

LUKE

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Chapter Six

The gospels emphasize the continual arguments among the Jewish leaders and Jesus over what can be done on the Sabbath. These Jewish leaders did not understand that the Sabbath was given to the Jews by God as a blessing and not as a curse.

Luke 6:1-5

Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. (2) But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" (3) And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, (4) how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?" (5) And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

There are no coincidences with God. This was a planned event from God's perspective as He was to teach a lesson about the Sabbath. There was no problem with eating to satisfy the hunger for wayfarers (Deut 23:25) but their actions broke four rules regarding the Sabbath. Plucking is a violation of reaping and the rubbing in their hands violated threshing. Throwing away the husks violated winnowing and eating demonstrated that they had prepared food. All four of these actions are forbidden by the Talmud on the Sabbath with no regard for the amount. This may seem excessively picky to us but the Jewish leaders took such actions very seriously as they misunderstood the purpose of the Sabbath. Jesus directed them to an action of David and his men when they were hungry. The bread was prepared for service in the temple (Lev 24:5-9) so David's actions were technically a breach of the law. However nobody blamed him for this action. Thus it seemed that a precedent had been made by David and so Jesus and his men should not have been blamed for their actions on the Sabbath. The phrase "Son of Man" invariably means Jesus as He is referring to His Messianic function to be Lord over a divine ordinance of the Sabbath:

Exo 20:8-11 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. (11) "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Also in reference to the preceding action of David, we note that the Son of David is also Lord!

Luke 6:6-11

On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. (7) The scribes and the Pharisees were watching

Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. (8) But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. (9) And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" (10) After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored. (11) But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Luke does not date this event either but continues to show actions of Jesus over the accepted actions allowed on the Sabbath. Healing on the Sabbath was allowed if death was imminent but not otherwise. The word "withered" is usually applied to plants or dried wood so we see that Luke is saying the man's hand demonstrated some form of muscular atrophy. The scribes and Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He broke another rule of the Sabbath. They were not interested in whether or not Jesus could heal the man but only if He would do this as a forbidden action on the Sabbath. Luke emphasizes the deity of Jesus by writing that He could know what they were thinking. Jesus commanded the man to come forward so everyone could see what He was doing. He then showed that there is no middle ground with the thinking of Jesus for actions only do good or do evil. The man was severely handicapped in life so to not heal him was to destroy life but to heal him was to save a life. Jesus then paused to give anyone a chance to reply to His statement but nobody did. He then told the man to show His faith by stretching out his hand. When he replied, the hand was restored. The opposition was not awed by the healing power of Jesus but they were filled with rage at His defying their position as rulers. They then discussed what they could do to Jesus.

Luke 6:12-16

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. (13) And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: (14) Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; (15) and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; (16) Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Luke does not make the time exact but it seems that the opposition to Jesus is increasing so He does what He should do and that is to go off alone to pray. He spent the entire night in prayer to the Father as He knew that before a lot longer He was going to be the perfect sacrifice. At day break He called together all of His disciples so that He could choose the small band of twelve men to be His apostles. The disciples were men who had chosen to follow the teaching of a teacher and they did so by following this person along his route. Twelve is the number of tribes of Israel and indicates that Jesus was choosing the perfect Israel or the true people of God. These generally were not special people for God generally works through average people. These twelve people Jesus called apostles, a word that means "someone sent" or "a messenger". Luke uses the word six times whereas the other gospels use it only once and usually refer to the group simply as "the twelve". Mark emphasizes the centrality of preaching in their function: *And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, (15) and to have authority to cast out the demons.* (Mark 3:14-15)

The gospels have various orders of the names but all list Judas as the last with Luke stating that he became a traitor so perhaps originally he was initially faithful in following Jesus. Iscariot may mean “man of Kerioth”, a town in Judea or Moab and this implies that he was the only non-Galilean among the twelve. All lists have Simon listed first but Jesus changed his name to Peter that means “rock” and Luke uses this name henceforth. The later Simon is called the Zealot perhaps because he belonged to a radical group of people opposed to Rome or it could just mean that he had a fiery zeal. Matthew and Mark use the name Thaddaeus rather than Judas, the son of James and this appears to just be another name for the same person.

Luke 6:17-19

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, (18) who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. (19) And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

Matthew devotes three chapters to this Sermon on the Mount and Luke’s version has many similarities but is much shorter. The level place is probably a mountain side where He can be a bit elevated from the crowd. The crowd included His disciples and many people from all Judea and Jerusalem and Tyre and Sidon. All these people came to hear His teachings and to be healed of their diseases. Luke tells us that also people who were troubled with unclean spirits were also being cured. Everyone was trying to touch Him in hopes of having some of His power enter them for curing their problems.

Luke 6:20-23

And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. (22) "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. (23) "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Luke now presents the beatitudes that exalt what the world despises and rejects what the world admires. Jesus spoke these words of wisdom directly to those who had chosen to follow Him. Jesus states that these poor people enter the kingdom of God now for He does not say that they will be in the kingdom of God. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus primarily means “poor in spirit”, and it is worthwhile to list the verses in Matthew here for comparison:

Matt 5:3-11 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (5) "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (7) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) "Blessed are

the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (10) "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Regarding hungering, Matthew adds “thirst for righteousness”. Matthew does not have an equivalent for Luke’s “you who weep now” and it cannot mean weeping for some personal loss but to people who are sensitive to evil and to the world’s rebellion against God. These people will later laugh as they witness the true judgment of the world and God’s sovereignty over all evil. Verses 22 and 23 are addressed to those who are hated by world for the sake of the Son of Man. These people are hated because they follow Jesus, who is hated by the world:

John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. (19) "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

Even though the followers of Jesus will all be hated by the world, they will rejoice later for their rewards are in heaven. The prophets were treated the same way by the former relatives of the current Jewish leaders. This statement about the prophets is related to the vineyard parable:

Matt 21:33-40 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. (34) "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. (35) "The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. (36) "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. (37) "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' (38) "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' (39) "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (40) "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"

The history of the treatment of God’s prophets is the same throughout history and was culminated with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Luke 6:24-26

"But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. (25) "Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. (26) "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

Now Luke proceeds to give us some woes as stated by Jesus and not by the other gospels although Matthew gives some woes to the Pharisees given by Jesus. The translation “woe” does not completely give the proper meaning of the Greek word, which could better be translated “alas” or “how terrible”. It is an expression of regret and compassion and not given as a threat. He is not addressing the disciples for they are not rich but He may be addressing those in the crowd who were rich by their worldly standards. Comfort is not to be confused with blessing for those who are only rich in worldly things have no spiritual riches and thus are to be pitied for they will not receive eternal blessings. Their account could be marked “paid in full”.

Those who consider themselves to be well-fed in the world consider that they have no other needs. They think only of their physical needs and consider that they have all that they need. They do not think of any lack of spiritual food but one day they will realize that they are actually starving from a lack of spiritual nourishment. A similar comment can be made about those who laugh now. Obviously Jesus does not condemn laughter as such but He means the laughter resulting from a carefree expression of contentment with the physical reality in which the people exist daily. This shallow merriment will one day be replaced with mourning and weeping when they realize all the spiritual nourishment they rejected.

Jesus is referring to those who are universally popular when He proclaims a woe on those when men speak well of you. It is good to have a good reputation outside of the church (*And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.* (1 Tim 3:7)) But those who are universally popular are only the false prophets (*The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?* (Jer 5:31)) Non-Christians do not want to hear the truth about Jesus and His requirements for obeying His commandments for they want someone to tell them that whatever they want to do is acceptable to God.

Luke 6:27-31

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (28) bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (29) "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. (30) "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. (31) "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

There are several Greek words that can be translated "love". Jesus is not referring to storge, natural affection, or to eros, romantic love, or to philia, the love of friendship. He is referring to agape, which is a love that goes out to all people regardless of the merit of the recipient to that love. Matthew elaborates on this requirement:

Matt 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' (44) "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (46) "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48) "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

These words would have been extremely odd to those listening to Jesus. Were not the Romans to be opposed and even hated for their oppressive actions against the Jews? His statements in verse 28 amplify on how this love expresses itself. Followers of Jesus should pray for salvation for their enemies so that they will be forgiven and find peace with God and then be at peace with others. Followers of Jesus must stand on the principles of Jesus but they should do good to those who hate them so that such goodness may cause the haters to question what they are doing and even consider discussing why such goodness is being extended to them.

In verse 29 Jesus is referring to a punch to the side of the jaw and not a light slap in the face. What Jesus is meaning is that His followers must not seek revenge but rather be willing to accept further injury rather than seeking revenge. The coat was the outer garment and the shirt was the inner garment. Followers of Jesus should be willing to give his enemies both garments rather than seeking revenge. Jesus is talking about one being willing to part with his possessions rather than seeking revenge. The key element is love. Sometimes it may be that true love does not give away something because such a gift may actually cause the person receiving it harm. The key is not to love things but to love people and to not seek revenge. Paul amplifies on this concept:

Rom 12:19-21 *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (20) "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Jesus gives the key to our actions against others in verse 31 as we should treat others as we would like to be treated.

Luke 6:32-36

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. (33) "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. (34) "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. (35) "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. (36) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

This application of showing love was also stated by Matthew as shown above (Matt 5:43-48). This application is how followers of Jesus should surpass the actions of sinners. We should also note that here Jesus is contrasting sinners with His followers. Christians should never be referred to as sinners. The Greek word translated "lend" means lend with interest. Before Christians congratulate themselves on some virtue they should compare their actions to those of sinners to see if some action is really virtuous before the court of Jesus. When we do lend to someone we should do it without charging interest and even being willing to never receive back the gift. Certainly we can see in history that God has been kind to ungrateful and evil men. But God is sovereign and He will eventually revenge those who have been evil to Him and others. God causes the sun and rain to fall on everyone and that certainly is a sign of His mercy.

Luke 6:37-38

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. (38) "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Judging and forgiving are certainly related and below are a few of the most popular verses regarding those issues to go with Luke 6:37:

- Matt 7:1-2 *"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. (2) "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."*
- John 7:24 *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*
- Matt 6:14-15 *"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (15) "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."*
- 1Cor 5:12-13 *For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? (13) But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.*

Both of the first two above stress the method of our judging and not whether or not we judge. We are to judge but only by God's measure. The forgiveness verses above relate to our state before God. A forgiving spirit is obvious evidence that the person has been forgiven. The judging of Luke 6:37 has to also be taken in context with Matt 7:1-2, John 7:24, and especially 1 Cor 5:12-13. Our judging of others is for within the church. A person who claims to be a Christian but is practicing some obvious sin certainly needs to be approached in a loving manner with appropriate scripture relating to his sinning. For those outside of the church we must not have a judging spirit for God is the One who judges them. Of course we should witness to those outside of the church but not in a judgmental manner.

The giving in verse 38 has been misinterpreted by many people to say that God wants everyone to be rich and we can become rich by giving to others. Certainly this is not what Jesus is saying. We are not to love our money so that if we see people in need we should respond. God will see our loving spirit and respond with an outpouring of spiritual blessings so that our reward in heaven will be greatly enhanced. Our standard of measure should be the same as that of God and Jesus is certainly referring to spiritual rewards.

Luke 6:39-42

And He also spoke a parable to them: "A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? (40) "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. (41) "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (42) "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye."

Jesus now turns to the responsibility of disciples to make more disciples of Jesus Christ. He may also be referring to anyone who puts their trust in the Pharisees since they have displayed their spiritual blindness. The physical context is this time period when there were no vast libraries and the internet available for people to learn. They only had their spiritual teacher and they must be properly taught by Him. They will never be above their teacher but will be like the teacher once

he is properly trained. Also the person trying to develop more disciples must be very careful to be free of sins that can detract from the teaching. A Christian teaching others must never have the attitude of “do as I say and not as I do”. The Christian teacher must pray and meditate on his personal spiritual state before he begins to train someone else to be a disciple. Hypocrisy will quickly ruin any attempt to be disciplining another person. Rigorous self-evaluation must precede any judging. Do note that Jesus does tell them to take out the speck in your brother’s eye, which is judging but on the church level since the brother is in the church.

Luke 6:43-45

"For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. (44) "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. (45) "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

Jesus now uses trees as examples of what comes forth naturally. We do not go to a thorn bush to pick figs and we do not go to a briar bush to pick grapes. We know what fruit will come from particular plants and similarly we should not expect wise judgments to always come from people who are not disciples of Jesus Christ. Of course atheists can sometimes come up with wise advice and Christians can sometimes be deceived and not have wise advice. But generally the result is as stated in verse 45. Our words will always eventually reveal what is in our hearts.

Luke 6: 46-49

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? (47) "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: (48) he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. (49) "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

Matthew ends his chapter on these sermons of Jesus with similar admonitions to build on the teachings of Jesus:

Matt 7:21-27 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (22) "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (23) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (24) "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. (25) "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. (26) "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the

sand. (27) "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

It seems that some people have already shown that they are not really His disciples for He asks why they call Him Lord if they do not obey Him. Words are not substitute for obedience and obedience is evidence of being a disciple of Jesus: *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* (John 14:15) The foundation must be properly build before one attempts to build upon it: *For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor 3:11) It takes hard work to build a proper foundation so the person claiming to be a disciple of Jesus Christ must be willing to put in that hard work to properly understand His teachings so they can be properly applied. A person may outwardly appear to be a Christian but if the foundation is not properly prepared he has nothing and his judgment will be severe.