

Sunday, February 9, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Luke 5:1-11

*A work of art was once a work in progress. –Adele Leon*

The Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze is the famous museum in Florence, Italy, where one can see Michelangelo's magnificent *David*. But the gallery is also home to four statues almost equal in fame — the Four Prisoners, also known as the Four Slaves. They were to be a part of the tomb of Pope Julius II, but they were unfinished. They seem to be half-born from the marble with which the sculptor was working. Scholars have given names: “The Awakening Slave,” “The Young Slave,” “The Bearded Slave,” and “The Atlas (or Bound Slave).” According to the gallery website, “they are some of the finest examples of Michelangelo's habitual working practice, referred to as *non-finito* (or incomplete), magnificent illustrations of the difficulty of the artist in carving out the figure from the block of marble and emblematic of the struggle of man to free the spirit from matter.”

It wasn't Michelangelo, but a renowned sculptor was once asked about his method for creating beautiful and lifelike statues. He replied, “When I look at a block of marble, I see the finished piece of art within it. All I have to do is chip away the excess stone to reveal the masterpiece inside.”

The sculptor was then asked how he could envision such beauty in a rough block of marble. He answered, “I see the potential within the stone, not its current state. I know that with time, effort and patience, I can bring that potential to life.”

In a way, we, too, are *non-finito* works of art in the hands of the Artist. In the hands of God, we are unfinished and incomplete, but growing toward splendor. God sees the potential within each of us. Jeremiah 18:1-6 tells the story of the potter and the clay, reminding us of God's sovereign ability to shape and transform us.

Though we may feel like unformed blocks of marble, God is at work, chipping away our rough edges, molding us, and shaping us into divine masterpieces. Our role is to remain pliable and open to God's transformative work, trusting that God knows what is best for us.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Creative God, you know what you want to make of me. Help me to be amenable to your touch, your paintbrush, your chisel, your design. May I be a work of art that brings glory to your name. Amen.*



**Daily Bible Readings**

- Sunday:** Exodus 1-4
- Monday:** Exodus 5-7
- Tuesday:** Exodus 8-10
- Wednesday:** Exodus 11-13
- Thursday:** Exodus 14-17
- Friday:** Exodus 18-20
- Saturday:** Psalms 13-15

***VERSE TO REMEMBER***

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*

—Psalm 14:1 (NIV)

## MYSTERY PERSON!

**Directions:** The purpose of this exercise is to discover the identity of a well-known biblical person. To do so, you must assign a number value to each letter of the alphabet, assuming that **M equals 1**. A word and number chart for you to fill in has been provided for your convenience. Complete each of the clues and then write your answer in the space below.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1

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**First Clue:** 22-19 26-23-10-19-18 23-2 7-13-6-23-15 15-2-18 17-23-26-23-17-23-15

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20-3-6 20-3-9-6-8-19-19-2 13-19-15-6-7.

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**Second Clue:** 8-23-8-9-7 15-2-18 16-15-6-2-15-16-15-7 11-19-6-19 22-23-7

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20-6-23-19-2-18-7.

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**Third Clue:** 22-19 11-6-3-8-19 8-22-19 16-3-3-25 3-20 21-15-26-15-8-23-15-2-7.

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WHO IS THIS PERSON?

Answer (spelled backward): luap.