

LUKE

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Luke chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw Luke chapter 5 close with Jesus speaking about not putting a new garment on an old one and not putting new wine in old wineskins. And the idea was that the Jewish religious leaders had become so rigid in their ways and they were not open to what God was going to do.

Now as we move into Luke chapter 6 this evening we are going to be dealing with a subject that was made into various traditions with all kinds of rules and regulations, the Sabbath day!

In fact, we are going to see two Sabbath day controversies regarding Jesus and what He was doing. You see, the religious leaders were becoming more and more hostile towards Jesus for coming against their traditions and here in Luke He is going to show them that He is Lord over the Sabbath. You can guess how they reacted to that!

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Luke chapter 6 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

LUKE 6**VERSES 1-2**

First of all Luke gives us the timeframe of the events of this chapter. He tells us that this is the second Sabbath and it could be speaking of the second one after the Passover and the disciples of Jesus were walking through some grain fields. That is a possibility.

Now as they were walking they were hungry and they began plucking some grain to eat. Now you need to understand that they were not stealing this wheat. You see, according to Deuteronomy 23:25 they were allowed to do this.

Moses tells us in Deuteronomy, **“When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.”**

In other words, if you were hungry you can pick some grain but you could not go into your neighbor’s field or anyone’s field for that matter, and start cutting the grain down for yourself, that would be stealing!

So this was all very legal but, as we can see, there was a group of people watching every move that Jesus and His men made to catch Him in some transgression of the Law and expose them as frauds. These Jewish religious leaders had some major problems with what Jesus and His men were doing.

To them, this act of picking the grain was work and thus, because it was the Sabbath, they were breaking the Sabbath day law!

And it truly got out of hand with all the rules and regulations that they had. They had made lists of all you could and couldn't do on the Sabbath. Thus, they condemn Jesus and His men for breaking the Sabbath day Law as I have said.

And specifically, they broke four of those man-made laws, the teachings of their fathers which they held above the Word of God. They were guilty of, according to these religious leaders, reaping, threshing, winnowing and I guess you can throw in there preparing the food!

One writer put it like this,

Over time the Jewish leaders had developed a series of thirty-nine clarifications of work, exotic legalisms, with each category capable of endless subdivision. The Mishnah explicitly listed as three of its thirty-nine categories “reaping . . . threshing, winnowing” (m. Shabbath, 7.2).

- R. Kent Hugues, Luke Volume 1, p. 200

Another commentator wrote,

Strict Sabbath observance had become the hallmark characteristic of the Jews since the Babylonian exile. After their return it had become interwoven with national determination and religious fervor so that the measure of freedom Jesus took in connection with the observance of the day greatly offended the Jewish people throughout the land. The great number of rules and the hair-splitting legalisms associated by the Jews with Sabbath observance were well known. They made life miserable and intolerable. A devoted Israelite was afraid to bat an eye or lift his finger for fear of breaking some rabbinical precept or regulation.

Sabbath subrules were brutal, and they were for the most part not biblical. For example, almost any action that would appear normal or necessary was against the law. A false tooth could not be worn. A person with a toothache could not rinse his mouth with vinegar, but he could hold it in his mouth and swallow it. Spitting would be interpreted as “a work,” and there was to be no labor on the Sabbath! No one could write down two letters of the alphabet. The sick could not send for a physician. A person with lumbago [backache] could not rub the infected part of the body. A tailor could not go out with his needle on Friday night (Sabbath eve) lest he should forget it and so break the Sabbath by carrying it about. The very purpose of the Sabbath had been lost. The Lord God had given it through Moses as a blessing to the Jewish people, and it had been made into a burden.

And upon an observance of these fantastic and self-imposed rules devotees thought they could build up a holiness that would justify them in the sight of God. . . .

- Mal Couch, Luke, Christ, The Son of Man, p.93

And folks, this continues even today. Listen to this true story. We are told, . . . In early 1992, tenants let three apartments in an orthodox neighborhood in Israel burn to the ground while they asked a rabbi whether a telephone call to the fire department on the Sabbath would violate Jewish law. Observant Jews are forbidden to use the phone on the Sabbath, because doing so would break an electrical current, which is considered a form of work. In the half-hour it took the rabbi to decide “Yes,” the fire spread to two neighboring apartments.

- David Guzik

Again, the old wineskins were rigid in their ways and Jesus is going to try to break them so that they could be new wineskins that He could use. May we always be open to what the Lord is doing. We need that refreshing water of the Holy Spirit to keep us soft, usable for the Lord.

Let's read on and see what the Lord says to these religious leaders.

VERSES 3-5

Please understand that these Pharisees knew the Scriptures, they took pride in that and now Jesus hits them hard by telling them in regards to the Sabbath and the Law, "**Have you not even read this . . .**" In other words, it is in the Word of God that what they were doing was kosher and yet their man-made traditions caused them to be very cold and narrow-minded!

I like the way that Barclay put it. He wrote, "It is possible to read scripture meticulously, to know the Bible inside out from cover to cover, to be able to quote it verbatim and to pass any examination on it – and yet completely miss its real meaning."

And we must be careful as well. We can know the Scriptures but are we living them? Have we become legalistic in our relationship with God? You see, it is easy to go down that path and justify our actions. God is not interested in Feasts or days of the week, or new moons, or even Sabbaths.

I know, shocking but true. He is interested in your heart and He wants you to understand that these things were a shadow, a picture of what was to come and that is Jesus, the substance!

And notice how Jesus rebukes them, with the Word of God, the very thing that they were saying they were obeying and they were not.

We see Jesus point them to the story of their great King, David, in I Samuel chapter 21. In this story, David is on the run from King Saul for Saul wants David dead.

And as David and his men arrive in the city of Nob, where the Tabernacle was located, he asked Ahimelech the priest for some food for they were very hungry. The problem was that Ahimelech only had the 12 loaves of showbread that were set on the right side of the Tabernacle, in the holy place, just outside of the holy of holies on the Table of Showbread.

Now each Sabbath they would bake new bread and place it on the Table of Showbread, and eat the old loaves. The thing is, according to Leviticus 24:5-9, only the priest could eat the bread, and whatever was left was burned with incense unto the Lord.

But the priest gives to David and his men the bread to eat which was unlawful to do and yet God does not rebuke David or Ahimelech for doing this. Why?

Because human need is more important than religious ritual! It is as Hosea 6:6 says, “**For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**”

In other words, don't ignore human need! Think of it this way, “Any application of the Sabbath Law which operates to the detriment of man is out of harmony with God's purpose.” (Morgan) The religious leaders were a good example of that, of doing the opposite of what God instructed them to do, putting the needs of man under their religious rituals!

And Jesus finishes this rebuke by telling them, “**The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.**” Luke 6:5. Please understand that Jesus' statement here is a direct claim to His deity. He had the authority to know if His disciples broke the Sabbath Law because He is the “**Lord of the Sabbath.**”

So if the *Lord of the Sabbath* is not offended by what His men were doing, neither should the religious leaders be offended. And keep in mind that the word “**Sabbath**” means rest and I truly believe we can find that rest in Jesus, for He is our Sabbath rest, He is Lord of the Sabbath!

One Sabbath day controversy put to rest but it is not over, another Sabbath day issue is going to be thrown in the face of Jesus to see what He will do. Let's read on and see what took place.

VERSES 6-7

Now with all the opposition against Jesus you would think He would isolate Himself, but not Jesus. Once again, on another Sabbath day, He enters the synagogue and He taught them. What is interesting to me is that we see these religious leaders there and they understood that Jesus was not only compassionate towards people, but that He also had the power to heal.

Why is that a big deal? Because it is the Sabbath and you can't heal someone on the Sabbath, that is work! Thus, I tend to think that they are setting Jesus up to catch Him breaking the Sabbath Day law and to do this they brought in this man with a withered hand.

And now they are watching Jesus to see what He was going to do and I do believe they knew what He would do, as I have said.

Now here was a man who was crippled and instead of these religious leaders desiring this man to be healed, they want him to be healed so they can **"find an accusation against"** Jesus! Wow, how hard and cold these men are and that same attitude continues today! The Pharisees never died, they are among us today, I am sad to say, in many churches across America!

How will Jesus handle this situation? Let's read on and see!

VERSES 8-11

First of all we see that Jesus knew their hearts, the religious leaders, He knew what they were trying to do. But Jesus does not back down from them. Jesus puts this man on display for all to see and then He asks these religious leaders a very simple question, “**Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?**”

In other words, is it wrong to heal on the Sabbath a man who is in need? Seems like an easy question to answer, but in their minds, it wasn't legal!

Thus, they saw the foolishness of their response, so they just kept quiet, they couldn't answer Him, or wouldn't answer Him. They should have seen the evil in their own hearts and repented, but they didn't!

In Matthew chapter 12 we see a little more of what took place. Matthew tells us that Jesus said to them that if one of their sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath they would go and get it out. And yet, here is this man in need and they are refusing to lift a finger to help him from his infirmity because it was the Sabbath. So is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? That answer is simple. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, it is always lawful to do good!

So there is this silence, the religious leaders refused to answer and thus, Jesus tells this man with the withered hand, “**Stretch out your hand.**” What is interesting to me is that this man did not argue with Jesus, “*Stretch out my hand, what are you, NUTS! I've been trying to do that for years and nothing, and now you tell me to stretch out my hand. Give me a break!*”

But that is not what he did. What we do see is Jesus command him to stretch out his hand and he does!

Folks, please understand this. The Lord is never going to command you to do something without enabling you to do it! How often God calls us to do something and we have all kinds of excuses, reasons why we can't. Walk by faith, follow the Lord and see what He will do not only in you but through you for His glory!

Now picture in your mind what is going on here. Jesus heals this man with a withered hand and you would think the religious leaders would be rejoicing, but they weren't. We are told, **“But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”**

The religious leaders were filled with rage at Jesus healing this man on the Sabbath day, as strange as that sounds. They were literally *“filled with madness.”* And think about this, they are upset with Jesus for healing a man in need and yet they have no problem with their anger, their rage on the Sabbath, that was justified, or so they thought!

Legalism does that, where a person strains at the gnat and swallows a camel, and that is what these religious leaders were doing.

One more point I want to bring out here and that is the compassion of Jesus towards this man and His willingness to do what was right in spite of the opposition. You see, that same attitude should be in our lives, it should be seen in us. One writer made this interesting observation because you hear so much of Christians being unloving, intolerant and many believe those lies. Are some that way? I am sure they are, but that is not what should be seen in our lives. We are told,

Does Christianity really make a difference? Is there a difference between card-carrying, Bible-believing Christians and their culture in situations needing mercy? According to some pollsters and social commentators, Christians are prime candidates for intolerance. However, this was statistically put to the test in 1983 in a book entitled, *The Religious Factor in Australian Life*. Part of the survey asked people about their attitudes toward various groups – people with criminal records, emotionally unstable people, people of a different race, members of minority religions, students, people in sects or cults, left-wing extremists, immigrants/foreign workers, never-married mothers, unemployed persons, heavy drinkers, aborigines, people with large families, homosexuals.

The answers were analyzed according to various religious groupings, and an “index of tolerance” was created. Can you guess who was most tolerant? Not liberals, not Catholics, not evangelicals, but *conservative fundamentalists*, by a significant margin. Those with no religion came in last. So much for the pundits.

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume One, p.203

It is as Hosea 6:6 says, “**For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**” May we not forget that!

VERSES 12-16

There are some who don't see the need for prayer but Jesus prayed all night as He sought men who would be His Apostles. You see, Jesus had many disciples, *MATHETAS*, or followers. But, out of those disciples He picked 12 apostles, *APOSTOLOUS*, or ambassadors or those who would be sent out with a message.

Tragically today we see in churches, leaders picked because of their popularity, their positions in the workplace, their money, their talents, and-so-on. God looks at the heart and thus, we need to go to Him as we look for leaders in a church, and that is what I try to do!

Now in saying that, I found this memorandum from the Jordan Management Consultants in Jerusalem regarding the men that Jesus picked. This is what it said.

TO: Jesus, son of Joseph, Woodcrafter, Carpenter's shop, Nazareth

FROM: Jordan Management Consultants, Jerusalem

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests. We have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant. It is the staff's opinion that most of the nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings and they both registered a high score on the manic depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man.

All of the other profiles are self-explanatory. We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours,
Jordan Management Consultants

We laugh at that, but that is what some churches do. They look for what the world calls SNL's or Strong Natural Leaders. God looks at the heart because if the heart is good, then God can equip any person to do anything!

God uses nobodies to do His work. Oswald Chambers put it like this. "God can achieve his purpose either through the absence of human power and resources, or the abandonment of reliance on them. All through history God has chosen and used nobodies, because their unusual dependence on him made possible the unique display of his power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced dependence on their natural abilities and resources." How true that is!

Think about that for a minute. If all authority in heaven and on earth are His, then it would be foolish for us to not submit to Him. We must depend on Him because He is the chief shepherd, the great shepherd and He leads us where we are to go and what we are to do. Never forget that.

Also, as ambassadors for Christ, we don't go with our own message. We are representing the King of kings and Lord of lords and thus, it is His message that we bring forth to the people. We represent Him and it is not about us. All that we say, all that we do people are making judgments about our God, the One we say we love. So represent Him!

Now, as you can see, Jesus picked a cross section of humanity to be His apostles, from a tax-collector to a zealot, who would not normally get along, they hated each other!

Now we are not going to go through each name here but just to clarify a couple of things for you, Bartholomew is Nathanael in John 1:45. Judas the son of James is Thaddaeus in Mark 3:18.

These are the ones who would represent Him, except for Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him. Now Jesus knew that he would betray Him, for in John 6:64 we are told, **“But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.”**

You see, He gives everyone a chance. Think of it this way. A man once asked a Theologian “Why did Jesus choose Judas Iscariot to be His disciple?” And the teacher replied, “I don't know, but I have an even harder question: Why did Jesus choose me?” Think about that one!

VERSES 17-19

People today, like back then, are wanting to be healed. The thing is, are we giving them Jesus, the one who can heal, or are we pointing them to this program, this deliverance ministry, this teacher? You see, people need to be touched by Jesus and that is what we need to give to them.

Now here is the debate. Is this the same teaching as Matthew chapters 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount? Some of the teaching is the same and some is different. One was on the mountain side the other on a plain.

So what is up with this? Remember Jesus taught these principles in many places, many different times, not just once. I believe this is a different location than in Matthew.

Now regarding this teaching. There are those that feel if we can get everyone to live as Jesus is saying in this sermon and the Sermon on the Mount the world would be great.

That is true but impossible to live out. Let me clarify that. Jesus is not speaking to the multitudes in Matthew or here in Luke, but to His disciples, His followers!

It is only by the empowerment of God that we can live this way. And keep in mind that it is not what you are to do, but what you are to be! It is what should flow from the life of a believer!

And lastly, as I have said, Matthew's teaching has been called *The Sermon on the Mount*, while we might call this section in Luke *The Sermon on the Plain*!

VERSES 20-23

First of all we see that Jesus is speaking to His disciples, not the multitudes. Were there many people, besides His disciples listening in? Absolutely, they could benefit from this teaching but the focus was upon His disciples.

Also, the word “**blessed**” speaks of a true happiness as we trust in the Lord, following His ways. Barclay explained it like this, “*Makarios* then describes that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and changes of life.”

Now as some read this they think this is speaking of the future, the Kingdom Age and not for us today. That is not true. Spurgeon said, “Note, also, with delight, that *the blessing is in every case in the present tense*, a happiness to be now enjoyed and delighted in. It is not ‘Blessed *shall* be,’ but ‘Blessed *are*.’”

This is the King’s Manifesto and we need to not only listen but apply these things to our lives!

The first point that Jesus makes is that we are to be poor and Matthew speaks of being poor in spirit. What does that mean? It means that you have concluded that you are spiritually bankrupt, separated from God, and thus our reliance is upon Him. It is only then that we can enter the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ!

From there Jesus speaks of those who hunger after the things of God and as you do you will find true satisfaction. Think about when you are hungry, what do you do? You seek food! You are trying to satisfy your appetite. The hunger you have is driving you and you are focused on satisfying that hunger! Jesus is telling us that there is blessedness as we seek after God, have a hunger for Him, focus on Him and His righteousness just like a hungry man focuses on food. And in that is true satisfaction, we are filled!

Then Jesus speaks of those who weep over what sin has done to people and the consequences if they don't come to Jesus. Our comfort is from the Lord and one day we will rejoice because sin will be done away with. Now I am not saying that we are to be going around moping about. We are to rejoice in the Lord but also understand the reality of sin in people's life, look at them with the backdrop of eternity in mind, and you will weep for them! And the result is laughter, joy in the Lord!

Lastly, because of who we are, that we are followers of Jesus, people will hate us because our light will expose their evil, their darkness. It is as Paul told Timothy, "**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**" II Timothy 3:12. You see, these light afflictions are but for a moment when compared to eternity with the Lord!

VERSES 24-26

Notice the contrast to what Jesus just said. Those that see themselves as rich, in need of no one or nothing, they are poor, spiritually speaking. If you think that you can enter into heaven on your own, by your good works, by this or by that, enjoy what you have now because you will not enter into eternal life with Jesus!

Those who have no room for God will be hungry, starving for the things of God for eternity, as they are separated from Him. It is amazing what people fill their lives with and in the end, you still will be hungry and you will continue to try and find that satisfaction that is only found in the Lord!

Those who laugh and mock the things of God will one day mourn over their foolishness, but it will be too late. My heart breaks when I hear people mocking God, making fun of Him because I know that in the end, they will mourn and weep!

And for those who are looking to be popular in this life, just accept everything mentality, they will regret it as did the children of Israel as they welcomed the teachings of the false prophets and both were heading to hell!

And think about that one today in the church! We have churches that want to be popular, they want the world to like them, they want people to speak well of them and in the end, they compromise their faith, what they believe so that they will be liked. And the world may like you but the Lord won't!

You see, the other end of the spectrum is that because of the message you have, because of your love for the Lord, you will be persecuted, not might, you **WILL!**

VERSES 27-30

I guess you can say that these are the rules for Kingdom life or how we are to live out our faith here and now. Thus, Jesus is telling us *how we are to act towards our enemies*. We are to love them, do good to them, bless them, pray for them, turn the other cheek when they attack our honor, this is not speaking of physically abusing us and standing there and taking it. This slap on the face with the back of the hand was a huge insult.

One writer put it like this,

These precepts have an astounding sound, and that is exactly what Jesus wants them to have. They do teach the complete reverse of what the unregenerate call right. . . . On the other hand, those misunderstand Jesus' meaning who regard him as teaching the doctrine of absolute "nonresistance" which would ignore and overthrow all justice and all righteousness. The law of love is not intended to encourage lawlessness nor to open the floodgates of cruelty and crime.

- R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, pp. 362-363

But also keep in mind that through the persecution of Christians, many have come to the faith and many will come to the faith as they watch Christians being put to death for their faith, being persecuted for their faith! I think the idea is this. The way you win an enemy is through love.

Now, let me put a disclaimer on that. The flesh can't do this, if you try this on your own you will fail. Man's tendency is to get back not to bless. But, as we walk in the spirit the fruit of the spirit will flow from our lives! You can't do this apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in your life!

Let me give you this powerful example and you will see what I mean of how we are to live out our faith. We are told,

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, no person in all of East Germany was more despised than the former Communist dictator Erich Honecher. He had been stripped of all his offices. Even the Communist Party rejected him. Kicked out of his villa, the new government refused him and his wife new housing. The Honechers were homeless and destitute.

Enter pastor Uwe Holmer, director of a Christian help center north of Berlin. Made aware of the Honecher's straits, Pastor Holmer felt it would be wrong to give them a room meant for even needier people. So the pastor and his family decided to take the former dictator into their own home!

Erich Honecher's wife, Margot, had ruled the East German educational system for twenty-six years. Eight of Pastor Holmer's ten children had been turned down for higher education due to Mrs. Honecher's policies, which discriminated against Christians. Now the Holmers were caring for their personal enemy – the most hated man in Germany. This was so unnatural, so unconventional, so supernaturally sublime, so Christlike.

By the grace of God, the Holmers loved their enemies, did them good, blessed them, and prayed for them. They turned the other cheek. They gave their enemies their coat (their own home). They did to the Honechers what they would have wished the Honechers would do to them.

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume One, p. 227

How would you respond if you faced a similar situation? First of all, and we do need to be honest here, the flesh would love revenge. "They are only getting what they deserved!" As true as that may be, we need to remember that God does not give us what we deserve. We receive His mercy, it is new every morning! Thus, that is what we are to extend to others who may treat us wrong, spitefully use us, abuse us. And the reason is simple, we are representing Christ to a person who is lost and needs to see Jesus so that they can enter into that abundant life that is only found in Him!

VERSES 31-35

Here Jesus gives to us *the attitudes we are to have towards our enemies*, to treat them the way we would like to be treated! You see, what is the motivation for doing what you are doing? The motivation is not about you but them, that they may come to know Jesus!

Here in verse 31 we see what has been called *The Golden Rule* and it is seen in many cultures even today. The problem is not the rule but the ability to live it out! And I think the only way to truly live like this is to be a part of God's Kingdom!

In other words, you have to be saved, you have to be filled with the Holy Spirit because the heart of man is evil. Man loves to not just get even, but he tries to take it a step further and the way that they treat others is not good apart from Christ!

So this Golden Rule is basically saying that we should treat others the way we want others to treat us. It doesn't say that is how they will treat us, but if we even stand a chance, treat people with the love of Christ!

It is as Paul said in Galatians 5:13-15, **“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”**

Many have been devoured because people refuse to serve each other out of love, and thus, self gets in the way and destroys relationships, it destroys lives! And remember what this section is all about, Christian Relationships!

And to drive home the point Jesus shows what the world does and if we just meet that standard, we are no different than the world! But we should be. We are to love our enemies. We are to love those who treat us unfairly. When we lend to others we do so never thinking we will get anything back.

And Jesus says in verse 35, **“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.”**

This is a hard one for many, that God blesses those who are wicked, evil, unthankful. Why does He do that? Because He loves them and died for them and His desire is that they would turn to Him. Thus, as His children we should do no less!

VERSES 36-38

Now we have *the principles to follow*. In other words, what you give out you will get in return. The word “**merciful**” speaks of being compassionate towards others, actively not passively! That is the heart of God and it should be our heart also, having compassion, mercy towards others.

Then Jesus speaks of judging and He says, “**Judge not . . .**” And many come to the conclusion we are not to judge people. Does that make any sense to you when we see Jesus speak of judging the fruit, the teachings of people to see if they are of God?

Please understand that Jesus is not teaching a universal acceptance of any lifestyle, any teaching, not at all! We are not to judge their motives, their hearts, but we certainly must be fruit inspectors and judge their actions, their teachings according to the Word of God in the love of God.

Forgiveness is next, and this is a hard one to swallow for many. You see, we can often forgive but not forget and then have we really forgiven? I don't think so. You see, our heavenly Father has forgiven us of all our filthy sins, and thus, can we forgive others for their minor failures towards us? I think we need to! Do you have a heart of forgiveness or un-forgiveness? What fruit is born in your life regarding this?

Finally, in our giving we are to minister to others and as we do we will be blessed. How you treat others will come back to you!

VERSES 39-42

Here is an obvious problem and yet, we see many doing this today. They look to blind people for help in their life, to direct them, and they both have fallen into the pit. Now I am not speaking of the physically blind but the spiritually blind. It is like a construction zone with all those signs pointing people in a myriad of different directions.

And Jesus confronted this in His day as Carson points out. He wrote, “Though the Pharisees and teachers of the law had scrolls and interpreted them in the synagogues, this does not mean that they really understood them . . . The Pharisees did not follow Jesus; so they did not understand and follow the Scriptures.”

How do I know if someone is spiritually blind? If they are leading you in a direction away from the Word of God and the teachings of God. Remember what Jesus said, “**. . . ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’**” John 14:6.

There is only one way, only one path, one door, and that is through Jesus! May we not be taken in by those blind teachers that are leading people into the pit of hell, eternally separated from God. And there are many out there waving their arms to follow them, but all you need to do is come to Jesus and He will not lead you astray!

The next point that Jesus makes is that we are far more tolerant of our sin than the sin of others. You see, there is a tiny speck in someone’s eye and we come to get it out with a huge telephone pole sticking out of our own eye. Humorous yes, but Jesus does drive that point home!

It is as one writer put it, “A good example of this kind of hypocrisy was David’s reaction to Nathan’s story about a man who unjustly stole and killed another man’s lamb. David quickly condemned the man, but was blind to his own sin, which was far greater.” How true!

It is not that we are not to help people out, encourage them, correct them if need be, but we must also not ignore the sin in our own life or we will become comfortable in it, we will be complacent with it and we will end up looking down upon others!

VERSES 43-45

This should just be obvious. The fruit that is born on a tree will tell you what kind of a tree it is. Also, the fruit that is born in our lives is the result of who we are! Yes, it may take time to see what kind of fruit it is, good or bad, but not every tree is the same and eventually it will be revealed!

And think about these words that Spurgeon spoke, “It is not merely the wicked, the bearer of poison berries, that will be cut down; but the neutral, the man who bears no fruit of positive virtue must also be cast into the fire.”

We need to evaluate our own lives, our own walk, get that plank that is in our eye out you might say. And think about this, for a tree to bear good fruit it must have a good root system, and the same is true in our own lives.

We must have a heart that is attached to Jesus and it is out of that the good fruit is born in our lives. You see, you can fool people for a time but eventually they will see you are not real, that your fruit is bad if you are not attached to Jesus.

Have you ever seen how real wax fruit looks? And yet, when you bite into it, yuck! It is bad. We, as Christians do need to be fruit inspectors and see what fruit is born not only in our own lives, but in others so we can see if they are saved, and if they are not, we can bring them to Jesus.

VERSES 46-49

Please understand that it is not just empty words but obedience to what Jesus is saying that makes you a disciple of His. Calling Jesus **“Lord”** is an empty statement if it never makes a difference in your life. How can you say you love the Lord if you don’t obey Him? It makes no sense and yet look at how many people are doing that very thing today!

It is as James says in James 1:22, **“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”**

And in James 2:14-18 we read, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

In other words, fruit in your life is born out of a relationship with Jesus. Listen to the following and I think you will see what I mean in regards to our not only hearing the Word of God, not only reading the Word of God, but doing the Word of God! We are told,

**Ye call me the “Way” and walk me not,
Ye call me the “Life” and live me not,
Ye call me “Master” and obey me not,
If I condemn thee, blame me not.**

**Ye call me “Bread” and eat me not,
Ye call me “Truth” and believe me not,
Ye call me “Lord” and serve me not,
If I condemn thee, blame me not.**

- Geoffrey O’Hara

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”** Those should be frightening words to those who say they love the Lord but there is no fruit in their lives, they are not obeying the Lord! They are doing what they want!

In verses 47 through 49 of Luke chapter 6 we see Jesus make a comparison between two foundations in which houses were built upon. And keep in mind that both houses were identical except for their foundation.

Thus, if your foundation is weak, your structure will be weak, it won't stand the pounding storms that come upon it. But, if your foundation is strong, it will stand the pounding storms that come upon it and that foundation is Christ! He is our Rock! It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 3:11, **“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”** Amen to that!

And please understand that storms will come, not might. And over time and the storms of life that come upon us will prove the strength of one's foundation, even when it is hidden. We may be surprised when we see who has truly built upon the good foundation. Trapp put it like this, “At last, when Judas betrayed Christ in the night, Nicodemus faithfully professed him in the day.”

You see, it is not just hearing God's Word, but applying it to your life, being doers of His Word, producing fruit that shows we are saved. Works don't save us but they are the fruit that is born in our life when we are saved.

You can't fool God or hide it from Him, He knows your heart as Numbers 32:23 says, **“But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.”** You see, your house will fall, and great will be its fall!

As I close this evening keep in mind that the Christian life is a tough life to live but it is also one we can live in Christ. Let me leave you this evening with these words from Dr. H. A. Ironside who said, “We cannot live the life until first we possess it.” May we not forget that! That life is found in Christ and apart from Him, you will not stand!