

Luke 6

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Introduction:

Lesson Content:

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath
The Twelve Apostles are Chosen
The Sermon on the Plain
Four-fold blessings
Four-fold sorrow
Directives about Love
General Principles
Verbal Abuse
Physical Abuse and Possessions
The Extent of our Love
Be Merciful in Criticism
Give Generously
Pick Your Teachers Carefully
Avoid Being a Hypocrite
Become Skilled Fruit Inspectors
Jesus requires Total Obedience

THE SON OF MAN IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

(6:1.) One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields, His disciples broke off heads of grain, rubbed off the husks in their hands, and ate the grain. (2) But some Pharisees said, "Why are you breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?"

- The **Sabbath** is Saturday, the day of rest designated by the Law of Moses. Work was banned for that day, but



where was the boundary between work and simply living? The Pharisees had worked out the boundaries, both for themselves and the nation. These answers were embodied in their traditions.

- Picking the grain itself was allowed by the Law of Moses. Deuteronomy 23:25. We know that it was late spring because either the wheat or barley was ripe.
- Now the **Pharisees** were challenging Jesus (vs. 2) because His **disciples** were not abiding by their arbitrary boundaries. They were unfriendly observers and trying very hard to find something wrong with the Lord.

(3.) Jesus replied, "Haven't you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? (4) He went into the house of God and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests can eat. He also gave some to his companions." (5) And Jesus added, "The Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath."

- Jesus' response was based on the case of **David**, a person they should accept as *authority*. The passage is 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Both **David** and the **priests** ignored the ceremonial provisions of the **law** that said the **bread** was consecrated in favor of meeting the needs of **David** and his hungry men.
- The Pharisees had used the term *breaking the law* in their question (vs. 2) and Jesus used it in His answer here (vs. 4). Human need takes priority over ritual requirements.
- Jesus is the **Son of Man** of Daniel 7. This was a clear claim by Jesus to Deity. While he asserted his *authority*

(Lord) over the **sabbath**, the argument may have been lost on His critics, but not His disciples.

(6.) On another Sabbath day, a man with a deformed right hand was in the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. (7) The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees watched Jesus closely. If He healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse Him of working on the Sabbath.

- Jesus was popular in the **synagogues** of Galilee. His critics could not keep him from **teaching**, but they could challenge every move He made.
- Having lost their debate with Jesus in the grainfields, the **Pharisees** planned to do better at the **synagogue** when the crowd was present. If they could catch Him healing on the **Sabbath**, they would have a case against Him. (Never mind that the miracle would also prove His divinity.) The man may have even been a "plant" so the officials could trap Jesus.

(8.) But Jesus knew their thoughts. He said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone." So the man came forward. (9) Then Jesus said to His critics, "I have a question for you. Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?"

- As at the healing of the palsied man in 5:22, He knew what they were thinking. They ignored this minor miracle in their passion to prove that Jesus was desecrating the **Sabbath**.

- Again, He faces them with the real meaning of the **Law**. Is it lawful to not help a person when you can? The silence was deafening.

(10.) He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! (11) At this, the enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with Him.

- Here God enabled **Jesus**, by means of the Holy Spirit, to heal on the Sabbath Day. This was in clear violation of the boundaries set by the religious officials. So whose boundaries were right? The conflict was between God, who enabled the healing, and the Pharisees.
- There was no reasoned response here from the critics, but **rage** and plans to harm him. *They* had been embarrassed before the synagogue worshipers instead of discrediting **Jesus**.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN

(12.) One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and He prayed to God all night. (13) At daybreak He called together all of His disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles. Here are their names: (14) Simon (whom He named Peter), Andrew (Peter's brother), James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, (15) Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (who was called the zealot), (16) Judas (son of James), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed Him).

- One of the most important decision times of His ministry was now facing **Jesus**. He did not normally pray all **night**, but choosing **twelve apostles** was not a normal decision.

They would be the foundation of the church forever. The next lesson in this series focuses entirely on these twelve men.

THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN

(17.) When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of His followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. (18) They had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil spirits were healed.

- While this is similar to the “Sermon on the Mount” recorded in Matthew 5 - 7, we believe that it was spoken at a different time. Many points are nearly the same, but not identical. **McGarvey** believes they were not identical.
- The **healing** included all who came, without concern for their conduct or beliefs.

A FOURFOLD BLESSING:

(19.) Everyone tried to touch Him, because healing power went out from Him, and He healed everyone. (20) Then Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

- This account was directed to His **disciples** while others listened.
- **Blesses** means *to make happy*. **God blesses you poor.** This may not point to monetary poverty because the crowd had afforded to come here. A secondary meaning of the word (Thayer) is *poverty of spirit*. The route to the

kingdom of God is knowing that we need it. On the other hand, the Pharisees didn't have a clue.

(21.) God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied. God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.

- Had they lacked food, Jesus would have fed them. The hungry lacked spiritual sustenance. Their teachers were fascinated with legal minutia. There is no food for the spirit there. Jesus has the answers to **satisfy** the hungry.
- There is no merit in just **weeping**, but those who **weep** over their sins will experience the joy of laughter later.

(22.) What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. (23) When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

- There is **joy** in being treated as the **evil** person when we stand up for Jesus. So what if His listeners were separated from the company of the synagogue.
- "Blessed are the unpopular."
- More than just a trickle of good feeling, we can **leap for joy** because we are in the same club as the **prophets** of Israel.

FOURFOLD SORROW

(24.) "What sorrow awaits you who are rich, for you have your only happiness now. (25) What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now, for a time of awful

hunger awaits you. What sorrow awaits you who laugh now, for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow. (26) What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds, for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

- Those who think they are spiritually **rich** now have all they are going to get. Those who were satisfied with the husks of the religion that was in place would someday know what **hunger** is. Those for whom life was now a party will one day **mourn**. Those highly regarded by the religious establishment will be found with the **false prophets**, not the truth.

Directives About Love

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

(27.) "But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.

- **Love** is dynamic and includes actively doing good to our enemies.

VERBAL ABUSE:

(28.) Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.

- Evil words and actions towards us are to bring forth a response of **prayer**.

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND POSSESSIONS:

(29.) If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. (30) Give to anyone who asks; and when

things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back.

- When abused, turn the other **cheek**. If they want to claim one garment, give them two.
- The follower of Jesus is to accept abuse in *small matters*. Jesus does not say, "If he takes your donkey, give him your wife and children, too." Give and don't fight for our "rights." Much litigation in America is over claiming of rights.

THE EXTENT OF OUR LOVE:

(31.) Do to others as you would like them to do to you. (32) "If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them!

- "This precept is fitly called the Golden Rule, for it embraces in its few words the underlying and governing principle of all morality. . . . It teaches us to put ourselves in our neighbor's place, and direct our conduct accordingly." -- **J. W. McGarvey**
- **Love** the unlovable. Easy to read, very hard to practice.

(33.) And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! (34) And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

- **Do good** to those unlikely to respond. Drop the market-place mentality for **doing good** — that of getting something in return. **Lend** to those unlikely to **repay**. (Sometimes we alienate our friends when we loan them money they cannot return.)

(35.) "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.

- Develop a character like that of God. We all owe God a debt, but few consider even being thankful for the loans like life, health, food and friends.

BE MERCIFUL IN CRITICISM:

(36.) You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. (37) "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven.

- The mercy of God is a life-long study. All **judgments** are not forbidden for society cannot function without them.
- **J. W. McGarvey** says, "The principle is, of course, to be limited by other Scriptural laws concerning judgment. It does not prohibit:
 - Judgment by civil courts, which is apostolically approved (Titus 3:1; Hebrews 13:17; 2 Peter 2:13-15).
 - Judgment of the church on those who walk disorderly; for this also was ordered (Mt .18:16,17; 2 Th. 3:6,14; 1 Timothy 1:20;6:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 1:10).
 - Private judgment as to wrong-doers. This is also ordered by Christ and His apostles (Mt. 7:15,16; Romans 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 1 John 4:1).

- “The commandment is leveled at rash, censorious and uncharitable judgments, and the fault-finding spirit or disposition which condemns upon surmise without examination of the charges, forgetful that we also shall stand in the judgment and shall need mercy (Romans 14:10; James 2:13). Our judgment of Christians must be charitable, (John 7:24; 1 Corinthians 13:5,6) in remembrance of the fact that they are God's servants (Romans 14:4); and that He reserves to Himself the ultimate right of judging both them and us (Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 4:3,4; 2 Corinthians 5:10).”

GIVE GENEROUSLY:

(38.) Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. ”

- Rather than His followers collecting what they are owed, they are to become generous and merciful and let God reimburse their expenses. In fact, He will compensate them beyond what one might expect.

PICK YOUR TEACHERS CAREFULLY

(39.) Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "Can one blind person lead another? Won't they both fall into a ditch? (40) Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

- We switch now from principles for living to the qualifications of teachers. If the **teacher** does not

understand the way of the Lord, his **student** doesn't have a chance. When he is fully taught, he will be like his **teacher**.

AVOID BEING A HYPOCRITE:

(41.) "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? (42) How can you think of saying, 'Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

- *McGarvey* says, "Jesus graphically and grotesquely represents a man with a log, or rafter, in his eye trying to take a chip or splinter out of his neighbor's eye. Both parties have the same trouble or fault, but the one having the greater seeks to correct the one having the less. The application is that he who would successfully teach or admonish must first be instructed or admonished himself."
- The word **hypocrite** is borrowed from the stage. The hypocrite (actor) wore a mask and pretended to be someone else. Jesus was receiving increasing opposition from those who taught one thing while doing another.



BECOME SKILLED FRUIT INSPECTORS:

(43.) "A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. (44) A tree is identified by its

fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes.

- The fruit-bearing test is very old and very natural. While judging has just been forbidden, we are asked to be fruit inspectors. I cannot tell WHY an individual may do as he does (judging), but I can tell WHAT he is doing, whether it is good or bad.

(45.) A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

- Listening to a person speak may be the way to find out what is deep within. A public speaker is transparent to those listening. While there may be exceptions, this is certainly the rule and may account for part of the terror the public has of public speaking.
- The application may have been to the teachers that were leading the multitudes astray by focusing on the tiny points of the Law and failing to live by its important truths.

JESUS REQUIRES TOTAL OBEDIENCE:

(46) "So why do you keep calling Me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? (47) I will show you what it's like when someone comes to Me, listens to My teaching, and then follows it. (48) It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built.

- Following Jesus means more than just saying the words **"Lord, Lord."** *Doing* is at the core of making Jesus our

Lord. Two steps are required for truly making Jesus the **Lord**: one is to come and hear Jesus; the other is to **do** what He teaches.

- Laying a **foundation** is painstaking and does not make a “showing.” It seems to consume unnecessary time in **house** construction. Many of the streams were dry during the summer and fall, but quickly became **floodwaters** during heavy rains.

(49.) But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins."

- The hastily constructed **house, built** without that time-consuming **foundation**, was occupied sooner, but when the seasonal stream rose, the house was destroyed. So are the lives of those who do not make the fundamental changes needed in order to follow Jesus as Lord.