

# God Alone

Luke 5:12-26

## Independence

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

Example: Gravity

## Dependence

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

Example: Imaginary friend

## Where are we on this continuum? Where is God?

## Setting

### Major religious groups among 1st 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)

## Luke 5:12-26

### 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

Man: faith and submission: “If you are willing...”

Jesus shouldn’t have touched him

Jesus: “I will” (not “God will”) ☑ word + action

Immediately cleansed by Jesus

### 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

Jesus is that Messiah

Later: Chief priests will lead the effort to kill Jesus

Yet many priests later became Christians

### 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: 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: 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

**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

**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!**

**Application**

**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

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!

**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..."

### 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

### 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!

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

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!

## Conclusion

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.

## Reflection Questions

1. When and where are you tempted to sit in judgment over other people?
2. What human frameworks (philosophies, or theological traditions, or political positions) most deeply shape your view of the world? How might those frameworks get in the way of you hearing and seeing Jesus fully?
3. What does it look like to think carefully and critically, and to confront evil, without judging?
4. Where are you learning to pray with deep faith and profound humility, submitting to God alone?