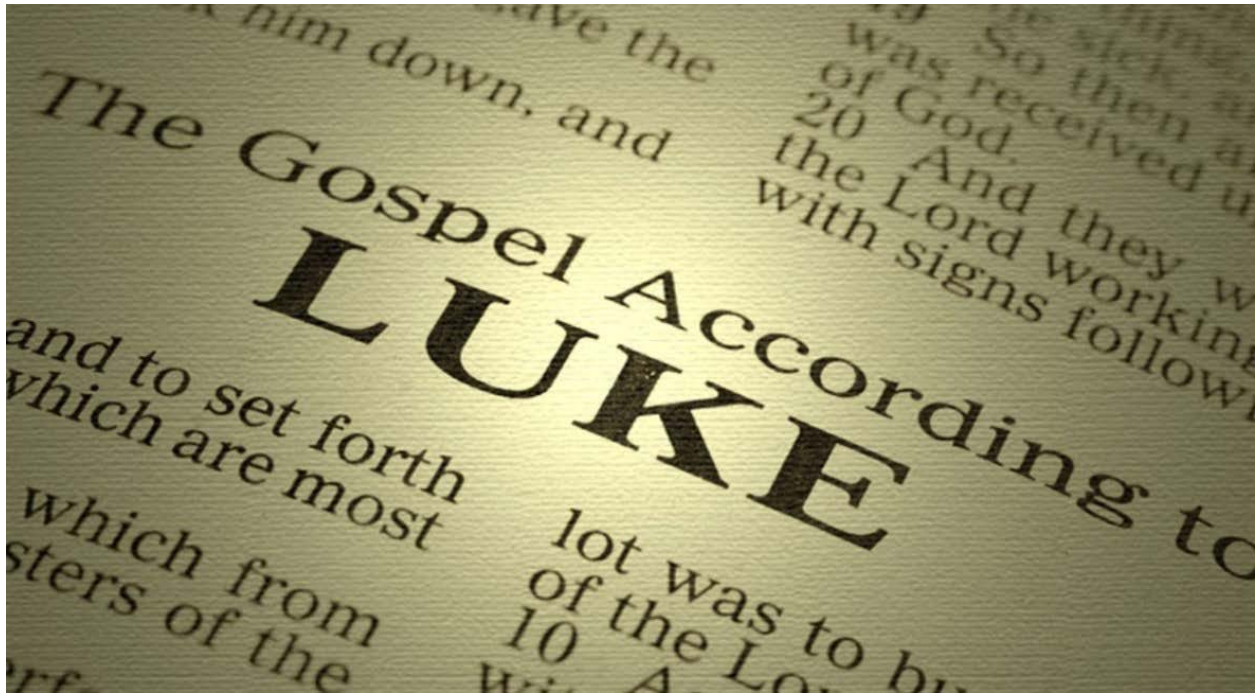


Luke 6, Part 2



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 6, Part 2

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Introduction to Luke 6, Part 2

The second part of Luke 6, which continues setting forth the “constitution” of Christ’s Kingdom, focuses on the duty of love. Love is the defining mark of a true believer, both love for God and love for our neighbors.

Love is the “good fruit” that issues from a “good heart”, a heart devoted to Christ in love (vv. 43-45). When our hearts are saturated with love so that love is the commanding affection of our soul, we will love like Jesus does and thus prove that we are good fruit-bearing trees in the Kingdom.

The old regime of mere self-love is through; the new regime of love for God and neighbors is beginning to unfold. And central to it all is Jesus, the very embodiment of God’s love for the world (Jn. 3.16).

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 The Idols of Our Age

Pray Psalm 73.1-3.

Truly God is good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Sing Psalm 73.1-3.

(Ellacombe: *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*)

To us our God is only good, to all the pure in heart!
But as for me, I nearly stood in sin from Him apart.
I nearly stumbled, nearly slipped as I the proud observed,
how they with ease and riches dripped while I, impoverished, served.

Read Luke 6.1-26; meditate on verses 24-26.

Preparation

1. On whom did Jesus pronounce woes?
2. Why?

Meditation

The coming of the Kingdom of God is not Good News for everyone. Jesus warned us (vv. 22, 23) that some people would hate, exclude, and revile us. Who are these people? Obviously, they are those whose appetites and desires are satisfied by temporal and material pleasures rather than the promised blessings of the Kingdom.

Those who are driven to make and have money may well realize their goal; but it will be their only consolation. Woe awaits them at the coming of the Kingdom of God because they neither desired nor sought it (v. 24).

Those who make temporal pleasures – food and drink, things and sex, things and experiences – their highest objective in life may succeed in varying degrees to realize their desire. But they will come to woe when the promise of the Kingdom is realized on the last day (v. 25).

And those for whom reputation and popularity are their chief ends will meet with woe as well, for they are like the false prophets of old, whom everybody loved because they told them what they wanted to hear, not what God was speaking (v. 26).

In these verses Jesus exposed the idols of our secular age – things, wealth, pleasures, popularity – and their false promises. Worshiping these may or may not lead to disappointment, disillusionment, and frustration in this life, but most certainly to eternal woe in the age to come. We must worship and serve the Lord of the Sabbath. No place exists for idols of any sort in the Kingdom of God.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Blessed are the poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, excluded, reviled, and cast out (Lk. 6.20-22).

Woe to the rich, full, laughing, and well-spoken of (Lk. 6.24-26).

To the blessed He had words of comfort, “Rejoice...in like manner their fathers did to the prophets” when they mistreated them (Lk. 6.23).

To the woe-begotten He said, “For so did their fathers to the false prophets” when they spoke well of them (Lk. 6.26).

The Christian life is full of beautiful, albeit difficult, contrasts like those found in yesterday’s and today’s verses. Things that our sinful minds in our fallen economy think are important, but that God says are not. Such as:

“So the last will be first, and the first last” (Matt. 20.16).

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16.25).

“...but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20.26-28).

Because the idols of our age are so pervasive in life and culture, we need to stay close to our Savior and His Word, leaning into Him, always seeking His mind (1 Cor. 2.16) for all we do and think. This will become a reality as we daily seek His Wisdom, Who said:

“Now therefore, listen to Me, My children,
for blessed are those who keep My ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it.
Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.
For whoever finds Me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD; but he who sins against Me
wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death” (Prov. 8.32-36 *caps added for emphasis*).

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant...” (Phil. 2.5-7). His mindset must be ours in order to realize this blessed life.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ”? How should this affect the way we look at our own lives?
2. Why do woes come upon those who desire things other than Christ to make their lives make sense?
3. How can we maintain vigilance against falling prey to the idols of this age?

A woe is a cry of pain that results from misfortune. Just as God presented blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience in Deut. 28, Jesus presented blessings and woes to His disciples who were anticipating the kingdom. The same blessings and woes apply to believers today when their works are evaluated (see 1 Cor. 3:12–15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 22:12). Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Note on Luke 6.24

Pray Psalm 73.25-28.

Thank God and praise Him for the promise and blessing of knowing Him and being a citizen in His Kingdom. Pray to know His Presence with you in all you do today.

Sing Psalm 73.25-28.

(Ellacombe: *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*)

Then what have I in heav’n above but You, my God and Lord?
And on this earth what shall I love besides You and Your Word?
My flesh and heart shall surely fail, and death my soul release;
Your strength for me will e’er avail and grant eternal peace.

Then let them perish who depart from You and from Your Word.

Luke 6, Part 2

All those unfaithful in their heart You shall destroy, O Lord!
But as for me, Your Presence, Lord, is where I e'er will dwell!
I hide myself within Your Word, Your wondrous works to tell.

2 Neighbor Love (1)

Pray Psalm 52.8, 9.

But I *am* like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
I will praise You forever,
Because You have done *it*;
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it is* good.

Sing Psalm 52.8, 9.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

“But as for me may I be seen in God an olive ever green!
Ever in God, most kind and just, shall I with joy and gladness trust!”

Thanks evermore to our Savior be raised! His faithfulness be ever praised!
Here with Your people, loving God, I wait upon Your Name, so good!

Read Luke 6.1-31; meditate on verses 27-31.

Preparation

1. Whom did Jesus command us to love?
2. By what standard should we love our neighbors?

Meditation

Jesus is outlining the good works that characterize those who are blessed to know Him and receive His Kingdom. The essence of those good works comes down to loving our neighbors as we love ourselves (v. 31; cf. Matt. 22.34-40).

It's not as easy as it sounds.

Jesus describes neighbor love in the most difficult of terms – loving those who hate or wrong us. Why must we love them? Because God does (v. 35) and, as His children and subjects, we must strive to refract His love into the world. To love this way requires supernatural power – the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5.22, 23). But we will not realize those gifts or that power unless we first make up our mind that loving our neighbors, be they ever so unlovable, is what we must do.

Whether they hate and curse us, spitefully use us, strike us on the cheek, steal from us, or otherwise take advantage of us, we must love our enemies. We must treat them not by the way they treat us but by the way we would like to be treated (v. 31). If we can love our enemies like this, loving our friends will be much easier.

And note that the love we must show our enemies is no mere attitude; it entails actions. Doing good, praying for, suffering abuse, exerting or depriving ourselves. Love gives and endures, expecting nothing in return (v. 30). We will only love this way as we keep our eyes on Jesus and His Word in our heart, and as we practice day by day loving the people in our Personal Mission Field, no matter how reprehensible they may be.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The Law found in Exodus 20.1-17 starts with our relationship to God, then moves into family. All ten commandments deal with familial relationships, but then these same commandments must be applied to those outside the family and even outside the faith.

Jesus' command to us in Luke 6.27-31 includes God, family, friends, and enemies. There are no special opt-out clauses for the exceptionally irritating.

"Some people are easier to love from a distance," our friend Pat Hunter used to say. But when we can't keep our distance, we may find that some of the living are really hard to love up close and personal.

1 Corinthians 13 sums up our goal for love. In action. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Lk. 6.27). Yes, that kind of love and that kind of good. And really, without Jesus Christ fueling that love in us, it is truly impossible to do. But "with God nothing will be impossible" (Lk. 1.37).

Under our breath, instead of cursing these folks, we bless them. And pray for them (Lk. 6.28).

We willingly accept more abuse than is inflicted on us, and we give more than what is taken from us. (Lk. 6.29).

Who does this? Who even wants to attempt this? Only those who know we belong to Jesus, and that Jesus has given His all for us. He died for us when we were to Him His enemies (Rom. 5.8). Just like the people we find so very hard to love. We were those people to Him. And yet. He loved us.

And Jesus says to us, This style of life, this way of living is the way to joy. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friend. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you" (Jn. 15.11-14). And we're back to Exodus 20.1-17.

This is a joyful life worth dying for. First to self, then for others.

"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise (Lk. 6.31).

For reflection

1. Discipleship comes down to loving God and neighbors. What is your approach to growing in each of these areas?
2. Why must neighbor love include love for those who oppose us?
3. Love is not just an attitude or a feeling. Love is action. What actions of love do you anticipate taking today?

To love friends is the custom for all people, but to love enemies is customary only for Christians. Tertullian (155-250), To Scapula 1

Pray Psalm 52.1-7.

Pray for those who persecute the Church in various parts of the world, that they might see God's love for them and, in the light of His goodness, come to repentance and faith in Jesus (Rom. 2.4)

Sing Psalm 52.1-7.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Why do the mighty boast in sin? God's love endures, it knows no end!
They with their tongues vain boasts repeat, and like a razor, work deceit.

Men more than good in evil delight, and lies prefer to what is right.
They utter words, both harsh and strong, with their devouring, deceitful tongue.

God will forever break them down, uproot, and cast them to the ground!

Luke 6, Part 2

He from their safety tears them away, no more to know the light of day.

The righteous see and laugh and fear, and say, "Behold, what have we here?
Such are all who at God conspire, and wealth and evil ways desire.

3 Neighbor Love (2)

Pray Psalm 104.1-5.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
Who cover *Yourself* with light as *with* a garment,
Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.
He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire.
You who laid the foundations of the earth,
So *that* it should not be moved forever...

Sing Psalm 104.1-5.

(Creation: *The Spacious Firmament*)

Bless God, my soul! How great are You, Lord, with majesty and splendor adorned.
The heav'ns He stretches like a tent, and lays His chambers in the firmament.
He rides the wings of winds on high and makes His messengers flaming fly.
The earth on its foundation stands, established forever by His hands.

Read Luke 6.1-36; meditate on verses 32-36.

Preparation

1. How do we know that God loves evil people?
2. Why must we love our enemies?

Meditation

True neighbor love seeks nothing for itself (vv. 32, 33), only to be a channel of the grace and kindness of God to others. Even those who are sinners, enemies, and evil (vv. 34, 35). In the Kingdom of God, grace, not personal advantage, is the coin of the realm.

The word *χρηστός* (*chrestos* – kind) is the key to understanding grace and how it serves as the currency of the Kingdom. The word carries connotations of being benevolent, better, and kind, of going beyond what is expected or even deserved, to advance a standard of goodness and lovingkindness which refracts the very being of God (v. 36). God is kind, and He calls us to be kind by the grace He daily shows us.

Such grace flows from mercy, both received (from God) and granted (to the undeserving). We are called to rise above the selfishness of others, to supersede their wickedness in kindness, to empty ourselves of possessions, power, privileges, or pride in order, like Jesus, to become agents of grace in the world. Only as we receive mercy and grace can we extend these to others in acts of kindness. We do not look to those we serve for some reward; God will reward us in His way and time as we spend His grace and are spent in loving service to others (2 Cor. 12.15).

Therefore, it is important to practice prayer without ceasing, so that we may always have the mercy and grace we need to show lovingkindness to others (Heb. 4.16).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Back in the very early 1980s, with four young children in tow, we were busy planting a church when our

sending agency decided to stop paying us. I must admit, that was a bit of a blow to our spirits and left us in a quandary about what to do. To say that I was disappointed would be generous. Furious? Close. Totally unhappy and sad. Yes.

That's when I first read two snappy sayings: When given lemons make lemonade. Truthfully, that one left me wanting to find the schmuck who said it and give them a piece of my mind. But the second has been a closely held truth: Unhappiness is the difference between what you expect and what you experience. Yes, I can resonate with that.

Jesus is telling us the very same thing: Go into your life "hoping for nothing in return" (Lk. 6.35). I hope I'm not appreciated for this act of kindness. I surely hope nobody thanks me for this gift. I really hope that my love is not returned in the way I give it. Boy, do I ever hope that I am not accepted at this church. Man, I hope my kids don't respect me.

Of course, that sounds defeatist in nature and not a very positive way to live one's life; but on the other hand, if done and thought through properly, it can save us from a lot of disappointment and wasted time on things we cannot control anyway. Our job is to do the things God has called us to do, regardless of the response.

"Depart from evil, and do good..." (Ps. 37.27).

"A good understanding have all those who do His commandments" (Ps. 111.10).

"I hope for Your salvation, and I do Your commandments" (Ps. 119.166).

"These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath" (Zech. 8.16, 17).

"...do justly...love mercy...walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6.8)

"...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10.31).

"...hoping for nothing in return" (Lk. 6.35).

For this is the will of God, our sanctification (1 Thess. 4.3). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will do well to always look unto Jesus...Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls (Heb. 12.2, 3).

This is the happiest way to get there.

For reflection

1. Treating others with kindness must not be conditioned on their responding properly. Why not?
2. What kinds of "rewards" might you expect from God for being faithful in loving your neighbors?
3. How should you prepare each day to fulfill your Kingdom calling to love your neighbors?

The office of love is to pour out again the same goodness that one has received from God on one's neighbor—to be to him as he experiences Christ is to him. William Tyndale (1494-1536), *Exposition of Saint Matthew's Gospel 5:43-48. 1*

Pray Psalm 104.13-23.

Thank God for all the ways He blesses you and the people in your Personal Mission Field. Whom will you talk with today about the loving works of God? Prepare for that opportunity now in prayer.

Luke 6, Part 2

Sing Psalm 104.12-23.

(Creation: *The Spacious Firmament*)

The birds beside the waters dwell and sing in the branches, full and well.
You drench the mountains from above; the earth is sated by Your love.
You cause the grass for beasts to grow, and plants for food to feed us so;
and wine to gladden man's poor soul, and bread and oil to make us whole.

The trees You water with Your grace, the mighty cedars in their place.
In them the birds their dwellings build, and goats inhabit every hill.
You made the moon the times to mark; the sun declines; You made the dark.
By night the beasts pursue their prey, and man to labor goes by day.

4 Judging Others

Pray Psalm 33.13-17.

The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.
From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;
He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.
No king is saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
A horse is a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

Sing Psalm 33.13-17.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

God from His throne looks down on men;
He knows our works and made our hearts.
Let not Your Church, let none depend
on strength or skill or human arts.

Read Luke 6.1-42; meditate on verses 37-42.

Preparation

1. What does Jesus say about judging others?
2. What must we as disciples strive to become?

Meditation

This passage is rather facetiously invoked at times when an opinion is expressed about someone's attitude, demeanor, or motives. "Now, now, we're not supposed to judge."

This is only partially true. We cannot live without judging – without discerning good from evil, choosing wisdom over folly, recognizing temptation and avoiding sin, and seeking to build one another up in our most holy faith. Jesus does not here proscribe all forms of judgment. Rather, it is unfair or hasty and thereby sinful judgment Jesus condemns, judgment that proceeds from a heart insufficiently circumspect about its own condition or considerate of the demands of neighbor love.

Jesus said that we must judge with *righteous* judgment (Jn. 7.24). Such judgment should be *temporal*. It does not condemn to eternal perdition, but seeks only to address a matter or condition at hand (v. 37). Righteous judgment must be *charitable*, so that we are giving grace lavishly to edify another (v. 38). We should judge others the way *we ourselves want to be judged* (v. 38). Judgment must not be blindly invoked but according to the standards of discipleship, that is, *according to Jesus and His Word* (vv. 39, 40). And before exercising such righteous judgment we must be *clear of any lingering sin*, looking to the Lord to cleanse us of anything contrary to the life of a disciple of Jesus (vv. 41, 42). When our exercise of judgment takes such a form, we will be able to help our brother "remove the speck" that is in his eye (v. 42).

We can't not judge matters. But we can learn to judge them as disciples of Jesus with righteous judgment.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Nobody ever reads a mystery novel by starting at the end and then working their way back to the beginning. That would take away all the anticipation and joy of trying to see how it will all work out. It just isn't done.

But in this passage I think it is helpful to start at the end and work our way back to the beginning, as gauche as it may sound to do.

Jesus said that before we judge anyone we should “remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye” (Lk. 6.42). In other words, first deal with your own keeping of the Law, and make sure it is sufficiently kept, before schooling someone else in its intricacies.

When we are in the Word of God daily, praying fervently for our own sanctification, keeping the Law, and loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving others as we love ourselves, if we have any time left over, we are free to take up the task of speck removal.

Jesus said to them and says to us: Don’t unjustly judge or condemn others; but please do forgive them. Do give, in every way possible: With your money, your time, your prayers, and your life. And by the way, “with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Lk. 6.38). There’s always a catch.

“Those who are of a perverse heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in their ways are His delight” (Prov. 11.20). And we want, more than anything, to bring God delight because of His great love and sacrifice for us. And how do we do that? Jesus was trying to teach His disciples and us how.

Paul wrote to the church in Philippi to “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life...” (Phil. 2.14-16).

We long to be that light. We long to follow God’s Law. We long to love and forgive and give as He would have us do. And lest we ever think that all this Law-keeping is not for us, we have only to hear what Jesus said about that very thing, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt. 5.17).

Judging and condemning the things God finds an abomination must be done to keep ourselves from blundering into the same perverse way of thinking and living. It is true, “We can’t not judge matters. But we can learn to judge them as disciples of Jesus with righteous judgment.”

For reflection

1. Why do we say that “we can’t not judge matters”?
2. Why is it important that we keep short accounts with God when it comes to sin?
3. How can you know when you’re judging “with righteous judgment”?

Whoever therefore is guided by good sense, does not look at the sins of others, does not busy himself about the faults of his neighbor, but closely reviews his own misdoings. Such was the blessed psalmist, falling down before God and saying on account of his own offenses, “If you, Lord, closely regard iniquities, who can endure?” Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), Commentary on Luke, Homily 29

Pray Psalm 33.18-22.

Thank the Lord that He sees your heart and watches over you all day long. Call on Him to keep you from all sin, including the sin of judging others unfairly. Commit your day to the Lord and ask Him for mercy and grace for all your times of need.

Sing Psalm 33.18-22.

*(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)*

God watches those who fear His Name,
who hope upon His grace and love:
He keeps their souls from death and shame
who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield;
upon us let Your grace descend!
We hope in You; to You we yield;
we trust in Jesus to the end.

5 Good Fruit

Pray Psalm 92.12-15.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Those who are planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing,
To declare that the LORD is upright;
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Sing Psalm 92.11-15.

(Sweet Hour: *Sweet Hour of Prayer*)

My eye my vanquished foe shall see; my ears hear those who threaten me.
Yet in God's house, where he belongs, the righteous like a tree grows strong.
Then let us green and fruitful be and flourish like a mighty tree,
to tell God's righteousness abroad: He is our Rock, our sovereign God!

Read Luke 6.1-45; meditate on verses 43-45.

Preparation

1. How can you know a good person?
2. What is the role of the heart in bringing forth good fruit?

Meditation

We have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that we should walk in them, that our lives should express and be always characterized by good words (cf. Eph. 2.8-10; Gal. 6.1-10; Tit. 3.8, 14; Rom. 12.21; Matt. 5.13-16). We're not saved by good works. But as Jesus implies in our text for today, we're not saved without them.

Good works flow from a good heart, so if we concentrate on nurturing positive affections, we may be assured that good works will follow. When we desire that which is good, long for it, concentrate on and delight in it, and when we suppress all desire for what is not good, we build up the treasury of goodness in our soul, thus preparing us for good works at every opportunity.

Only God is good, and we must seek Him by all the means whereby He reveals Himself to us, in His Word and in His world, but especially in our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1.3; Col. 3.1-3). As you come to the Scriptures each morning, let your prayer be that of those ancient Greeks: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus" (Jn. 12.21). Jesus is throughout the Scriptures (Jn. 5.39; Lk. 24.27). Our reading and study of God's Word are incomplete until we gain some new understanding of, insight to, or vision of Jesus from wherever we are reading. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make us more like Jesus (2 Cor. 3.12-18), and we can be sure that good fruit will follow in our lives as we submit to His teaching.

Seek Jesus and all the goodness which is to be known in Him. Cherish the knowledge of God (Jn. 17.3), and delight in Him (Ps. 37.4). Thus, you will always be ready, eager, and able to do what is good, whether by words or deeds.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Nobody is exempt from the need to be taught by Jesus. Nobody. In our verses for today, Jesus is teaching His disciples, but on another occasion, He said something very similar to the Pharisees: "A good man out of

the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things...For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12.35, 37). And to His disciples He said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Lk. 6.45).

David wrote, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from
the God of his salvation” (Ps. 24.3-5).

Solomon wrote, “ Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Prov. 4.23).

As an extra encouragement for us to clean up our hands and heart, God wants us to know that:
“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer. 17.9, 10).

We can surely see from these Scriptures that what goes on inside us determines what happens outside of us. And that in all actuality, nothing truly good is going to happen in our Personal Mission Field unless it is first occurring in our minds, hearts, souls, and lives.

Each of us is known by our own fruit (Lk. 6.44). And if our hearts are fertilized and watered by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, then we will bear fruit worthy of our repentance (Matt. 3.8). Good fruit will be born in and by us when we keep our hands clean and our hearts pure with all the diligence we can muster.

For reflection

1. What can we do to ensure that our heart is always clean?
2. Why are good works so important for following Jesus?
3. What does it mean for you to seek Jesus?

If anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord resists the Lord's commands by living perversely, it is evident that the good that the tongue has spoken has not been brought out of the good treasure in his heart. It was not the root of a fig tree but that of a thorn bush that produced the fruit of such a confession—a conscience, that is, bristling with vices, and not one filled with the sweetness of the love of the Lord. The Venerable Bede (672-735), Homilies on the Gospels 2.25

Pray Psalm 92.1-10.

Thank God for His many blessings, especially for His Word and Spirit, which He has given to equip us for every good work (2 Tim. 3.15-17). Ask Him to show you what fruit you need Him to bear in you today.

Sing Psalm 92.1-10.

(Sweet Hour: *Sweet Hour of Prayer*)

How good it is to thank the Lord and praise to God Most High accord;
by day to let His kindness ring, His faithfulness by night to sing.
With ten-stringed lute, resounding lyre, and sweetest harp we'll lift You higher.
For You have made our souls rejoice; we sing Your praise with blended voice!

How sweet Your works, Your thoughts how deep: The fool cannot such knowledge keep.

Luke 6, Part 2

Like grass the wicked rise each day; in judgment they are swept away.
But You, O Lord, abide on high; Your enemies shall fall and die.
All those who sin shall scattered be, but, Lord, You have exalted me!

6 Hearing and Doing

Pray Psalm 119.57-60.

You are my portion, O LORD;
I have said that I would keep Your words.
I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart;
Be merciful to me according to Your word.
I thought about my ways,
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.
I made haste, and did not delay
To keep Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.57-60.

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

I vow to keep Your Word; You are my portion, Lord.
Let favor fill my heart; have mercy by Your Word!
When I think on my way, I turn my feet to You,
to Your path I shall not delay, Your Word to do.

Read Luke 6.1-49; meditate on verses 46-49.

Preparation

1. What question did Jesus ask the crowds?
2. What two kinds of people did Jesus describe?

Meditation

Christians refer to Jesus as “Lord”, and well they should, for that is what He is. But referring to Jesus as Lord, even praying or singing to Him as Lord, of itself says nothing about the genuineness of one’s faith. As Jesus explains here, those who call Him “Lord” but don’t obey Him have no true foundation for their faith. Whatever they believe, or whatever they think they have gained by their profession of faith or participation in a church, there’s one sure test of their discipleship.

Do they hear and do what Jesus teaches?

Hearing by itself is not enough. Read your Bible, listen to sermons, join a Bible study group, hear as much of Scripture as you can cram into a week: It will avail you nothing merely to hear the Word of God (v. 49).

But you can’t skip the hearing simply by mimicking what you see other believers do. Doing Christian things won’t get to the heart, where the issues of life are formed and emerge. Implied in these verses is the idea that doing without hearing is as bad as hearing without doing.

We need both – to hear the Word, every day and increasingly, and to do the Word, in every facet of our lives (vv. 47, 48). The sure foundation of faith which can weather all the storms of doubt, fear, trial, temptation, and persecution consists of daily hearing and doing the Word of God. Without these, we are vulnerable to being washed away by floods of wickedness and unbelief.

Whenever you refer to Jesus as Lord, or hear Him referred to as Lord, say to yourself, “hearing and doing, hearing and doing.” Such is the proof of genuine Christian faith.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus told stories worth listening to. They are full of descriptions, people, situations, and life and death issues. And they are told in such a way that the most erudite listener or a child can understand the theme perfectly.

The Word of the LORD came to Ezekiel who told much the same story that Jesus was repeating here. The LORD God said, “I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the LORD” (Ez. 13.13, 14).

Disobedient listeners, like untempered mortar or houses built without a foundation, never stand when tested.

God doesn’t appreciate faux Christian living. What He wants is for us to hear and do His will and word. And the exciting thing is this: God expects us to do it. And because He does, He will give us the power to accomplish it. Solomon astutely wrote: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Prov. 24.10). Ouch! But we don’t have to faint, nor do we need to be weak.

God doesn’t want us to crash and burn in this endeavor. Or as Jesus put it, “And the ruin of that house was great” (Lk. 6.49). No, God doesn’t want that for us. He has promised us strength so we will not fail. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2.13). Our job is to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2.12). Hear and do seems to rear its head at every turn!

Paul, as always, in his own inimitable way, summed it up perfectly: “...for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified...” (Rom. 2.13).

Jesus held out a carrot stick for us to strive for by telling us of the person who heard and actually did His words. It is possible. It is doable. It is why we are to work so hard with fear and trembling. We don’t have to fail at this and be ruined. “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who:”

1. Dug deep into the word of God for wisdom, knowledge, and to see Jesus.
2. Based his whole life on Jesus, laying the foundation for all he did and thought on the Truth, the Rock.
3. When the flood of sadness, poverty, illness, and pain arose, and the stream of testing and temptation beat against him vehemently, he could not be shaken.
4. Because he was permanently stabilized on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The sure foundation.

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3.11).

Hearing and doing—we will not be shaken.

For reflection

1. How would you explain to a new believer what it means to dig down and lay a sound foundation for your life?
2. What are some things you could do to improve your *hearing* of the Word of God?
3. What are some things you could do to improve your *doing* of the Word of God?

Those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will profit in a trying time, who think, speak, and act according to the words of Christ. Those who take pains in religion, found their hope upon Christ, who is the Rock of Ages, and other foundation can no man lay. In death and judgment they are safe, being kept by the power of Christ through faith unto salvation, and they shall never perish. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 6.37-49

Luke 6, Part 2

Pray Psalm 119.61-64.

Pray that God will empower you to hear, receive, and live His Word today. Ask Him to make you a source of mercy and grace to the people around you.

Sing Psalm 119.61-64.

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

Though wicked ways constrain and bind my hands in sin,
yet I recall Your Word and turn to You again.

By night I thank You, Lord; my voice to You I raise;
for all Your righteous, holy Word I give You praise.

All those who fear You, Lord, go with me on my way,
all those who keep Your holy Word from day to day.
Around us all the earth declares Your mercy, Lord.
That I might know Your glorious worth, teach me Your Word.

7 The Primacy of Love

Pray Psalm 119.105, 106.

Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
I have sworn and confirmed
That I will keep Your righteous judgments.

Sing Psalm 119.105, 106.

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)
Your Word a lamp is to brighten my way.
Lord, from Your pathway let me never stray!
I give my word now as I have before:
Your righteous Law I will keep ever more.

Read Luke 6.1-49; meditate on verse 46.

Preparation

1. Who can truly call Jesus “Lord”?
2. Who should not?

Meditation

The second part of Luke 6, which continues setting forth the “constitution” of Christ’s Kingdom, focuses on the duty of love. Love is the defining mark of a true believer, both love for God and love for our neighbors.

Love is the “good fruit” that issues from a “good heart”, a heart devoted to Christ in love (vv. 43-45). When our hearts are saturated with love so that love is the commanding affection of our soul, we will love like Jesus does and thus prove that we are good fruit-bearing trees in the Kingdom.

Jesus calls us to love even our enemies, and to be generous and charitable to all people who are in need (vv. 27-31). Since our Teacher has demonstrated such amazing love – healing the sick, casting out demons, teaching God’s Word – we who are His disciples must aspire to be like Him (v. 40; cf. Jn. 13.34, 35). Even when it is necessary to act in judgment, we must do so lovingly, with righteous judgment, making sure that we are not guilty of sin before we try to help others acknowledge and deal with theirs (vv. 41, 42).

But we will not be able to stand firm in love unless we are grounded solidly on the Word of Christ. The storms and trials of the world will shake us from our sure foundation unless underlying all we do is love for Jesus and His Word (vv. 46-49). Love is not a matter of mere lip service; the Kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power (1 Cor. 4.20). Jesus is our Lord, and we are His true subjects as we eagerly attend to His Word day by day and are careful to obey what He teaches. Loving Him and His Word, we will love our neighbors as ourselves and, more importantly, as Jesus does.

The old regime of mere self-love is through; the new regime of love for God and neighbors is beginning to unfold. And central to it all is Jesus, the very embodiment of God’s love for the world (Jn. 3.16).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus, the very embodiment of God’s love for us, wants to see and experience our love for Him. And because He came in human form, He and we, understand what He is talking about.

How many of you want to hear “I love you” from a spouse and then have their behavior prove the exact opposite? How many want to hear “I love you” from a child and then have them completely disrespect and

disregard anything that we have requested them to do? How many would like to have an employee never do what their job description required, but by golly, they say that we are a tremendous boss? My guess would be that no one would say, “Oh, I’d like very much to be that unappreciated spouse, parent, or employer.”

Eliza Doolittle sang these very thoughts in *My Fair Lady*. Here are a few of her appropriate lines penned by Lerner and Lowe:

*Words! Words! Words! I’m so sick of words!
I get words all day through first from him now from you!
Is that all you blighters can do?*

*Don’t talk of stars burning above; if you’re in love, Show me!
Tell me no dreams filled with desire; If you’re on fire, Show me!*

*Never do I ever want to hear another word. There isn’t one I haven’t heard.
Here we are together in what ought to be a dream; say one more word and I’ll scream!*

One can almost hear Jesus singing those very words to us. And we should be chagrined and saddened by that very thought.

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord’, and not do the things which I say?” (Lk. 6.46)

Indeed, why? He is the King. He is our King. We live in His Kingdom. We should do everything that He says. We should do all that He requires. And yet, sadly, it seems our words are way ahead of our actions.

“To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice” (Prov. 21.3).
“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...” (1 Sam. 15.22).

David, too, penned a song on this topic:
“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart’” (Ps. 40.6-8).

We most assuredly do not ever want to hear Jesus ask us this question: But why don’t you do what I want you to do? We, more than anything, want Him to know of our deep love and appreciation for Him. That He deserves our utmost, our best, our life. After all, that is what He gave for us.

“Now may the God of peace...make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13.20, 21).

“The Primacy of Love” for Him supersedes all other callings upon our life. Don’t just say you love Him, show Him. *Now!*

For reflection

1. How can you know whether you love Jesus with all your soul and strength?
2. Why is loving Jesus this way essential for loving our neighbors?
3. To whom will you show the love of Jesus today?

... those shall enter the kingdom who have Christ and the gospel not only in their mouths but also in their hearts, those who do

Luke 6, Part 2

the will of Christ and live as the gospel teaches them. These shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, where they will live eternally in joy with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to whom be all glory, Amen. Richard Taverner (1505-1575), On the Eighth Sunday after Trinity 12

Pray Psalm 119.107-112.

Offer praise to God as an expression of your love for Him. Spread before Him that work that lies ahead of you this day, and ask Him to guide you by His Word and to give you joy in serving Him.

Sing Psalm 119.107-112.

(Slane: *Be Thou My Vision*)

I am afflicted and sorely distressed;
O Lord, revive me that I may be blessed.
Teach me Your Word, Lord, my thanks I proclaim;
offerings of praise I declare to Your Name!

Daily I take up my life in my hand,
working to keep to Your gracious command.
Let not the wicked turn me from Your way;
I from Your precepts, O Lord, will not stray.

I take Your Word as the joy of my heart,
my trust, my heritage, my special part.
I bend my heart to fulfill all Your Word,
always, forever, to serve You, O Lord.

Luke 6, Part 2

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Why is it important that we love our enemies?
2. What is the “heart”? Why is it so important for guiding our lives?
3. What is the “good fruit” Jesus expects us to bear??
4. Why is it important that we both hear and do the Word of Jesus?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from our study of Luke 6.27-49?

For prayer:

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