



Luke 5

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Tape #8049
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter five. Jesus has begun His public ministry. He has gone through the cities of Galilee preaching, teaching and healing the sick. His reputation is growing. It is difficult for Jesus to go anywhere without being thronged by multitudes of people, many of them coming to hear the word but more of them coming in order that they might receive healing or help. And so Luke opens the fifth chapter with this incident.

And it came to pass, that, as the people were pressing upon him (5:1)

Hard to imagine what it must have been like trying to move through a village when word goes out and the people come and they begin to try and get as close to you as they can. Pushing, shoving, thronging about Him. And such was the case with Jesus. People wanting to get near, wanting to touch. And "they were pressing upon him,"

to hear the word of God, and he stood by the lake of Gennesaret (5:1),

Or what we know as the sea of Galilee, also known as the sea of Tiberias.

And He saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets (5:2).

Another time when Jesus was there at the sea of Galilee, these same fishermen were mending their nets when Jesus called them to leave their nets and to follow Him. This particular incident should not be confused with the incidents that are recorded by Matthew and Mark. For there, Jesus was calling them to follow Him which I believe they did. But now they've sort of gone back to the fishing again. They are this time cleaning their nets. When they are casting their nets into the sea you pick up all kinds of, the grasses and so forth that grow there in the sea, so it's necessary to clean your nets from the debris that is picked up when they're tossed out. And they are there washing their nets.

And Jesus entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and He asked him if he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship (5:3).

Because the people were pressing on Him so heavily, it made a convenient pulpit, it gave a little space between the people and Jesus. It gave Him an opportunity to address them without just being crowded and pushed. And so He sat there in Peter's ship and He taught the people that were there on the shoreline.

Now when he had finished speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught (5:4).

For a big catch. For a haul.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and we have taken nothing (5:5):

In other words, Lord, it's useless. There are no fish there today. It's just useless, Lord. We've toiled all night and caught nothing. But in accommodating, he said,

nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net (5:5).

No, Lord, I'm not doing this because I think we're going to get anything but just at Your word, just to make You feel good, I'll let it down. I'll toss it out. It was an act of obedience on the part of Peter, reluctant obedience but obedience. As far as Peter's experience and understanding it was going to be fruitless. But to his amazement,

When they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fish: and the net began to break. So they signaled to their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the ships, so that they began to sink (5:6,7).

And as the ships began to sink, it began to sink into Peter's mind what was going on. As he realized that this is not normal. This is a miracle. This man who had done so many miracles, this man who had healed his mother-in-law of the great fever, also have power over the natural world, as would be demonstrated even

later when Jesus on the same sea rebuked the winds and the waves. And so Peter now began to realize that Jesus was not just a mortal man but that He was more than just a man indeed. Perhaps even the Messiah. And with the recognition of Jesus as he saw Jesus in truth, he saw himself in truth. One of the most important things is that we do get a true vision of Jesus or a true view of Jesus because you'll never have a true view of yourself until you see yourself in His light.

Walking in the darkness of this world, we are so often deceived. We are prone to think of ourselves more highly than we should. We're prone to be very forgiving of our weaknesses and our sins. And we fail to see the truth about ourselves until we see ourselves in His light. And seeing ourselves in His light always brings conviction, the acknowledgment of sin and the confession of sin.

Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord (5:8).

Peter acknowledging his sin. Recognizing that he has really no place around Jesus because of his sin.

For he was astonished, and all those that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: So also was James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon (5:9,10).

And so as Simon said, Depart from me; Luke puts this little insertion, gives you a little bit of information. But then we come back to the conversation between Peter and Jesus, and there was no break there. Peter is saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

And Jesus said, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men (5:10).

It's sort of the second call to Peter. The first call was when he was mending his nets there at the sea of Galilee. Here is the second call. Now we know that there was a third call. Fishing had a real hold on Peter. It was his livelihood, it was his chosen profession. I believe he thoroughly enjoyed it. And when a man's work is his pleasure, he is a happy man. When you enjoy your work, it ensures real happiness and success. I believe that Peter really enjoyed fishing. It was just a part of his blood.

We remember that after Jesus died and rose from the dead, He told the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. And so they went up to Galilee to meet Him at the specified place and when Jesus didn't show up immediately, it was Peter who said to the other disciples, I'm going fishing. It was sort of again, Well, I guess this is all over, going back. This is where I made my living. This is how I made my living. This is how I know to make a living. I'm going fishing. And they said, We'll go with you. And again, they had a very similar experience in that they fished all night and caught nothing. You remember the story. In the morning Jesus was standing on the shore. They didn't recognize Him. And He called out over the water, Did you catch anything? And they said, No. He said, Why don't you cast your nets on the other side? And they cast their nets on the other side and immediately they were filled with great fish, so much so they couldn't even pull it into the ship. And when John saw they couldn't pull it in because of the multitude of fish, he said to Peter, It's the Lord. And Peter grabbed his coat and dove in and swam the shore and the other disciples came in a little boat pulling the net with them. When they got on the shore they found Jesus there and He'd fixed them some fish, broiled fish on the fire, He said, Come and eat. Then He turned to Peter and He said, Peter, you love Me more than these? (John 21:1-15)

The third call again at the sea of Galilee and it again involved fishing and empty nets and full nets. And this was the final, after this Peter didn't go back to the old life anymore. This was it, this was the commitment. So Jesus said, From now on you're going to catch men. The book of Acts records how successful Peter was in catching men.

And when they brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him (5:11).

They had servants and they left the ships with their servants and they followed Jesus.

And it came to pass, when Jesus was in a certain city, there was a man full of leprosy (5:12):

Luke being a physician is using again a medical term and it's a term that refers to an advanced state of leprosy. It wasn't just the beginning, it wasn't just a blotch on his skin. But there was a very advanced state of leprosy.

who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and begged him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him (5:12,13).

Now under the law, it was unlawful to touch a leper, Mosaic law. And some wonder why Jesus would

violate the Mosaic law. My personal opinion is that He didn't. I believe that the action was simultaneous. That as the man said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou can make me clean. And I think the minute Jesus said, I will, he was cleansed of his leprosy. By the time Jesus touched him he was no longer a leper. I see it as just a combined action. And by the time Jesus touched him, the leprosy had already departed.

And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show himself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, according to the commandment of Moses, for a testimony unto them (5:14).

Let it be a witness to the priest. Just go and show yourself and do that which was commanded by Moses.

Back in Leviticus, chapter thirteen and fourteen, we have the Mosaic law concerning the leper. And all of the rules and the regulations that applied to a person with leprosy and the method by which a person who did have leprosy could be received back into the community. The examination by the priest and the setting apart for several days, the second examination and then when it was determined that there was no more leprosy, then there was to be certain sacrifices offered in certain ways and the leper would be received back into the community.

The interesting thing to me, we read there in Leviticus, "Now this is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Leviticus 14:2). That to me is a very interesting statement because leprosy was incurable and remains to the present time incurable. They are able now to arrest leprosy, which is now called Hansen's disease, and they can arrest it, they can stop its development, but they can't cure it. And yet the interesting thing to me is that God made provision for His supernatural overriding of the natural condition of a person which was incurable; and yet God made provisions for Him to operate and to cure that which was incurable so that that person could come back into the community. So God wants to work. And so, If You will, You can make me clean. Jesus said, I will. It shows how that God is desiring to work and has left the opening that He might work even in an incurable situation such as the leper. So I love that, "the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing."

But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Jesus: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities (5:15).

Some came to hear and others came just to be healed. I think that this is always the case. There are some who come just to receive the benefits. They're not really that interested in obeying the commandments of Jesus, following Him, but they would like to receive some of the benefits. The great healing campaigns always has a certain percentage of people that aren't really interested in committing their lives to the Lord. They're just interested in being healed of their infirmities and thus was the case even in the time of Christ.

With the great multitudes and the pressure that was there constantly, because of the multitudes and the pressing needs of the multitude, we find Jesus resorting to prayer.

He withdrew himself into the wilderness for prayer (5:16).

The greater the pressure, the more Jesus saw the necessity of getting alone in prayer. I think that Luke does a very commendable service to us in that he gives us a great insight into the prayer life of Jesus. And the thing that I think impresses me most about the prayer life of Jesus is that if He saw the necessity for prayer, being who He was, the very Son of God, if He saw the necessity of prayer, who in the world do we think we are that we can possibly survive the pressures of this world without prayer? That we can somehow get by without prayer. Jesus in His prayer life certainly indicates to us the importance of and the necessity of prayer. That prayer be a very integral part of your very being. That we learn to rely upon and depend upon the strength that comes from prayer.

And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by [they were the scribes], which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them (5:17).

So on this particular day, the critics were there, the Pharisees and the doctors of law. They've been attracted also. Now in the Galilee region at this time, there were ten cities around the sea of Galilee with a population of at least 15,000. They were known as the Decapolis. And so there was a very large population, much larger than there is today around the Galilee region. And coming up from Jerusalem, from the south, from Judaea, where the Pharisees, the doctors of the law listening and looking for flaws, seeking to find fault and the power of the Lord was present to heal the people.

And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Jesus. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus (5:18,19).

So these resourceful men coming to the house where Jesus was teaching, finding that they couldn't get into the house, the multitude of people crowded around, climbed up on the roof, removed a few tiles, let the man down in front of Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee (5:20).

Sometimes there is a direct relationship between a person's sin and a physical malady that they might be suffering. For instance, the sin of promiscuous sex often leads to many forms of venereal disease. The syphilis and other venereal diseases that come as the result of promiscuous sex. It is thought by many Bible commentators that this man probably had syphilis. And it had advanced to the state where this man had become paralyzed or in a paralytic of sorts. With the palsy there was the constant shaking, the weakening of the muscles, the inability to walk. You had to be carried. And it could be that it resulted from some encounter, perhaps with a prostitute, who knows. But having developed the palsy as a direct consequence of his sin. Don't you know that it played upon his mind continually. If I had not, I wouldn't be in this condition. It's amazing how that one foolish mistake can cause a person a lifetime of suffering, pain, sorrow. We are making decisions all the time and one foolish decision can often be so costly. And for years you can rue a bad decision, a stupid move.

So many people find themselves physically incapacitated because of a foolish move in driving their car. A split-second decision. I know it's dangerous to pass, I know that it's a two-lane road, I know I can't see around the curve, but there hasn't been much traffic I'll take a chance. I'll pass. You sort of wait and hover and then you think, Go for it. You put your foot on the throttle, you pull up and then here is a truck, no place to go. Your body is smashed, your spinal column is broken, and you spend your life paralyzed because of one foolish split-second decision. Cost a lifetime of suffering and pain. Don't you know that you live that moment over and over and over and over again? That moment when you decided to go for it, to put down the throttle, to try and make it and you relived that foolish decision until it haunts you, it torments you.

And thus, I can imagine with this man, the sin whereby he contracted this disease that created the palsy. Probably over and over and over again, it tormented his mind and I think the most glorious words he could ever hear were the words that were spoken by Jesus when He said, Your sins are forgiven. Tormented conscience, you're forgiven.

David said, "O how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). And so I'm certain that there was a burst of joy in this man's soul when Jesus said, Thy sins are forgiven. I'm certain that there was also equally with his friends a bit of disappointment. I think that they probably thought, Lord, that's not why we tore up the roof and let this guy down. We want you to heal him. I do know that the Pharisees had an adverse reaction, Who does He think He is saying? Only God can forgive sins. And they were upset at the statement of Jesus. Now the question is, Were the Pharisees right in their assertion that only God can forgive sins? And the answer is yes, they were right. That is true. Only God can forgive sins.

When David sinned with Bathsheba and the subsequent plotting of the murder of her husband, as David prayed for forgiveness, he said to God, "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this great evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:4). Sin is against God. It may affect fellow man. You may lie about me and it might hurt. But you're really sinning against God that said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16). It is the violating of the law of God. That's what sin is all about. And because it is violating God's law, only God has the capacity and power to forgive sin. Only God can say, Your sins are forgiven. So they were correct in their assumption.

So then what is Jesus proving when He said, Thy sins are forgiven. He's proving that He is God, of course. This created a real turmoil.

The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies (5:21)?

Was it blasphemous if He were not God? Yes. If He were not God, He was speaking blasphemy.

Who can forgive sins, but God alone (5:21)?

But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What is it that you reason in your hearts? What is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven; or to say, Rise up and walk (5:22,23)?

What is easier to say? Easier to say your sins are forgiven. Now I may be a quack and I might wear a big cross and a robe and I might walk down the streets and just say, Your sins are forgiven. And walk around just telling everybody, Your sins are forgiven. And if you walked up and down Fourth street, Santa Ana, people would soon get familiar with the fact that there's some quack up on Fourth street with a robe and all that goes around saying, Your sins are forgiven. People would come up and they would say, Wait, he should be along pretty quick. And they would watch for you and you become sort of a notable character in the community who was a few bricks short of a load. They'd know that you were some kind of. So you could say that but how can you prove it? How can people prove that you couldn't really forgive sins? You can't see it, you see. That's an inward work within the spirit of man that can't be observed readily. In time it can be observed but it isn't observed readily.

But if you say to a man who is paralyzed there on the cot, Rise up and walk. That's a horse of a different color because now whether or not there is power in your words can easily be proved. If the man rises up and walks, then it proves that there's power in what you said. You spoke with authority and power. If the man just maybe struggles a bit, tries to get up and then falls back on the couch, then there's no power in what you said. And so it's easy to prove whether or not there's true power in the word that you spoke. So Jesus said, "What's easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven you; or to say, Rise, take up your bed and walk."

But that you may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (5:24),

I'm giving this, Jesus said, to you as a proof that you might know that I do have the power here on earth to forgive sins.

(he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto you, Arise, and take up your couch, and go to your house (5:24).

Alright, we're putting it on the line. This is it, it's on the line now. If the fellow lies there, Jesus is totally discredited.

But immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God (5:25).

Don't you know he did? I think he was probably glorifying God just as much for the fact that his sins were forgiven as for the fact that he was walking again. Glory, double blast. My sins are forgiven.

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God (5:26),

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that when they see your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). And certainly He was an example of that. When He would do these good works, the people would glorify God. He did them in such a way as they brought glory to God. He did not do them with a lot of flare and a lot of kinds of things that drew attention to Himself. But He did them in such a way not like in a circus environment but just in such a plain, natural way that it didn't draw a lot of attention to Himself but the net result was that people were glorifying God for the work that was done.

and they were filled with awe, amazement, saying, We have seen strange things to day. [Yes.] And after these things he went forth, and saw a [tax collector] publican, whose name was Levi [and we know him as Matthew], and he was sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me (5:26,27).

A tax collector was a hated individual. He was always considered a collaborator with Rome. He collected taxes for Rome and they had many different taxes the Roman government had exacted on them. They had the Poll Tax that everybody had to pay just for the right of living, no matter how rich or poor that was the same tax for everybody and that's just the right to breathe the Roman air. To live under Roman rule. Then they had a ten percent income tax that could be paid either in a ten percent of your crops or the crops sold and ten percent of the money. But there was a ten percent income tax. And then there were taxes for transporting goods. And they had everywhere along the line these little toll booths where you had to pay so much tax for how many wheels you had on your cart. You had to pay tax for the goods that you were transporting from one area to another. And it was at this kind of a, he was a Customs Officer actually and Capernaum was one of those cities where it was on the route between Egypt and Damascus. So a lot of

goods were passing through. He was there collecting taxes for Rome. Tax collectors were notable crooks.

And the interesting thing, they discovered in some of the writings in Greek they found this notation that marvelled that there was actually an honest tax collector. It was as though, that's about as weird as you can get. It's unusual a thing as you can find, an honest tax collector, because they were notably dishonest. Anything that they could collect above the quota was their own and thus all the tax collectors were very rich men, as well as hated. And here is a "tax collector named Levi, sitting there at his toll booth: and Jesus said to him, Follow Me."

And he left all [toll booth], rose up, followed Jesus. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of tax collectors and of others that sat down with them (5:28,29).

Having followed Jesus, he now wants to introduce Jesus to his friends. And about the only friends a tax collector had were other tax collectors. And so he invited all of these tax collector friends that they might meet Jesus.

And the scribes and Pharisees murmured to his disciples, saying, Why do you eat and drink with these tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (5:30-32).

A little further on in Luke's gospel we're going to find Jesus eating with another tax collector. That's the story of Zacchaeus there in Jericho. And you remember the story well. Short little fellow, and he was curious. He heard that Jesus was passing through. Being a tax collector he dared not mix with the crowd. They would pinch him, elbow him, and he would come out bruised if he dared to go into a crowd of people. So he went ahead of the crowd, climbed a tree, a safe place, in order that he might just watch Jesus as He passed by under the tree. To his amazement, Jesus walked right up to the tree, looked up and said, Zacchaeus, come on down. I want to come to your house for dinner.

And as Jesus was eating at the house of Zacchaeus, again these Pharisees and scribes were murmuring because He was eating with sinners and it was there that Jesus said, "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost" (Luke 19:10). So twice we find Him eating with tax collectors. Twice we find them finding fault with Him for doing so. But there's more to it than that.

Because in that culture, eating with a person had a connotation of becoming one with the person in their minds. Because of their habits of eating sauces, soups on the table, bowl of soup and not everyone had their own little individual bowl with their own spoon and very sanitized and sanitary. But with the soup you just had bread. And so the one bowl of soup, you'd all just dip your bread in it and eat it. No rules of etiquette that says you can't put the same piece back in the second time. Put it in and suck it, back in again. So eating was a real sharing of germs. What I've got, you're going to get. What you've got, I'm going to get. And they really looked at it as a uniting of persons, it's becoming one with the other person. And here He is eating with sinners. He's becoming one with sinners.

A Jew would never eat with a Gentile, never. That was strictly forbidden. Even Peter got caught up in that. When the Gentile church in Antioch where Paul was ministering. Peter came up to visit and he sat down and ate with the Gentiles until there were certain brothers from the church in Jerusalem who came up and they were sort of shocked and so Peter quit eating with the Gentiles and it caused a division in the church. So Paul rebuked him for creating a division. Until these brothers came from Jerusalem you ate with the Gentiles. And now you've separated yourself and it has caused a split here. Paul said I rebuked him to his face because he was at fault. But it was that old tradition. We're going to get that in just a moment, the traditions and the hold tradition is going to have upon people.

Jesus was identifying with sinners. Interesting. Because later on, He is to take the sins of the world upon Himself and He is to die for sinners. He's come to seek and to save that which was lost. No man is too far gone but God's grace can't reach him. Now some people don't like that. I understand there's quite a furor, a lot of stuff going on in the newspaper, letters to editors and so forth, a lot of people don't want Dahmer in heaven. And they're quite upset that he has made a profession of Christ before he was murdered in the prison. And so now there's a big debate on whether or not he's in heaven. And many, many people just don't want him there. But no man is beyond the grace of God. No man.

So having started now this criticism and finding fault, they carry it on. It's a bad thing to get in a critical

mode. Because when a person once gets in a critical mode, it's hard to get out of it. You begin to find fault with everything. And you begin to wherever you go, you are looking now for the faults. You're not open to receive that which is valuable or good but you're picking, you're just judging. You're looking for something that isn't quite up to your beliefs or standards and you're tuned in to find what's wrong with what is being said. And that's sort of sad. But I've seen many people that have taken this twist in the road, this bend. And once they take that bend, it seems like they are now critical of everything. They feel that they have to voice their righteous opinion on every subject. Rather sad indeed. It's a Pharisaical kind of an attitude. That's the very same kind of a trap that the Pharisees were in. They were always looking to find fault. And so now it's begun, it's going to continue and only get heavier.

And they said to Jesus, Why is it that the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees [our disciples too]; but yours, here they are eating and drinking (5:33)?

Here at the house of Levi.

And he said unto them, Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast, while the bridegroom is with them (5:34)?

While the bridegroom is there, it's partytime.

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them (5:35),

That Greek word "taken away" is "taken away by force" referring to the cross. "The day will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them,"

and then shall they fast in those days. And so he spake also a parable unto them; No man puts a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a tear, and the piece that was taken out of the new agrees not with the old (5:35,36).

They didn't know anything about sanforized shrunk in those days so that new cloth when it was washed would always shrink. So you would make the garment several sizes bigger than it needed to be and then you'd wash it and get it down to size. But the shrinking of the cloth was always just to be counted on. That is why if you had an old garment, you wouldn't sew a new patch on it. Because the first time you washed it, the new patch would shrink and of course, it would just make the tear worst in the old garment. So it was just something they didn't do. They wouldn't patch a new piece of cloth onto an old garment because it'll just make the tear worse.

And no man puts new wine into old skins;(5:37).

The bottles were leather skins and He said you don't put the new wine in the old skins. If you did, it would cause an immediate fermentation process of the old wine that was in the old skin. You pour the new wine in, it would start an immediate fermentation process which would create the gases that would swell and it would burst the old skin and it would all just pour out. So you would put the new juice into new skins, supple leather skins.

else the new wine will burst the bottles, and it will be spilled, and the bottles will perish. But new wine must be put into new skins; and both of them are then preserved (5:37,38).

It's preserved in the new skin. He is talking to the scribes and Pharisees and they are locked in the old traditional systems. The old traditional religious systems, they're locked into it. And Jesus is saying, Look, I'm bringing new wine but you just can't put it in those old skins. A new piece of cloth but you can't sew it on to the old garment. Otherwise, it will just rip the garment. Or otherwise it will just break the old skins. I believe that reformation of an old religious system is probably an impossibility. Once the old skins get set, they are not able to receive a new work of God's Spirit. Too rigid. Sad but true. But there are so many people like the Pharisees who have been locked by tradition into an old religious system and Jesus said,

No man also having drunk old wine immediately desires the new: for he saith, The old is better (5:39).

You've seen it. People who are so set in their ways, they're not even willing to try. They are not interested in what God might be doing today. More interested in what God did 500 years ago or thousand years ago or whatever but not interested in what God might be wanting to do today because they're locked in their religious traditions. And so what Jesus is speaking about here is something that is quite common and continues to the present time. People who are locked in their old traditional systems just can't take a new fresh work of God in their hearts and in their lives. Pharisees, how locked they were in their traditions. And

how often Jesus came against them because of their rigid position in their traditions, rebuking them because actually they were putting their traditions above the word of God. Not just on an equal par with God's word but above God's word.

And so Jesus said, you just don't put the new wine in the old skins. So He was creating a new order with His disciples. That God might pour His Spirit and this new work of God's Spirit into the new skins. But even the new skins have become old. And so God when He desires to work a fresh new work seems to always go outside of the system and starts a whole new work. It doesn't take long, unfortunately, for systems to become rigid, to become established, to develop their own traditions and their own ruts. And it's so easy to get in a rut. This is the way we've done it, this is the way we've been doing it for the past fifteen years and I don't see any need for change or reason why we should change. And people get in ruts so easily. But just remember the only difference between a rut and a grave is the length and the depth. God keep us from the ruts lest they become graves.

Father, we thank You for the work, the fresh work of Your Holy Spirit. And God keep us ever supple, pliable. Keep us Lord from rigidity that would preclude our receiving any fresh work of Your Spirit. O Lord may we always be open to receive. Free us Lord from any traditions that may have begun to develop. And help us Lord to always walk in an openness before You, ready to hear, ready to receive, ready to respond, ready to obey. In Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.