Through Revelation 19, He says, “I am going to kill the kings of the earth. I am going to get intense before it is over. I am going to change the whole leadership of the earth in one day.” In Revelation 19:19, it is really dramatic. He was saying, as it were, “But not now, not in this hour. That is not what I am doing.”*

*So He did not want people spreading the news that He was the Messiah because it would create conflict ahead of time. He wanted to preach around the nation and sow the seed of the truth all over Israel, and then bring the confrontation. He was not afraid of the confrontation, but He wanted a little bit of time to sow the message Himself in all the villages as the Messiah before the confrontation came to a head. That is why He was constantly telling demons or people not to tell others who He is, because they would get the idea He was a political leader, and that would stir up all kinds of animosity. It would create the conflict before He wanted it. He was not afraid of the conflict, but wanted it in its right timing. He did not want demons introducing Him.*

* 1. Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law in Capernaum (Lk. 4:38-39; cf. Mt. 8:14-15; Mk. 1:29-31).

38Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. 39So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them. (Lk. 4:38-39)

*Most of this happened in Capernaum. He arose from the synagogue, Luke 4:38, and He went to Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. The high fever meant it could be deadly or very, very dangerous to her health with long-term consequences.*

*Verse 39, He rebuked the fever just like He rebuked the demons. We can rebuke sicknesses, and we can rebuke spirits. Sometimes He will speak to a sickness and command the sickness to leave. Part of what He was doing was showing His power and compassion, and in part of it He was modeling how humans anointed by the Spirit are to participate with the Holy Spirit. Remember, He is not only showing us His power—though He is—and He is not only showing us His compassion—though He is—but He is also giving us a model of how we, by the Holy Spirit, operate together with the Holy Spirit. Whatever Jesus did, He did by the power of the Spirit: He rebuked the storm, He rebuked the fig tree, He rebuked inanimate objects, He rebuked sickness, and He rebuked demons, all by the power of the Spirit.*

* 1. Jesus healed many as whole town gathered at the door (Lk. 4:40-41; cf. Mt. 8:16-17; Mk. 1:32-34). Mark added that the “whole city gathered together at the door” (Mk. 1:33).

40When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. 41And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. (Lk. 4:40-41)

*Now the sun was setting, and news was going out everywhere, all over. It says in Mark 1 the whole city gathered. Now it is interesting, that this happened when the sun was setting because it had been the Sabbath. Now that the Sabbath is over, as the sun is setting, everybody could gather in a more public way outside of the synagogue. “When the sun was setting” means now the Sabbath is over; that is the significance of giving the timing of that.*

*All that were sick—anyone who was sick in the whole area of Capernaum and the whole region—He laid hands on every one of them. I mean He was going late into the night, verse 41. Demons came out of many. You wonder what was going on in Capernaum that so many people had demons in them! They were regularly identifying Him as the Christ. We know “Christ” and “Messiah” are the same. “You are the Messiah!” “You are the Messiah!” “You are the Messiah.”*

*Jesus was rebuking them, “Stop! I do not want the Messiah stuff out right now. Everybody misunderstands it.” Again, Jesus was not being humble, like, “Gee whiz, do not draw attention to Me.” He is not afraid of the earth worshipping Him; that is where it is going. He is being very strategic in this. Of course, He did not want demons being His promo team.*

* 1. Jesus engaged in early morning prayer often (Mk. 1:35-38; Lk. 4:42-43). Jesus’ first preaching tour in Galilee probably lasted about 4 months in early AD 28 (Mt. 4:23-24; Mk. 1:39; Lk. 4:42-44).

42Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them… (Lk. 4:42)

35Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. 36And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. 37When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.” 38But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” 39And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee…   
(Mk. 1:35-39)

23And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness …24Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. (Mt. 4:23-24)

*Now He is going to move outside of Capernaum on His first Galilee tour. He is going to go to all the villages. It is going to take about four months. Again, we see between Luke 4 and Mark 1, we are kind of going back and forth telling the story. Look at Mark 4:35, “Now Jesus in the morning”—He has been up all night, remember, healing everybody. He healed the mother-in-law who was sick, and then after sunset, when the Sabbath was over, the whole town came. He worked late into the night, verse 35, and now in the morning, having risen long before daylight—I mean He must have slept an hour or two or not at all—He went out to a lonely place where He prayed.*

*Verse 36, Simon and Peter are obviously the same, you know that. Peter was searching for Jesus. They are going to bother His prayer time. “Jesus, where are You hiding? Jesus, it is me.” Jesus is tucked over there in a hiding place.*

*Verse 37—I can just picture this—they found Him. Peter starts off here in the very beginning instructing Jesus with a little tone of correction. “Where have You been? Everybody is looking for You! They need to be healed.”*

*“Peter, chill. The Father and I are connecting in a way that is critical. You don’t get all of that right now, that it does not work out there except when I am flowing in the overflow of what the Father and I are connecting about.*

*Jesus said, “and by the way,” verse 38, “I am not interested in doing what everyone in Capernaum wants me to do. They are not leading Me by their demands. I am obeying My Father. We are going to go to other towns. No, Peter, no, no, we are not doing it that way.”*

*Often when I do Q&As, people ask, “What is one of the biggest challenges in ministry?” In forty years of ministry I will tell you one of the biggest challenges, top of the list for me and I think for any leader: the ability to say no and to live in your limitations. I am so tempted, as are most leaders, to respond always to need.*

*The Father would say, “I am not even leading you in that. I want you to talk to Me right now. You have limited strength, limited time.”*

*Leaders buy into this Messiah complex where they are the one that meets the need, they are the one that delivers everyone. They cannot bear anybody being disappointed in them. Then, three years later, they are spiritually burned out, and they cannot help anyone then. Jesus said, “No, Peter, we are not doing it that way. I know they are all looking for Me, but not only am I not going back to Capernaum, I am going to stay in My prayer thing with the Lord for a season, and then we are going to go to another city, because I am not following what their cry is right now. I am following the Father’s wisdom.*

*Everywhere He went, the people wanted more, and Jesus was compassionate. There is a lie I have heard over the years; it is kind of really silly. I have heard it so many times. They say, “Jesus had time for everyone.” That is the absolute craziest thing if you study the life of Jesus. The reason I am bringing it up and pointing it out is that one of the most profound things about Jesus’ life was His ability to say no and to stay on target with the Father.*

*He did not go everywhere that everybody wanted at every whim, at every request. He was on a pathway; He was on a journey. He was following. He had marching orders from above. So, I am just saying that to leaders—those who are currently leaders and would-be leaders—do not buy into the sentimental idea that Jesus had time for everybody. He turned many people away after a momentary encounter when He prayed for them in power and then moved on to the next city, the next town, and stayed on His journey.*

*I am not advocating coldness, but I am advocating that human leaders acknowledge their weakness and limitations. You can stay in the race for forty years if you do not buy into the Messiah complex, not for three or four years and then burn out. You will see that all through Jesus’ life. That is one of the hardest lessons that I have had to learn, and I still lose my way on that.*

1. Jesus’ second call of the four fishermen
   1. Jesus’ second call of the four fishermen—Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Lk. 5:1-11). From this time on they permanently travelled with Jesus. At Jesus’ first call to these four fishermen, Simon and Andrew were *casting a net* into the sea, and James and John were *mending nets* (Mk. 1:16-20).

1…He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen…were washing their nets. 3…He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat… 4He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5But Simon… said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word  
I will let down the net.” 6…they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.   
7So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to…help them…8When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”… 10James and John…were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid.   
From now on you will catch men.” 11…they forsook all and followed Him. (Lk. 5:1-11)

* + 1. The Lake of Gennesaret is the Sea of Galilee. Gennesaret was a district at the northwestern end of the Sea of Galilee. The district’s name is associated to it, thus the Lake of Gennesaret.
    2. Peter’s heart is seen (5:8). Most would have rejoiced to have contact with a miracle worker. They would be thinking of the blessing they would get from Him, but Peter recognized something more than a miracle. He saw God and worshiped in humility.

*Now we come to the second call of the same four fishermen. Here different lessons are being emphasized. This is the call where they did not go back to fishing again until after Peter denied the Lord and Jesus had risen from the dead, when He went to Galilee and found Peter fishing in John 21, but that is months away; it will be some months before we get to there. Peter went fishing after his denial. That was bad because Peter was giving up and saying, “I cannot deal with my failure. I am going to go back, buy the boats back, and rev up the fishing business.” Anyway, that is for next April when we will be to John 21.*

*Okay, Luke 5, the second calling. He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, which is the Sea of Galilee; it is the same thing as Sea of Galilee. It has four different names. This time there are two boats, and they are washing the nets. They are not casting the nets or mending the nets like they were in Mark 1, but they are washing them.*

*Verse 3, and Jesus sat in the boat, went a few yards out, and spoke to the multitudes. He gave a sermon. The acoustics were good there. They say the acoustics are just right there in that lower area surrounded by mountains and the sea. I do not really know how all of that works, but they say the acoustics can be quite astounding so that He could sit in a boat and talk to a large group of people.*

*Verse 4, He said, “Peter, let’s go out to the deep. Let’s go out to the Sea of Galilee and let your nets down.” Verse 5, Peter said, “Well, Lord, we toiled all night.” Remember we read in Mark 1, that a month or two earlier they were called, and they said yes, and they really were in, but Jesus was living in Capernaum with them so they did not give up their day job yet.*

*Simon says, “We have toiled all night.”*

*Jesus said, “Peter, do what I am asking you to do.”*

*Maybe Andrew, Peter’s little brother, might have whispered, “Peter, He knows something you do not know. Peter, just do what He says.” So they went out, in verse 6, and had a great catch of fish.*

*Now here is one of the points that Jesus is making to Peter, and it is a point we can receive in our mission to be fishers of men—which is to lead people to Christ and not only to lead them to Christ initially, but to bring them to Christ in fullness. I mean we are leading unbelievers to Jesus,* ***and*** *we are leading believers to Jesus. We are fishing for men or women—even believers—bringing them out of bondage, bringing them into greater liberty. We are still fishing for them in that regard. It is not only unbelievers that we are fishing for. We are bringing people to the goodness of God and to a place of liberty— So here is the point, verse 5, Peter said, “I worked all night, yet I did not have any breakthrough.”*

*Jesus might have said, “Do not ever forget, Peter, that just because you work all night and there is not a breakthrough does not mean that a mighty breakthrough is not coming suddenly.” Peter was to know this. All of his days he would remember that it is hard, no fish, it is hard work, no fish, setbacks, no fish, no fish, no fish. Suddenly a great catch of fish more than I could contain!” In a “suddenly,” things can turn in a moment.*

*This calling of Peter, this second calling, actually was a lesson to him as well, as it is for us. Do not give up because you toil and in the natural it seems there is no point. Jesus would say, “Well, you do not know when I am going to get in the boat with you.” When there is no fish over and over and over, and suddenly everything is different.*

*Verse 8, when Peter saw the great fish catch, he fell down; he was awestruck. He was aware that he was in the presence of majesty. See, another guy would have seen the great catch and thought, “Man, we just made enough money that we have some economic room here to go launch our ministry.” I mean that great catch of fish undoubtedly had an economic impact for their families.*

*Peter could have said, “Boy, there is favor! There are miracles! There is excitement, I’m in the inner crowd of a guy with miracle power.” But Peter saw something else, verse 8. He said, “That is great, but I am in the presence of God. This is not about me getting more money or in the inner circle or having a powerful ministry, I am in front of God.” He fell down and worshipped.*

*That is what made Peter a reliable apostle once he sorted things out after a while. He went through a few more bumps because he was interacting with God, not just pursuing a professional ministry so he could get more stuff and establish his own niche. Then, verse 11, all four of them—Peter and his brother Andrew, and the two brothers, James and John—forsook everything.*

* 1. Jesus healed a leper, then many came to that town in Galilee (Lk. 5:12-16; cf. Mt. 8:2-4; Mk. 1:40-45). This is the beginning of hostility with the Pharisees in Galilee (Lk. 5:12-6:11).

12…behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 13Then He…touched him, saying,   
“I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately the leprosy left him. 14And He charged him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.” 15However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 16So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (Lk. 5:12-16)

41Then Jesus, moved with compassion…said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed” …43He strictly warned him…44“See that you say nothing to anyone;” 45However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely…so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction. (Mk. 1:40-45)

* + 1. Jesus revealed Himself as willing to heal. This settled the issue about healing (Heb. 13:8).   
       In the person of Jesus, the Father clearly revealed His willingness and desire to heal the sick.
    2. The people in Israel wanted a political kingdom, not a spiritual kingdom.
    3. Leviticus 13-14 described the cleansing procedure described by Moses where the cleansed leper was to show himself to a priest. Jesus sought to respect the authority of the priests.

*Next was a leper. I will kind of go rapid-fire through this. The key issue with the leper, verse 12, he said, “Lord, if You are willing, cleanse me.”*

*The Lord settled it, “I am willing.” Beloved, it is settled forever! He never changes! I am the God who heals. I am willing. Jehovah Rapha, the God who healeth thee, the covenant God who heals.*

*He tells the leper, verse 14, the same thing, “Do not tell anybody.” But the leper told everybody because the leper was so excited! He had a disease, a skin disease that isolated him socially and kept him in incredible poverty, and now he is liberated from this terrible skin disease. He is not isolated socially any longer, and he is not stuck in poverty. I mean, everything has changed in his life, spiritually as well. He has met the Messiah; he is so excited.*

*The reason Jesus does not want him to tell is that He does not want the message of the Messiah as the political deliverer against Rome to win the narrative, because He is a spiritual deliverer first, but they are not even thinking of a spiritual deliverer. They want a conqueror to beat up Rome. Jesus wants to define who the Son of Man is and what the Messiah does. He wants to sprinkle seed all the villages of Israel, and then He will let the conflict come to the point where He ends up getting crucified.*

* 1. Jesus healed and forgave a paralytic in Capernaum (Lk. 5:17-26; cf. Mt. 9:1-8; Mk. 2:1-12).

17…as He was teaching…the Pharisees and teachers of the law…had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. 18Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed…19because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling…20When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” 21And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 22But…He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23Which is easier, to say, “Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? 24But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” 25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house…26And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!” (Lk. 5:17-26)

*Now the great convention, Luke 5:17. Look at this: Pharisees, the top brass religious leaders from every town, I mean all the denominational heads were in town from Judea, which is the whole region, and Galilee, the whole region. From Jerusalem, I mean the main city, all the top brass, I do not know about “all,” but the big guys were in town. The power of God was present to heal. They do not really like Him. He has not really gotten in their faces just yet. He did it to Nazareth, but He has not disturbed them just yet. They remember He is the guy who messed up the temple the first day He went down to Jerusalem. They are thinking, “We do not know about this guy.”*

*They are in a house, Jesus had a crowd there, and many of the top religious leaders in the nation were there. Verse 18, all of a sudden the tile of the roof of the house starts to move, and dirt is coming down. What is going on? It’s a big crowd. There is a young man who is paralyzed, and his four friends are digging through the roof to lower the paralyzed boy down.*

*Jesus looks at him, verse 20, and He said, “Your sins are forgiven.” Now He is doing that, knowing the top brass, the top leaders, are there. Not all of them, but many of them. This is so offensive. The top leaders who know the Bible really well, they think, verse 21, that you cannot forgive sins unless you are God. That is blasphemy. Jesus is saying, “You are right: only God can forgive sins. I forgive your sins.”*

*They are thinking, “What?”*

* + 1. Jesus was often charged with blasphemy (Mk 14:64; Jn 5:18; 10:33, 36).
    2. The religious leaders were right in claiming that only God can forgive sins.
    3. It is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven” than “Get up and walk” because the legitimacy of the claim that God forgave someone cannot be disproven, whereas declaring the healing of a paralytic can easily and immediately be verified.

*Jesus asked a question, He asked, “Which is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven”—because nobody can verify it—“or tell a paralytic to walk right now”—because you can verify it instantly. I can tell you that you are forgiven, but you do not really know until you die. I can get some fifty more years, and nobody could hold me accountable, and they do not know until the guy dies. The answer is, it is much easier to say, “You are forgiven.” He says, “Okay, I will say the hard one: rise and walk.” The guy just breaks forth out of his paralytic condition and is walking. I mean you would naturally have so much atrophy in your body that even if your muscles and nervous system were restored you couldn’t walk. But he even carries his bed. It is like the muscles are rejuvenated. I mean the miracle is remarkable. The whole place is filled with fear.*

* 1. Jesus called Matthew also named Levi (Lk. 5:27-28; cf. Mk. 2:14). Matthew tells this story using his name Matthew instead of Levi (Mt. 9:9). Here Jesus manifested His compassion toward sinners.

27After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office.   
And He said to him, “Follow Me.” 28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. (Lk. 5:27-28)

* + 1. Levi was not the chief tax collector, but an agent working at a tax office in Capernaum.
    2. In Matthew 9:9, the tax collector was called Matthew, not Levi, and in all four lists of the twelve apostles Matthew is the name that is used. Jews often had two names (one in Hebrew or Aramaic and the other in Greek or Latin); he was probably called Levi Matthew.

*Then He encounters one of the top sinners in town, Levi. Well, this man has two names. He is called Levi, and he is called Matthew. It is interesting that he was a tax collector. The reason everybody hated the tax collectors was because they had joined the team of the Romans, the pagan foreigner oppressors. Rome was saying, “We do not know your Jewish customs and your streets and all of your language and ways, so if you will muscle your people and get the money from them, we will give you a cut of it.” So the tax collectors would really be rough on people and use the whole force of the Roman state to enforce it. The tax collectors would pocket a bunch of what they collected. The Jewish people felt that the tax collectors sold them out and oppressed them economically and lived richly by taking their money because they got a percent of it, so they hated the tax collectors.*

*Jesus looks at Matthew Levi and says, “I want you on My team.”*

*The other people think, “What?”*

*Jesus is thinking, “I can see there is something bigger than that man’s sin right now. I can see there is a cry in his heart.” Beloved, God can see the cry in the spirit of a person who has sincerity and even a desire to be faithful long before they ever break through. I mean Matthew was still wheeling and dealing when Jesus called him.*

* 1. Levi held a banquet in gratitude to Jesus at his house in Capernaum (Lk. 5:29-32; cf. Mt. 9:10-13; Mk. 2:15-17). We see the joy of Levi and his sinner friends in contrast to the Pharisees and scribes. The religious leaders were against eating with sinners because of the risk of ceremonial defilement.

29Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30And their scribes and the Pharisees complained …saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” 31Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

32I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Lk. 5:29-32)

*Matthew Levi was so grateful! He had a big banquet. He was saying, “Man, I love You because You love me. You believe in me. I really do want You. I am going to do this right.”*

*Maybe Jesus was thinking, “Oh, I know, I know. What you do not know, Matthew, is that your name is on one of the foundation stones in the New Jerusalem. That is going to shock you when you see that, but I will tell you that some other day.”*

*Matthew says, “I will get all of my friends together.” Well, all of his friends were harlots and tax gatherers and sinners.*

*Jesus says, “This is awesome! Bring them all in because they all have a destiny they do not know about. They have a cry to belong to God, to be real, to have a new beginning, to be forgiven, to have a new start with God and reality, and I am going to give it to them.”*

*Oh, the religious leaders did not like this at all! But it is interesting as Jesus speaks the famous sentence, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Now there are no righteous people, by the way; that was a hypothetical. He did not come to call the righteous, and one reason is that there are not any.*

*But the Pharisees put their chest out, and they thought, “Oh, so you did not come to call us.”*

*Jesus might say, “No, you really misunderstood. There are not any; there is none righteous. Your righteousness is like a filthy rag.”*

* 1. Matthew added Jesus’ exhortation that they go and learn what it means when God says, *“I desire compassion and not sacrifice”* (Hos. 6:6). True spirituality is to result in compassion for people *and* zeal for holiness. When zeal for holiness motivates us to condemn people, then it is not God-like.

12…He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” (Mt. 9:12-13)

* + 1. Test your zeal for holiness by your love for man to see if it is real or “religious” holiness.
    2. The Bible teaches that there are none righteous (Rom 3:10).
    3. Some use this passage to validate hanging out socially in wrong places as a “silent witness.”

*Mark and Luke also tell the story of Matthew’s party, the banquet. Matthew, when he tells his own story, he adds one other part that Mark and Luke do not add. It is in Matthew only. Matthew would say, “Let me tell you. I was there,” as he was writing the gospel of Matthew, “and Jesus said, ‘Those who are well do not need a physician.” He called sinners, not the righteous. “Listen,” he added one more phrase, verse 13. Matthew said, “I remember when Jesus told everybody to go and learn this: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. So when Jesus said, ‘Go learn this,’ to the Pharisees, ‘I want people who understand mercy, not animal sacrifices,’ mercy is what Jesus is into.” I can imagine Matthew saying, “When He said that at my dinner, at my party, He was talking to me. I wrote it down. I am the picture of His mercy, oh yes, Lord!” Mark and Luke did not put that in there. You know up in the New Jerusalem Matthew is going to go up to them and say, “Guys why didn’t you put that one in? That was the main sentence of the whole party.”*

* 1. Jesus was asked about fasting by John’s disciples (Lk. 5:33-39; cf. Mt. 9:14-17; Mk. 2:18-22). This happened in or around Capernaum. Jesus described the apostles as “friends of the bridegroom” who should not “mourn” as long as the Bridegroom was with them (Mt. 9:14-15). But after Jesus, the Bridegroom, was taken from them at the crucifixion, then they would fast with deep longing to encounter His presence in a greater way as the Bridegroom God—“the Bridegroom fast.”

33They said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?” 34And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast [mourn] while the bridegroom is with them? 35But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.”  
(Lk. 5:33-35)

*Now the disciples of John go to Jesus after John had been killed. They said, “Hey, how come your guys do not fast? How come they are not dedicated? Our guys are.” Every time you see the disciples of John, they are almost always in a debate–whenever they show up in Scripture! I do not know how all of that works, but I like John a lot.*

*Verse 34, Jesus says, “Well, you see My guys? They are friends of the Bridegroom. I am the Bridegroom.”*

*Maybe the disciples of John were thinking, “Wait! A few months ago that is the term John used, before he went to prison. He said he was a friend of the Bridegroom.”–John 3:29.*

*Jesus is now saying, “My guys are friends of the Bridegroom. I am the Bridegroom God. They are presenting My message as the Bridegroom God.” He goes on, “The day is coming when I will be taken away.” He meant His death, but they did not know that is what He meant. He says, “I will be taken away, and My guys will fast.”*

*What fasting does is position your spirit to be tenderized. You do not earn anything fasting. You position yourself to receive more, to receive it faster, because your spirit is tenderized. “They will long for Me, the Bridegroom God, and they will fast because they will remember how close I was to them when I was with them day after day. By the Holy Spirit My presence, by the Spirit, will touch their heart. By fasting it will accelerate in their lives.”*

* 1. Jesus taught about the new order of the kingdom that was being established by His very presence.

36Then He spoke a parable to them: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. 37And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. 38But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” (Lk. 5:36-38)

21“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse.” (Mk. 2:21)

* + 1. Wineskins were containers made from the skins of animals. The expansion caused by the fermenting of new wine bursts old wineskins because they have already been stretched as far as is possible. Thus, it was not possible to mix the old legalistic structures of Judaism with the new experience and activity of the Spirit associated with having a relationship with Jesus.
    2. Jesus taught that one cannot put a “new patch” on an old garment or system and that one *must* put new wine in new wineskins. Seeking to add the work of the Spirit to the older order of Judaism would ruin the new-wineskin order, and it would not preserve the old order either.
    3. Jesus was saying one cannot bring a new move of God into an old setting unless that old setting is willing to set aside some of the old ideas, values, and practices. Jesus did not come to put a patch on Judaism, but to establish the new covenant order with His people.

*Then He ends this portion with the parable of the new wine and the wineskin. You can read it on your own, but in essence, He is telling them that the new way of the Spirit is not going to work in the old legalistic structures. That is really the message. There is a new way coming, and it is here now. Jesus would say, “I am here, and it is going to intensify. The new way will not work in the old structures of Judaism.”*

*Over the years even of church history the structures start weighing down the life of the Spirit, over generations. In every generation or so there is breaking in of God and new expressions of Christianity, new breakthroughs of God’s way, because the principle is true when the Lord is doing a fresh work. I do not mean every week or every month, but I mean in the course of a generation or even once a century—a long period of time—He breaks in. The old structures that were useful at one time now are not; they cannot contain the move of the Spirit, the new move of the Spirit.*

*Even now the Lord is preparing worldwide to invoke this principle yet again. There is going to be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a great response to God. It is going to look different. There is going to be a new expression. There is going to be a new understanding of Christianity. There is going to be new wine and wineskins in the generation the Lord returns that do not fit in any other generation.*

*Lord, we are saying that we are ready, and we are looking for it. We are looking for it in Jesus’ name. Amen!*

Let’s stand before the Lord. Well the leper said, “Are You willing?”

He said, “I am willing.” To the demon-oppressed person the Lord says, “I came to set you free from torment.”

*I want to pray for the sick tonight. He is here in our midst; today is the day. Yes, we are looking for a big breakthrough, but today is the day, today is a day of salvation right now. I want to invite anybody in the room, if you need your body to be healed or your mind or heart is being attacked by the enemy in an intensified way. There is a heightened attack of the enemy against your mind and your body. Maybe it is in the night, being disturbed in the night in dreams, etc. I want to ask the Lord for the spirit of liberty and healing. We say, “Lord are You willing?”*

*He answers, “Yes, I am willing. I have settled it. I am willing. I came to set the captive free. That is what I am here for. Today is the day of salvation.”*