



A Post Tenebras Lux Sunday Sermon...

Jesus Knows More About...

Luke 5:1-126

Jesus knows more about...

...what you know more about...than anybody else.

This morning's sermon springs from my reflection on three seemingly unconnected stories in Luke chapter five. In these three short, simple stories, I believe the Holy Spirit wants to make real to us the depths of Jesus' incomparable knowledge and wisdom and He desires that not just because He wants us to gain another fact to add to the long list of things we already know about Jesus but rather because He earnestly longs for us to make every effort to know the mind of Christ and coming to know it to do what He wishes. Now in the first story, the one contained in Luke 5:1-11, Luke shows that Jesus knows more about fishing than one of the most experienced fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.

In the second story, the one contained in Luke 5:12-16, Luke shows that Jesus knows more about leprosy than the priest appointed and trained to be an expert on leprosy under the Mosaic Law.

And finally in the third story, the one contained in Luke 5:17-26, Luke shows that Jesus knows more about sin and the forgiveness of sin than the self-proclaimed experts on the law among the scribes and Pharisees.

Now I wanted to tell you that because I do want you to know, at least in a cursory way, how the three stories or section hang together. You see my original intention was to exposit each of the three stories slowly, to show how Luke intended them to link together literarily and to show how together they demonstrate **“Jesus superior knowledge and wisdom over three separate groups of experts.”**

But I find this morning that I have written something different than what I intended and I have done that because I long for this morning’s message to be something more, something much more than an academic exercise or literary study. In fact, my prayer for you this morning is that you might come to see the wonderful truth contained in these three little stories. That you might come to believe that Jesus is in fact wiser than you are and that believing that you might come to trust His wisdom enough to live as He commands.

Now I have done one other thing in this message and that is that I have made it personal. Now I don’t mean that I am angry with anyone or that what to set anyone straight. Rather I long for you to apply this message personally to your own life. You can see my intent I think even in the title my message...

**“Jesus knows more about...
...what you know more about...than anybody else.”**

You see, I have done that because I think it wouldn't matter very much if you believed that Jesus knew more than a bunch of first century fishermen, or a first century priest or even a bunch of first century Jewish lawyers unless you also happened to believe, to really believe, that Jesus knows more than you know even though you live in a modern world filled with thousands upon thousands of technological and scientific marvels.

I want you to take the implications of what I say personally.

Now I want to do one other thing, something I have never done before. I want to tell what it was that led me to begin to meditate on the importance of these things.

A few months back, I was given a charge by a group of godly men to admonish a young woman who was contemplating divorce from her husband. I took my charge quite seriously. I prayed and meditated about what I ought to say to her and when my chance came I poured out from the depths of my heart and soul whatever wisdom and pastoral experience my heart and mind could muster. I pleaded with her, I pleaded with her with a broken heart in exactly the same way

I would have pleaded with my own precious daughter.

I begged her to consider her vows.

I begged her to consider her Christian testimony.

I begged her to consider her husband's spiritual well being.

And then finally, I begged with her to slow down and to give the Lord Jesus a chance to work a miracle in her marriage, a chance to restore her affection for her husband.

And when I said that I could see in her eyes that she had no idea what I was talking about. I could tell that she thought of Jesus as a winsome historical figure.

But to her He was just that, and only that. He was not a living reality in her life. She understood my asking her to wait for Him or to obey Him just about the same way she would have if I had asked her to wait for or obey Teddy Roosevelt or some other historical figure that had come and gone. You see she believed, earnestly and honestly believed that she knew more about what she needed than anybody else.

Somehow, along the way she had lost the wonder of Jesus.

Now, my prayer is that the Spirit of God will drive the truth of these three simple stories will drive deep into your soul the wonder of Jesus so that you'll come to know His wisdom personally and experientially with the result that you will gladly seek to obey all that He commands.

Now to that end, let us pray.

Come now O Holy Spirit,

You who have been assigned the glorious task of advancing the truth and glory of the Lord Jesus and burn into our hearts the reality of His matchless wisdom an

grace. Cause us to see Him as He is. Cause us to love Him as He is. Cause us to serve Him and worship Him with you and the Father one God now and forevermore, world without end. Amen.

Now because you are the kind people you are I know that many of you are especially good at what you do...and I know that that is true, just as true, even for those of you that are retired. Because you are the kind of obsessive compulsive, driven personality types that you are, the things that you care about...you care about deeply...and you have applied yourselves in such a way that you know more about...what you know about...than almost anybody else.

Now I am not just talking about those of you that are professionals. I'm not talking just about you dentists and teachers and printers. I'm not talking just about you chemists or engineers or accountants. I am including you but I am also talking about those of you that think of yourselves principally as husbands, or wives, or brothers or sisters, or sons or daughters. I am talking about those of you who think of yourselves principally as married, or widowed, or single or divorced.

Almost to a person...each of you has some area of expertise in your life that makes you smarter or wiser or perhaps even sadder than anybody else you know.

Now I say that...knowing perfectly well that you are a humble bunch...and knowing perfectly well your fear of being prideful but I also know you're a pretty honest bunch of people and I know that you know, deep down in your

souls, that what I am saying is true. But even as you concede the point let me hasten to say...

Jesus knows more about...

...what you know more about...than anybody else.

You see that is the point the Holy Spirit through Luke's gospel is trying to get across in Luke chapter five. And to get that point across, He links three seemingly unconnected stories in such a way as to draw our attention to one important truth.

Now...that is not unusual in Luke's gospel.

In fact, if you know Luke's very well you'll know that he often links stories together to make a point.

In Luke fifteen, for example, when Jesus was blasted by the Pharisees for spending time with sinners, He reminded them that God was actually delighted when lost sinners came to repentance and He drove His point home by telling three short, separate stories about the delight three different people expressed whenever they found something they had lost.

I imagine that you each of you could tell me what kind of people the three people were in Luke 15. But in case you've forgotten let me remind you.

One was shepherd who had lost one of his sheep.

One was a woman who had lost one of her coins.

One was a father who had lost a rebellious prodigal son.

All three of the people there found something they had lost and all three rejoiced as a result. And the point of the three stories is the same. Heaven rejoices over sinners that are repentant in the same way people rejoice when they find something they have lost.

Do you see what I mean? Three stories about lost things...but one idea...one central point. **God rejoices when sinners repent.**

Now the same kind of thing happens here in Luke 5. There are three stories and each story demonstrates Jesus' wonderful wisdom and knowledge and show that He is not just a run of the mill prophet. **They show rather...that He possesses the wisdom of God and that He does so because He is God.**

The first story is a familiar one and involves Peter and a boatload of fish. And the point of the story is simple enough. Jesus knows more about fishing than even the best and most experienced fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Now I want to put in at verse 4 but before I do let me set the scene.

Jesus had been teaching along the Sea of Galilee. It's a large fresh water lake and teaching there meant there was always water for the people to drink and more often than not it meant there was food and shade for the crowds that followed Him. Here in Luke five, however, the crowd has swarmed Jesus more or less hemming Jesus in against the water.

Jesus notices a couple of fishing boats on the shore, boats that belonged to Peter and his partners and He asks Peter if He can use his boat as a sort of floating pulpit to teach the crowd. Peter is happy to comply and he and his mates get into the boat and push out a little way from the shore and Jesus sits in the back of his boat and teaches the crowd in sort of an amphitheater on the water. Apparently Peter sits right behind Him in the boat delighted to listen to Jesus teach the crowd.

It's a wonderful scene, don't you think? Now keeping all that in mind let's start at verse 4.

NIV Luke 5:4...When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Peter's answer troubles me. It's not an outright rebuke, of course but it does indicate a measure of doubt about what Jesus actually knows. I think it is Peter's way of saying something like this.

"You know Jesus I have sat here in the back of the boat and listened to you preach and I am willing to concede that you are a wonderful preacher. You make the Word of God and the love of God come alive...and your manner, how you say what you say, is something truly wonderful. I can see the crowds hanging on your every word. I've seen you make them laugh out loud. And I've seen you break their hearts by exposing their sin.

Now I know you are genuine and not in the ministry for the money. I've seen you reach out to befriend the helpless and the hopeless and I've seen you give money and clothes and food to others even when it meant you had to go without.

And you know, I've even seen some the chairs you've made so I know you are an excellent carpenter. But when you talk about letting down the nets...you are talking about the one thing I know something about and I think, respectfully, that you are out of your depth.

You see I have fished this lake all my life and I have managed to make a living for my family doing what I do and I've been able to do that is because I know how to fish. More often than not, I know where the fish are. I know what they like to feed on and I know when they feed. I even know when they go deep and I know in my gut when trying to catch them is pointless like it is now.

Nevertheless, even though I am tired, even though it is a lot of work, because of my respect for you...I will let down the nets."

Verse 6 tells us what happened next.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:6**...When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Now in my mind's eye, I can see Jesus sitting in the back of the boat looking down into the water and I can see Peter's expression of surprise as the lines holding the dragnets suddenly snap taut. I can see Peter's surprise as the boat stops dead in the water because of the weight of the fish in the net behind the boat. And I can see his face as the water at the back of the boat begins to churn with hundreds and hundreds of fish.

I can see the frantic faces of the other fishermen on the boat knowing that there is no way...absolutely no way their boat will ever hold the fish that are in the net. I can see them waving to the others on shore to hurry out to where they are and I can see the waves lapping over the gunwales of both boats as they limp, back to shore, filled with fish. Finally, I see Peter making eye contact with Jesus and coming at last to full a realization of all that had just happened. I think that is why verse 8 says what it says.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:8...**When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "**Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!**"

You see, in that moment, Peter came to the stark realization that the most certain thing in His life was, in fact, not very certain at all. That seems obvious enough in his willingness to leave the fish, that enormous catch of fish, and his boat and everything he knew...to follow Jesus. You see I think Peter's initial reaction and his subsequent action was an admission, a very simple admission that **Jesus did indeed know more about...what Peter knew more about...than anybody else.**

And it's the same in the second story. It's a bit more subtle but the same. You see the second story involves an unnamed leper and a priest in charge of examining people who had leprosy.

Now that sounds strange to us today, but in Jesus' day lepers were not allowed near the towns or villages. Because leprosy was contagious, lepers were not allowed to be anywhere near where healthy people lived or worked. Lepers lived

alone in a world of sickness and shadows and they had to warn anyone coming near them that they were lepers. That's why this story is so wonderful. It not only shows the wisdom of Jesus it also shows His compassion.

Look at verse twelve.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:12...**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.**" ¹³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "**I am willing,**" he said. "**Be clean!**" And immediately the leprosy left him.

I love that story. I especially love that phrase that says, "**and he reached out his hand and touched the man and said, I am willing.**" You see, Jesus was willing and was able to do what no other man could do. He could make that which was dirty...clean.

Now the strangest part of this second story is that Jesus orders the healed man not to tell anyone what had happened. Look at verse 14.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:14...**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.**"

You see Jesus wanted this healed leper to go to a priest, a priest who had the unenviable job of examining people to determine whether they were leprous or not. In those days, leprosy was terminal and it was so awful in its form and anyone that contracted leprosy was immediately cast out from the world he

knew. When a man was pronounced “**unclean**” with leprosy he gave up everything he owned and contact with everyone he loved.

Still, from time to time, priests were called to examine people that thought they had somehow been cured of leprosy. The law insisted a priest certify a leper to be clean before he could rejoin his family and friends.

And here’s the thing, it’s never, ever happened. The priest was an expert. He was expert on determining when someone was cleansed from leprosy. Only, no one was ever cleansed from leprosy. He was an expert about something that never happened.

Now because of that it is easy to imagine this particular priest’s reaction when the man he knew to be a leper, a man that the text says was covered with leprosy, came to him actually cleansed of his leprosy. The priest examined the man and pronounced him clean without any notion as to how the man had been made clean and the point Luke is trying to make is that the priest could recognize cleanness but was unable himself to make anyone clean. To put it another way, Luke is saying that **Jesus knew more about...what this particular priest knew more about...than anybody else.**

You see Jesus knew when a man was clean and He knew how to make a man and that made Him infinitely wiser than any priest. And it’s the same thing in the last story. It involves a group of Pharisees and lawyers who thought they knew more about sin and forgiveness than anybody else.

Look at verse 17.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:17**...One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ 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.

Jesus was sitting in a house, surrounded by experts in the law and there were so many of them from so many different towns around Israel that this poor paralytic was unable to get to Jesus. But this poor man's friends, and wonderful friends they were, were not easily deterred. In fact, they carried the man's stretcher up on the roof and began to tear away the tiles until there was a hole big enough to lower the man down through the roof. Now imagine the commotion and the rubble and dust and broken tiles falling down on the crowd.

In my mind's eye, I like to imagine our Savior looking up to the men lowering the paralytic down laughing with delight. Jesus certainly had no intention of turning the man away. Look at verse 20.

^{NIV} **Luke 5:20**...When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "**Friend, your sins are forgiven.**"

Now that is not what we want to have happen. It is not even what we expect to happen. What we expect to happen is that Jesus will meet the man's real need and heal the man so that the man will get up and walk.

But Jesus' actions are wiser than even our expectations. In fact, He does deal with the man's real problem. He deals with the issue of the man's sin first.

But His words incense the experts at the law. Look at verse 21.

^{NIV} Luke 5:21...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?"**

You see the experts in the law were half right. No one can forgive sins but God alone. But they were also wrong. They were wrong because they failed to understand who Jesus was and why He was perfectly within His rights to pronounce this man's forgiveness of sin.

So Jesus schooled them by giving them an object lesson they could understand.

Look at verse 22.

^{NIV} Luke 5:22...Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, **"Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...."** He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, **"We have seen remarkable things today."**

You see Jesus' miraculous healing here revealed that he knew more about...what the Pharisees and lawyers claimed to know more about...than anybody else.

Now I wanted to read these stories to you and I wanted to remind you of these things because I think as believers sometimes it is possible to lose the wonder of our Savior. I know that I have done that.

I have always prided myself on knowing more about what my wife needed than anybody else.

Now because I pursued the life of a scholar I haven't always been able to buy her new clothes or even a decent car. But I have been pretty careful to do what I was able to do. I have always been careful to make sure she could go to the doctor or dentist when she needed. I have always devoted a lot of time to praying for her and listening to her. I have always tried to encourage her to express her talents, which are many, and to encourage her emotionally. Sometimes I have even been willing to scold her about a bad habit or some unkind thing she might have said. But always, I thought I could take care of her better than anybody else and I thought that because I loved her better than anybody else.

But Monday, November 24th, 2003 changed all that.

I was out doing the work of the ministry while my wife was home having a heart attack. Because I was doing what I was doing, my wife had to call her sister to take her to the hospital. She got there just in time because once she got to hospital my beloved wife arrested twice. My children were there, many of my church members were there. In fact, I was just about the only person I knew who wasn't there.

When they finally found me, I got to the hospital just a few minutes before they wheeled her out of surgery and this is what the whole ordeal taught me. It taught me that even though I thought I knew more about taking care of her than anybody else, there was someone else more dependable than me. And praise God almighty that that is so. Jesus knew who was going to save her life. He knew

who could take care of her and He was gracious enough to keep me out of the way until I was properly cared for.

You see, **Jesus knew more about what I thought I knew more about than anybody else.**

And this morning, I suspect some of you need to hear that message. I know some of you are hurting. Some of you have children that are right on the edge of drifting from the faith. Some of you have marriages that are in trouble. Some of you are struggling financially or struggling with aging and are emotionally or physically exhausted. Some of you are sick and you are not sure how everything will turn out. You are at your wit's end and at your wisdom's end. You have been fishing for a long time and are tired.

Here's my prayer for you. My prayer is that you will learn the lesson of the nets. That you will do what Jesus commands. That you will stay at it. Stay the course. Jesus knows and Jesus cares about you. Whether it is money or relationships or sickness or even the heartbreak of sin. Jesus knows who you are and what you need. Let down the nets of faithful obedience, let down the nets even of skeptical obedience and let us learn to marvel at what He can do.

"Jesus knows more about...

...what you know more about...than anybody else."

Lord's Supper

Now it occurred to me in preparing for my meditation on the Lord's Supper that some of you might be thinking, **"You know Tom, Jesus does know about what I know more about than anybody else except when it come to my sin."**

And certainly if you were thinking that, you would be right to a point. Jesus knows nothing of the practice of your sin experientially. But He knows an infinite amount about bearing the weight and penalty of your sin experientially. You see He bore in His own body the full weight of my sin and your sin and the sin over every believer in every age.

He knows more about...what we know more about...than anybody else, even when it comes to our sin.

Still He has in His infinite wisdom and goodness determined how to care and provide for us through His great atoning work. So come let us and taste and see that the Lord is good.