

August 16, 2026



CHECKPOINTS



Following Jesus: More Than A Checklist

“Connect”

Luke 5:17-26 [17-21 listed]

¹⁷ One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, ¹⁹ but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.” ²¹ But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, “Who does he think he is? That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!”

Sermon Summary:

Some of us grew up with a version of faith that looked a lot like a checklist. Go to church—check. Try to be a good person—check. Pray when life gets hard—check. Over time, without even realizing it, following Jesus can begin to feel like just another box to check in an already busy life. But Jesus never invited anyone into that kind of relationship. He didn't say, “Fit Me in when it's convenient.” He didn't say, “Add Me to your list.” In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Following Jesus isn't about completing a religious checklist; it's about walking with Him every day.

Checkpoints aren't boxes to earn God's approval—they're markers that help us evaluate whether we're actually growing as followers of Jesus. They remind us to keep moving in the right direction, taking intentional steps toward becoming more like Christ.

Ice Breaker Questions:

1. Who has had the biggest positive influence on your faith journey?
2. Tell about a time when friends or family helped you through a difficult season.
3. What's one activity you enjoy doing with other people more than by yourself?
4. Have you ever worked with a team to accomplish something you couldn't have done alone?
5. What qualities make someone a trustworthy friend?

Objective Questions:

1. Where was Jesus teaching when this event took place?
2. Who had gathered to hear Jesus teach?



CHECKPOINTS



3. What kind of man was brought to Jesus?
4. Why couldn't the men bring their friend into the house through the front door?
5. What creative solution did the men come up with?
6. What did Jesus see before He spoke to the paralyzed man?
7. What was the first thing Jesus said to the man?
8. How did the Pharisees and teachers of the law respond to Jesus' words?
9. What miracle did Jesus perform to demonstrate His authority?
10. How did the crowd respond after witnessing the miracle?

Interpretive Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus first addressed the man's sins before healing his body?
2. What does the determination of the four friends teach us about genuine biblical community?
3. Why was Jesus impressed by the faith of the man's friends?
4. What does this passage reveal about the relationship between faith, forgiveness, and healing?
5. How does the reaction of the religious leaders differ from the response of the friends and the crowd?

Application Questions:

1. The Checkpoint this week is Connect: Choosing authentic community over isolated faith. How has authentic Christian community strengthened your walk with Christ?
2. Are you more likely to ask for help when you're struggling, or try to carry burdens alone? Why?
3. Who in your life might need someone to "carry them to Jesus" through encouragement, prayer, practical help, or friendship?
4. What keeps people from experiencing authentic community in the church, and how can we help overcome those barriers?
5. What is one practical step you can take this week to deepen your connection with God's people—whether by joining a group, inviting someone to coffee, reconnecting with a friend, or intentionally encouraging another believer?