

**Continuum of Dependence**

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**Independence**

Our thinking, actions, and feelings have no effect on it

Example: Gravity

Examples: **Independence**

**Dependence**

Our thinking, actions, and feelings have complete control over it

Example: Imaginary friend

Examples: **In Between**      **Dependence**

**Where is the coronavirus on this continuum?**  
**Where are we on this continuum?**  
**Where is God on this continuum?**

1

**God Alone**

**Luke 5:12-26**

[bib.ly/Lu5.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu5.NIV)

2

### *Setting*

Major religious groups among 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish people

- **Pharisees** (most “law” scholars and teachers)
  - SECOND STORY** • Most influential among common people & synagogues
  - Theologically ‘liberal’ and politically ‘conservative’
    - Scripture plus traditions and debates
  - Ritual purity was very important
- **Sadducees** (mostly priests)
  - FIRST STORY** • Powerful in the temple
  - Wealthy and powerful, though a smaller group
  - ‘Conservative’ theologically
    - Maybe only the first 5 books of the Old Testament
- **Essenes** (not many in Jerusalem)
  - Communal, social action; ascetic (severe self discipline)

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#### Story 1: Sadducees

#### Luke 5:12-13

<sup>12</sup> While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

<sup>13</sup> Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.

leprosy = incurable, highly contagious skin disease  
clean = healed and welcomed by people again

4

**Luke 5:14-16**

**14** Then Jesus ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”

**15** Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. **16** But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

**testimony = reliable declaration**

5

**Story 1: Sadducees****Luke 5:12-13**

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*Luke 5:12-26*[bib.ly/Lu5.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu5.NIV)**12-13: Leper cleansed by Jesus, breaking the social norms**

- Leprosy → transliteration, but not ‘leprosy’
  - Incurable skin disease that required constant isolation
  - Instantly spread ‘uncleanness’; can’t join worship ever
  - Thought to be a punishment from God
  - Only solution: ‘cleansing’ by God
- Man covered with leprosy **shouldn’t be** in town!
  - Would have expected Jesus to rebuke the man
- 14: • Man: faith and submission: “If you are willing...”
- 15-16: • Jesus **shouldn’t have touched** him
- 17-19: • Jesus: “I will” (not “God will”) → word + action
- 20-26: • Immediately cleansed by Jesus

7

**Luke 5:14**

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**testimony = reliable, powerful declaration**

8

**Luke 5:12-26**[bib.ly/Lu5.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu5.NIV)

12-13: Leper cleansed by Jesus, breaking the social norms

**14: Jesus: give direct testimony to the priests alone**

- One of priests' jobs: declare skin diseases cured
  - Then people could be welcomed in society again
  - This never happens!
- Testimony = reliable, powerful declaration
  - Was perhaps for the priests...
    - The Messiah has come
    - Messiah = God's chosen rescuer for His people

15-16: • Jesus is that Messiah

17-19: • Later: Chief priests will lead the effort to kill Jesus

20-26: • Yet many priests later became Christians

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**Luke 5:15-16**

**15** Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

**16** But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

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12-13: Leper cleansed by Jesus, breaking the social norms

14: Jesus: give direct testimony to the priests alone

**15-16: Crowds kept growing, and Jesus kept praying**

- Why the crowds came: to hear and to be healed
- Prayer perhaps in preparation for conflict with religious leaders (next several stories)
  - Jesus took time alone to pray, even though teaching and healing opportunities were endless
  - And no one else could do what Jesus was doing
- **If Jesus did this, certainly we should too!**

17-19:

20-26:

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**Story 2: Pharisees****Luke 5:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

**Pharisees = powerful and respected religious leaders**  
**teachers of the law = experts in religious requirements**

12

**Luke 5:20-26**

<sup>20</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

<sup>21</sup> The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

**sins = guilt or shame before God**  
**blasphemy = defiant false words**

13

**Luke 5:20-26**

<sup>22</sup> Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? <sup>24</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” <sup>25</sup> Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. <sup>26</sup> Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

**Son of Man = title for the Son of God (Jesus)**

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15-16: Crowds kept growing, and Jesus kept praying

**17-19: Friends innovated to bring paralyzed man to Jesus**

- Faith → overcoming obstacles to get to Jesus
- **Pharisees** & teachers of law came from all over!
  - House wasn't huge; perhaps mostly religious leaders
- “Power of the Lord was with Jesus”
  - Even though Jesus was God, He lived like people
  - I think Jesus had a careful plan for this situation
    - He knew his audience well

20-26:

18

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**unexpected, strange, astonishing** (Jesus)

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**Luke 5:12-26**[bib.ly/Lu5.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu5.NIV)

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15-16: Crowds kept growing, and Jesus kept praying

17-19: Friends bring paralyzed man to Jesus

**20-26: Jesus forgave & healed & proved His authority as God**

- Sin is most deeply an offense against God
  - So only God can fully forgive sins
  - To claim full authority to forgive is to defy God
- Being healed can be confirmed; forgiveness cannot
- God doesn't listen to blasphemers, **defiant liars about God** so healing proves Jesus' authority to forgive
- Amazed/**terror**, worship, awe/**fear**, remarkable/**paradox**

21

**Apparent Logic of Jesus**

- Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins
  - Can't prove it one way or the other
  - Blasphemous [defiant lie] if not true
- Jesus healed the man's paralysis
  - Direct evidence that healing took place
  - Jesus can only do this if God approves of Him
- Therefore, God approves of Jesus, so Jesus' claim to have the authority of God to forgive sins is true

22

“Everyone was [amazed/astonished/terrified] and gave praise to God. They were filled with [awe/amazement/terror] and said, “We have seen [remarkable/ unexpected/ strange/ astonishing] things today.”

### Why the intense and complex reaction?

#### Their categories based on Scripture:

- There is only one God, and to be in His presence is to die
- Only God can forgive sins
- Jesus, standing before them, claimed His authority to forgive
- The miracle, which they personally saw, proved that Jesus, a human being, had the authority of God

Their ideas, prompted by Scripture, caused them to reject Jesus!

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### *The Big Idea*

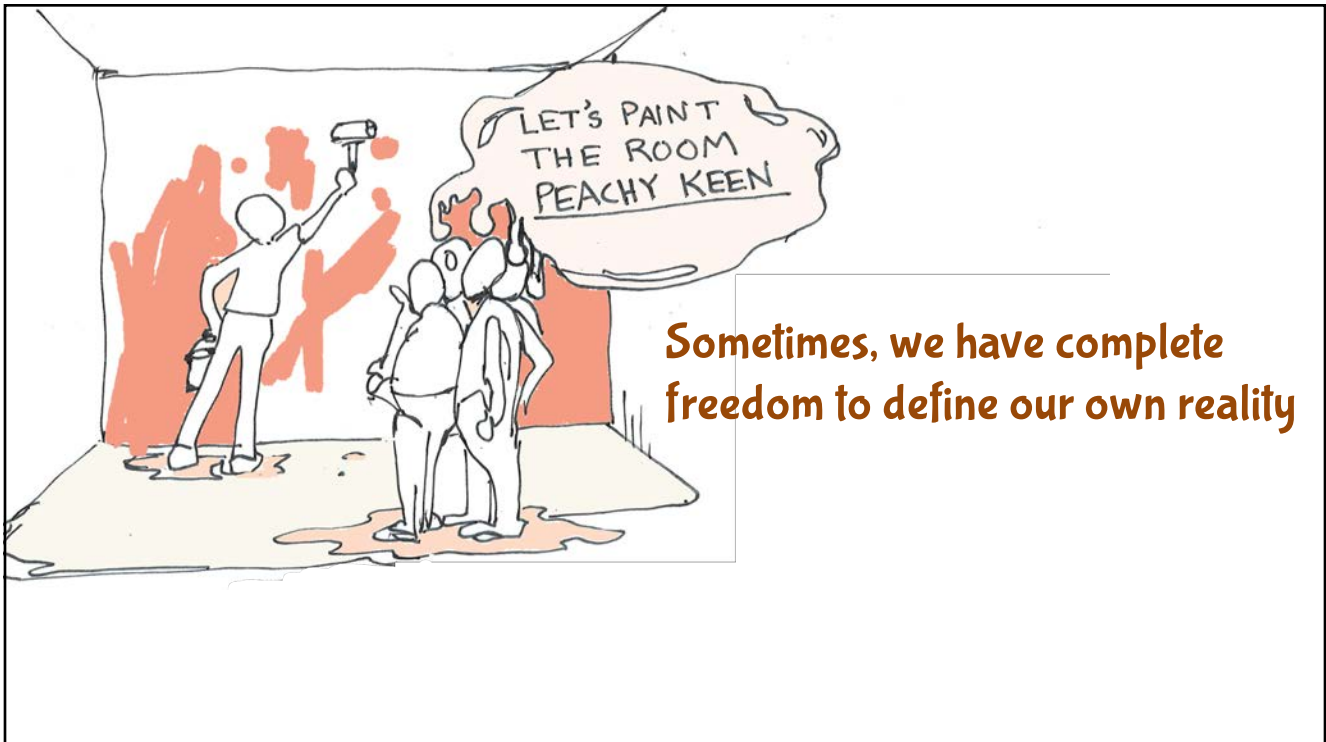
**Jesus alone has the full authority of God  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

**This reality is astonishing, unexpected, amazing, terrifying...**

**Jesus does not fit neatly within  
human categories and frameworks and ideas**

**Jesus has the final say on everything!**

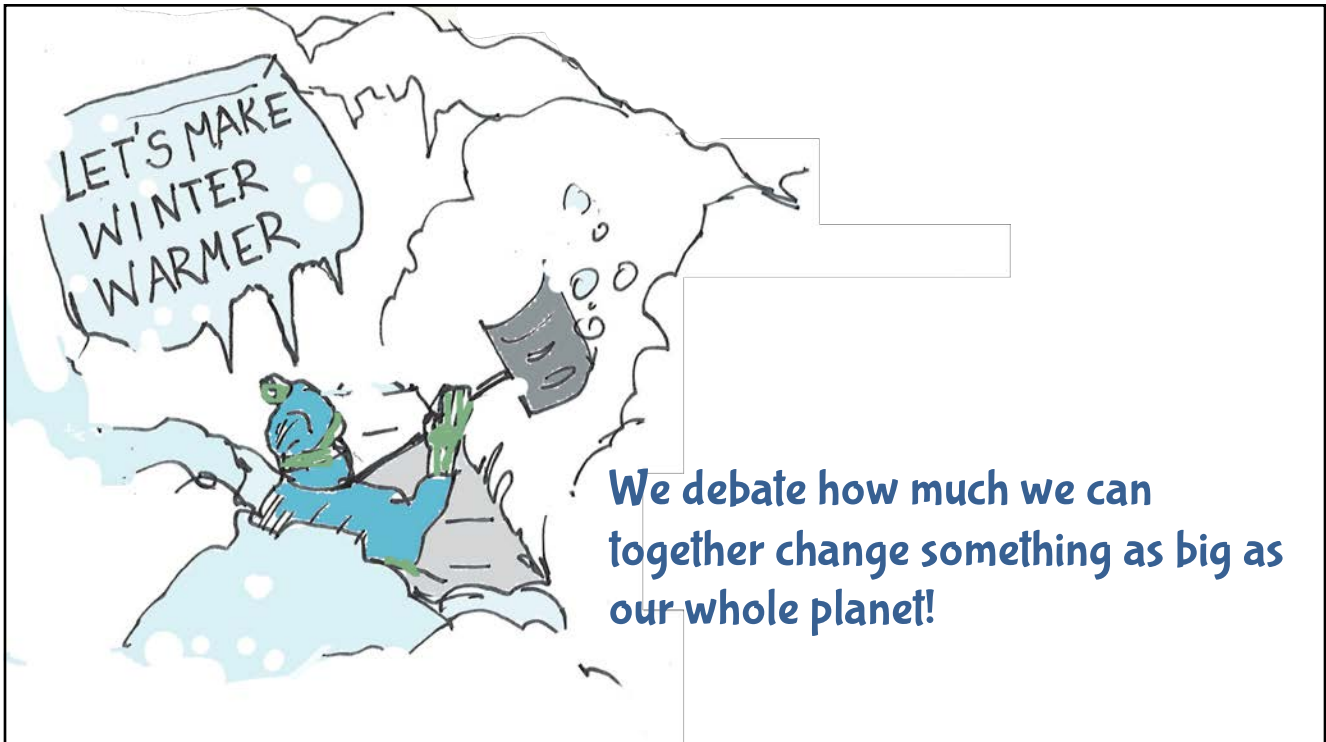
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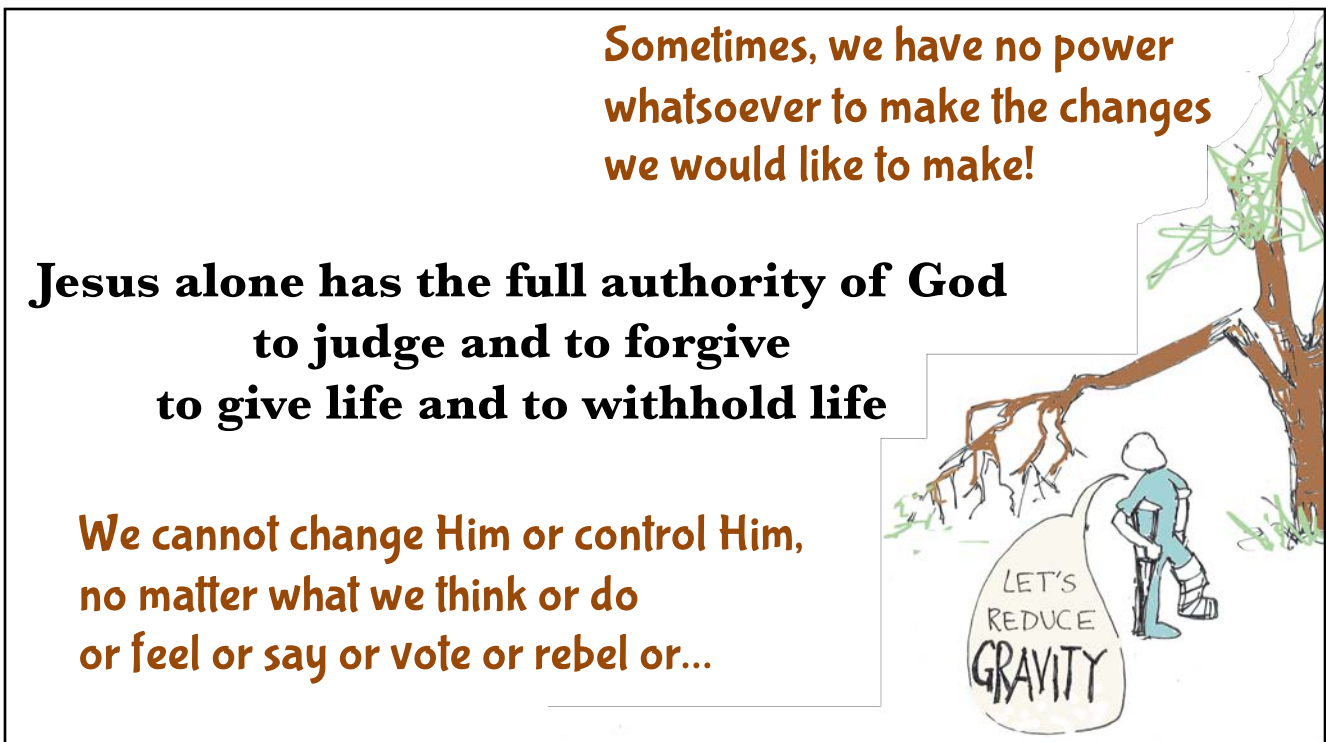
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26



27



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**Jesus alone has the full authority of God  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

**Fear (fully submit to) Jesus alone**

- **How reliable is our intuition, our sensibilities, our reasoning for economics? the coronavirus? theory of relativity? string theory? intercultural interactions? knowing God?**
- **Our intuition, our sensibilities, our reasoning mean nothing compared to the wisdom and will of Jesus**
- **“Who can fathom the mysteries of God?” *Job 11:7***
- **“What he opens, no one can shut.  
What he shuts, no one can open.” *Revelation 3:7***

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**Jesus alone has the full authority of God  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

**Fear (fully submit to) Jesus alone**

**How foolish it is...**

- **to think that we can disagree with Jesus and be right!**
- **to think that our reasoning determines what makes sense from His perspective**

**He is God, and we are not**

**So the only wise and good action is to bow before Him!**

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**Jesus alone has the full authority of God  
to judge and **to forgive**  
**to give life** and to withhold life**

### Hope in Jesus alone

- Other people's judgments of us mean nothing compared to the will of Jesus to forgive and to give life
- Other people's racism or injustice or deception or evil intent mean nothing compared to the will of Jesus to forgive and to give life
- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" *Romans 8:31*
- There is no other source of life (spiritual and otherwise)
- Pray with great faith and submission: "If you are willing..."

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**Jesus **alone** has the full authority of God  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

### Sit UNDER Jesus

- Jesus said: "**Do not judge**, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." *Matthew 7:1-2*
  - Think carefully & critically in truth, and confront evil
  - But **do not judge**
- **It is impossible to look down on people and up at Jesus at the same time**

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Jesus alone has the **full authority of God**  
 to judge and to forgive  
 to give life and to withhold life

Submit every thought to Jesus

- Every human framework is a mixture of good and bad, and at best a partial expression of what is true and good  
**Joshua met an angel of God: "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." *Joshua 5:13-14***
- Good human frameworks, prompted by Scripture, sincerely held, have often stopped people from hearing God
  - **Religious leaders honored Scripture and missed Jesus!**

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Jesus alone has the **full authority of God**  
 to judge and to forgive  
 to give life and to withhold life

Submit every thought to Jesus

- We also ask Jesus: "Are you for us or for our enemies?"
  - Jesus' reply: Neither!
    - He asks: Are you submitting to me as God?
    - This includes political parties, theological parties, denominations, nations, people groups, and more
- Jesus worked so that people in each group would know that He is God

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**Jesus alone has the **full authority of God**  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

**Submit every thought to Jesus**

- **Grow in **God's** thoughts & be shaped in **God's** agenda**
- **Some human frameworks are better than others**
- **It is not wrong to associate with good human frameworks**
- **Yet good human frameworks, prompted by Scripture, sincerely held, have often stopped people from hearing God**
  - **We misunderstand or fail to hear the Spirit**
  - **We misread the Bible or skip parts**
  - **We lead others astray and we are led astray**
- **Never stop being transformed **by God Himself!****

35

*The Big Idea*

**Jesus alone has the full authority of God  
to judge and to forgive  
to give life and to withhold life**

**Jesus wants each of us to know Him fully**

**In **profound humility**, realize...**

- **Only God sees everything clearly and truly**
- **Every human view is imperfect and incomplete**

**Be a student of His Word. Listen to His Spirit. Be eager to be corrected by Him and His people. Obey boldly as He leads.**

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