Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

# Encounters with Jesus: The Sign of Healing (Luke 5:17–26)

## Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

* How are you in crowds? Excited? Anxious? Overwhelmed?
* What’s an act of friendship that someone has done that you find especially memorable?
* Have you ever received a gift that you weren’t expecting? What was that like?

## Dig

After reading Luke 5:17–26 together, discuss these questions.

1. What do you see emphasized in verse 17 about the situation? What would your outlook on that situation be? Wonder? Expectation? Skepticism?
2. In light of the situation as the text describes it, what are the paralyzed man and his friends hoping for with their actions in verses 18–19?
3. Jesus’ statement in verse 20 is a surprise to all. We see how the religious leaders reacted. How do you think the paralyzed man reacted? His friends? Other people in the crowd?
4. Jesus prioritizes forgiveness in this story, but he also heals the man. What does that tell you about Jesus and what he does for humanity?
5. In this story Jesus claims authority to forgive sins and then commands a paralyzed man to walk, which he does. What kind of authority does Jesus show with these two actions?

## Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

* Pastor Bryan remarked that the faith of the men in the story was notable not because of their bold risk-taking but the object of their faith, Jesus. What difference does that make to you?
* Think for a moment about being forgiven by the God who made you. How does that change your understanding of your life? Your feelings about yourself? About others? What are you grateful to receive? What is hard to believe or accept?
* What would be the cost of forgiving others are freely as Jesus does? The benefits? The opportunities? The threats?
* What do you think made it hard for the religious leaders to accept Jesus’ claim to forgiveness? What makes it hard to accept forgiveness through Jesus now?

## Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

* What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
* What kind of help do we need from God to extend his forgiveness to others more faithfully?
* What are some blessings you experience as someone forgiven by God that we can thank God for?