



The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Six

IV. Luke 4:16-9:50 - The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee (continues)

IV.b Luke 5:17-6:11 - The beginning of controversy (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Six

One Sabbath day the disciples were seen picking and eating grains of wheat. The Pharisees were upset that the disciples were violating the Sabbath as this was considered work.

Jesus continued healing on the Sabbath and he reminded the people that the Sabbath was a good day to do good deeds.

The Pharisees became even more incensed and started planning to get rid of what they saw as a threat to their eminent positions in the community. That night, Jesus again goes to a mountain alone to pray.

The next day, he selected his remaining disciples; they departed from the mountain and went to the plain, where he was met by large crowds. Here, Jesus delivered a similar sermon to that recorded in Matthew Chapters 5-7 and known there as the 'Sermon on the Mount'.

It was full of great teaching, including love your enemy, as well as your neighbours and friends. Jesus stated that people should not be quick to judge others as to their deeds and to focus more on keeping themselves from sinning, rather than accusing others.

Jesus alludes to good and bad people being identified by their fruit. He reminded them that they do bad things out of what is in their hearts and that true believers build their houses on solid rock, rather than the shifting sands of the desert that cause many to stumble and fall. Those built on rock, i.e. on the Word of God, will withstand everything that comes against them. Whereas those built on sand, i.e. the things of this world, will crumble as they have no true foundation.

IV.b.iv Luke 6:1-5 - Lord of the Sabbath

In this first Sabbath controversy, confirmed in vv.6-11, Luke 13:10-17 and Luke 14:1-6, Jesus announces that he is lord of the Sabbath.

¹ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels.

Luke 6:1

One Sabbath they pick some ears of corn. The law permitted plucking grain from another person's field but no instrument, like a sickle, could be used. This is stated in Deuteronomy 23:24-25 <<If you enter your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. If you enter your neighbour's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain>>.

The two stories in vv.1-11 appear in Matthew 12:1-14, where they both appear to be on the same Sabbath day, whereas here and in Mark 2:23-3:6, it is recorded as occurring on separate days. The key point is they demonstrate Jesus' view of what can be done on a Sabbath day; what is appropriate as being good for man and in line with God's purpose.

Some translations of v.1 specify the Sabbath, as we read here: <<And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that He went through the cornfields>> (21st Century KJV). This would indicate that it was the first Sabbath after the Passover festival and part of the counting towards the Festival of Weeks, i.e. Pentecost. Therefore, it occurred in springtime.

They rub them to remove the outer chaff.

² Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Luke 6:2

Some of the Pharisees considered plucking grain on the Sabbath as work and therefore forbidden.

You is plural and included Jesus in his disciples' activity because, as their teacher, he was responsible for his disciples' actions.

³ Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions"

Luke 6:3-4

What David did. The Sabbath is not mentioned in 1 Samuel 21:1-6 but the point is that David did something that is lawful only for the priests, as confirmed in Leviticus 24:5-9; that is, eating the consecrated bread or bread of the Presence, i.e. the consecrated sanctuary bread.

Jesus points out that both David and his followers did this unlawful act because of David's authority. How much more, therefore, can Jesus and his followers do something that meets a human need, even though it violated the Pharisees' interpretation of the law?

Twelve loaves of bread representing God's covenant with the 12 tribes of Israel were to be baked and placed in the tabernacle on each Sabbath as an offering. The bread that was from the previous week was removed and was only to be eaten by the priests as defined in Leviticus 24:5-9, but scripture does not condemn David for eating the bread during his escape from Saul. The law was intended to serve God's people rather than God's people being intended to serve the law. David ate the bread of the Presence so it follows that, at

least in the case of need, actions are allowed on a Sabbath that otherwise might not be permitted. The term 'David's Lord' is discussed further in Luke 20:41-44.

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath".

Luke 6:5

Jesus argument essentially is that the Son of Man, and not the Pharisees, through their regulations, ultimately rules over and interprets the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was made for man. Jesus emphasises that man is not to be confined by the Sabbath but rather that the Sabbath is given as a gift to man for spiritual and physical refreshment. Again, Jesus emphasises his authority as Son of Man. If the Sabbath is for the benefit of mankind, and if the Son of Man is Lord over all mankind, then the Son of Man is surely Lord even of the Sabbath.

IV.b.v Luke 6:6-11 - A man with a withered hand

In a second Sabbath controversy see vv.1-5, Luke 13:10-17 and Luke 14:1-6, Jesus exercises his power and authority to heal on the Sabbath. We have previously discussed the links between power and authority.

⁶ On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shrivelled.

Luke 6:6

Shrivelled or withered is paralysed or atrophied.

⁷ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

Luke 6:7

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law or scribes were discussed in the last chapter.

They watched Jesus not to gain insight but to accuse Jesus. They would have conceded that life-threatening situations allowed for breaking the Sabbath but this was not such a situation. We will see this again later, when we read: <<Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath" >> (Luke 13:14).

⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.

Luke 6:8

Jesus knew what they were thinking. Jesus' awareness of people's thoughts is an indication of his deity. We will come across this on a number of occasions, e.g. Luke 5:22, 7:40, 9:47 & 11:17.

⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

Luke 6:9

Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it? Jesus had acted out of compassion to heal the man with the withered hand. His opponents, however, finding themselves in a dilemma, refused to answer. A similar example comes in: <<The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing>> (Luke 13:15-17), with other similar examples in Luke 14:5-6 and Luke 20:3-7.

¹⁰ He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored.

Luke 6:10

Stretch out your hand. Jesus pointedly did not do anything in this situation that could be called work. He did not even touch the man but simply spoke a word and surely *speaking* is not prohibited on the Sabbath! Nor did the disabled man do any forbidden work for he simply stretched out his hand. Jesus' accusers were silenced and they were furious (v.11).

His hand was completely restored. This is proof that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (v.5).

¹¹ But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Luke 6:11

They were furious. Even a mighty miracle cannot change their hardened hearts.

What they might do to Jesus serves as the conclusion of vv.1-10 and foreshadows his suffering and death.

IV.c Luke 6:12-49 - Jesus teaches the disciples

Jesus appoints 12 apostles, then gives extended teaching to a large group of disciples, including what is often called the 'Sermon on the Plain' (vv.20-49), which is similar to the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew chapters 5-7.

IV.c.i Luke 6:12-16 - Twelve apostles

From among his many disciples, Jesus chooses 12 apostles. The word apostle comes from the Greek *apostolos* or messenger, i.e. one who is sent out. The apostles were specifically called by Christ and will, in due course, see the risen Lord Jesus, John 20:19-31 and Acts 1:22. They established and governed the whole church under Jesus Christ and they had authority to speak and write the words of God that were considered equal in authority to the OT Scriptures. This is confirmed by Peter: <<I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles>> (2 Peter 3:2), and: <<Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other

Scriptures, to their own destruction>> (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul was called to be an apostle when Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road (Acts Chapter 9), and the unusual timing of his call led Paul to conclude that no more apostles would be chosen after him: <<and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born>> (1 Corinthians 15:8).

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Luke 6:12

Jesus went out to pray. Luke alone mentions Jesus praying before choosing the apostles.

Spent the night praying to God underscores the importance that Jesus placed on prayer especially here, before making the crucial choice of who should be his apostles.

It seems to me that we too should ensure we pray before making important decisions.

¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

Luke 6:13

Disciples, apostles. Jesus had and still has many disciples or followers but the apostles were a rather special bunch.

¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,

Luke 6:14

Simon, whom he named Peter was the most prominent disciple and heads each listing of the apostles. Henceforth, Luke will use the name Peter except in Luke 22:31 and 24:34.

Andrew was the brother of Peter and is mentioned in Acts 1:13.

James and John were a second set of brothers, who were also Galilæan fishermen and who were in the second boat in Luke 5:10-11, as partners of Peter and Andrew, see Luke 5:7. In Mark 3:17 they are introduced as: <<James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder)>>. When Jesus was on his final journey to Jerusalem he met opposition in a Samaritan village, whose inhabitant's would not let him pass. This was the response of the Boanerges: <<When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" >> (Luke 9:54).

Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city or birthplace as Peter and Andrew (John 1:44).

Bartholomew, Bar-Tholomaios or son of Tholomaios is a family name that occurs in each of the lists in the Synoptic Gospels. He is probably the same person as Nathanael listed in John's Gospel and is frequently paired with Philip.

¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphæus, Simon who was called the Zealot,

Luke 6:15

Matthew is most commonly referred to as Levi the tax collector as in Luke 5:27.

James son of Alphæus is not to be confused with James the brother of John, or James the half-brother of Jesus.

Simon, the Zealot is confirmed in Matthew 10:4 and Mark 3:18. Zealot comes from the Greek word *zēlōtēs*.

The Zealots were political activists, and were radically opposed to Roman rule. Apart from Jesus' call and influence on their lives, Matthew and Simon would have had deep animosity toward each other, with Matthew, as a tax collector, working in the service of Rome and Simon, as a Zealot, seeking to overthrow Rome.

¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Luke 6:16

Judas the son of James does not appear in the parallel accounts in Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18. In his place is Thaddæus, which is probably his other name as many of the apostles had double names. Some earlier translations have Judas as the brother of James and commentators speculated he was the son of Joseph and Mary; the author of the Book of Jude. Modern thinking now has this as being less likely.

The name for the other Judas was qualified by Iscariot, which probably means man from Kerioth, a town in Judæa. He was the son of Simon Iscariot.

Who became a traitor, as later confirmed in Luke 22:3-6, 22:47-48, and Acts 1:16-20.

IV.c.ii Luke 6:17-19 - Jesus ministers to a great multitude

Luke introduces Jesus' 'Sermon on the Plain', as we will see vv.20-23, with a summary of his activities. The introduction is mirrored in Mark 3:7-12.

¹⁷ He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judæa, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon,

Luke 6:17

He went down. Jesus had been on a mountain (v.12). Now he preaches on a level place, hence 'the Sermon on the Plain'. Among the listeners are three groups: them, i.e. the apostles, a large crowd of his disciples, and a great number or multitude of people.

A great multitude emphasises Jesus' ever-growing popularity as news about him continued to spread, as we saw in Luke 4:37.

People from Tyre and Sidon would likely have included Gentiles.

¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, ¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Luke 6:18-19

The crowd's purpose is to hear Jesus and to be healed of their diseases. In addition, those with unclean spirits come and are cured. The distinction between disease and demon possession was discussed in Luke 4:40-41 <<When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ>>, which you may recall also indicated that the Sabbath had ended.

Tried to touch. We see this again with a woman suffering from menstrual bleeding, who was healed simply by touching Jesus (Luke 8:44-47), and in these words: <<People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them>> (Luke 18:15).

The association of power and healing was discussed in Luke 5:17.

IV.c.iii Luke 6:20-23 - The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes all begin with 'Blessed are'. They are called beatitudes from the Latin beatus, which means blessed or happy. These short statements summarise the essence of the Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed is more than a temporary or circumstantial feeling of happiness. It is a state of well-being in relationship to God that belongs to those who respond to Jesus' ministry. The poor in spirit are those who recognise they are in need of God's help: theirs <<is the kingdom of God>> (v.20). It belongs to those who confess their spiritual bankruptcy.

Luke's first record of a sermon by Jesus was in Luke 4:16-30. His second sermon is here in vv.20-49. The Beatitudes are not conditions for entering the kingdom of God but blessings pronounced on those who have already entered. The main theme of the Beatitudes, and the following woes, involves the 'great reversal'.

The authoritative message of the Messiah: kingdom life for his disciples. This sermon is similar to the first of five major discourses recorded in Matthew in chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18-20, and 24-25. In this sermon, Jesus is speaking to his disciples and expounds the reality of discipleship, lived in the presence and power of the Kingdom of God but within the everyday world.

Some interpreters have thought the purpose of this sermon was to describe a moral standard so impossibly high that it is relevant only for a future millennial kingdom. Others have thought its primary purpose was to portray the absoluteness of God's moral perfection and thereby to drive people to despair of their own righteousness, so that they will trust in the imputed righteousness of Christ. Both views fail to recognise that these teachings, if rightly understood, form a challenging but practical ethic that Jesus expects his followers to live by in this present age.

The sermon, commonly called the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew, is probably a summary of a longer message but the structure is a unified whole. Matthew's record has similarities to the 'Sermon on the Plain' here in Luke Chapter 6 but there are also significant differences.

The three main theories about their relationship are:

1. They record the same sermon but Matthew and Luke give summaries that report different sections and emphases.

2. They record two different sermons given on different occasions but repeating much of the same content as itinerant preachers often do.
3. Either Matthew or Luke or both have collected sayings that Jesus gave on different occasions and put them together in a sermon format.

The third point seems to make Matthew's presentation of this as a single historical event untruthful and evangelical commentators have not generally adopted it. Points one and two are both possible and it is difficult to decide between them.

²⁰ Looking at his disciples, he said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:20

Blessed are you who are poor. This means 'blessed are those of you who are poor in material things and who are also my disciples, and thus are putting your trust in God'. In the OT, the poor were frequently referred to as the pious poor, who looked to and depended on God. Jesus is not saying that poverty in itself is a state of happiness or blessing. It is a blessing only when accompanied by trust in God. Jesus' stated elsewhere that he was anointed 'to proclaim good news to the poor' as discussed in Luke 4:18, and is a quotation from Isaiah 61:1, which has a strong spiritual dimension as well: good news would come to the poor, who long and wait for God.

For yours is the kingdom of God. Such people belong to the kingdom and will receive the blessings of the kingdom. It belongs to those who confess their spiritual bankruptcy. Jesus consistently gave special care to those on the fringes of society, i.e. people who bear God's image but who are treated as trivial and the objects of oppression. For example: <<But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind>> (Luke 14:13), <<The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame'>> (Luke 14:21), <<When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me">> (Luke 18:22), <<If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? (James 2:3-6), and: <<Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you>> (James 5:1-6).

²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

Luke 6:21

In a way v.21 is similar to v.20.

You who hunger now refers to those among Jesus' disciples who are physically hungry and also hungry for God's help and presence. This is confirmed in Matthew 5:6 by: <<Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled>>.

Now implies that the hunger will not last forever: for you shall be satisfied. God will supply their needs first with his abundant presence in this life. As Psalm 107:9 says: <<for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things>>, and then also with meeting their physical needs, perhaps quickly in this age, as in Matthew 25:35-40 <<For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' " Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' " The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'>>, and the promises in Mark 10:30 <<will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life>>.

We have the response of disciples throughout the ages, which is: <<Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead>> (James 2:15-17), and: <<If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth>> (1 John 3:17-18), but certainly in the abundance of the age to come: <<People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God>> (Luke 13:29).

Who weep now is listed as mourn in Matthew 5:4. Now indicates that in the consummated kingdom, God will wipe away every tear, as we see in Isaiah 25:8b <<The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces>>, in Revelation 7:17b <<And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes>>, and: <<He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away>> (Revelation 21:4). Instead of weeping, there will be laughter: <<Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them" >> (Psalm 126:2).

22 Blessed are you when men hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

Luke 6:22-23

Whenever enemies hate, exclude, insult or reject Christians, the response should always be to rejoice, as seen in Acts 5:41 <<The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name>>, or in a Philippi prison: <<About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them>> (Acts 16:25), because great is your reward in heaven. Just as Jesus experienced opposition and persecution, his disciples can expect the same. Their reward may not come on earth but it will surely be theirs in heaven.

How their fathers treated the prophets. Throughout history, beginning with Cain's murder of Abel recorded in Genesis 4:8, and confirmed in 1 John 3:12, there have been those who oppose God's people.

IV.c.iv Luke 6:24-26 - Jesus Pronounces Woes

Blessed is now followed by woe as in this warning to those who forsake the Lord: <<Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "My servants will eat, but you will go hungry; my servants will drink, but you will go thirsty; my servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of spirit">> (Isaiah 65:13-14).

We do not encounter the woes in Matthew's records. Although they will cover a number of aspects including wealth, Jesus is not against people having such things in life. It is when they don't use what they have to advance the kingdom that he condemns them. The people targeted are those that see their possessions and position as their consolation, instead of being merely for their convenience during this life. God, through Christ, is our true consolation.

24 "But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.

Luke 6:24

Woe to you who are rich is a solemn warning to those who are rich against the tendency to delight in and trust in things of this life more than God: for you have already received your comfort or consolation. Care for the poor and the dangers of riches are common themes in Luke, as we read in Luke 1:53, Luke 12:13-21, and Luke 16:19-31.

In James 2:1-7, we see the pitfalls of preferring the wealthy over the poor in the assembly. In that case, James shows the fundamental incompatibility of holding faith in Christ and showing partiality among people. And in James Chapter 5, he turns his attention from business people to wealthy landowners who controlled much of Galilee and, indeed, much

of the Roman Empire. He denounces them for their materialistic accumulation of wealth, for defrauding their workers, and for their self-indulgent actions that have led to the deaths of innocent, righteous people.

25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
 for you will go hungry.
 Woe to you who laugh now,
 for you will mourn and weep.

Luke 6:25

Woe to you who are well fed now continues describing the rich who have no worldly cares but are not rich in faith, as confirmed in [Luke 1:53](#) <<He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty>>, and in [James 5:1](#) <<Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you>>.

Woe to you who laugh now is not a condemnation of all joy and laughter, only the condescending, boastful or mocking laughter of the callous, complacent rich, who care little for others or for God. They shall mourn and weep, when God's judgment comes.

26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you,
 for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.

Luke 6:26

The fourth woe warns that, while true prophets were hated, excluded, reviled, spurned, beaten, tortured and killed, as noted in [Hebrews 11:35b-38](#): <<Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground>>.

False prophets were well spoken of, for they prophesied what people wanted to hear. This is a warning against seeking the approval of the world rather than being faithful to God.

IV.c.v Luke 6:27-36 - Love your enemies

Resuming the theme of his disciples being hated (v.22), Jesus gives several examples of what it means to love your enemies. It is virtually a repeat of [Matthew 5:38-48](#).

27 “ But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 6:28

For blessing those who curse you can be seen in Paul's words: <<We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it>> ([1 Corinthians 4:12](#)).

For examples of praying for one's abusers we have in [Luke 23:34a](#) <<Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing>>, and [Stephen at his death in Acts](#)

7:59-60 <<While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep>>. [The ability to bless those who do this, depends on confident trust in God's care and sovereign direction of the events of life.](#)

²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

[Luke 6:29](#)

[Strikes you on one cheek](#) is an insulting slap, which pictures a backhanded slap given as an insult. A right-handed person would use the back of the hand to slap someone on the right cheek as confirmed in Mishnah, Baba Kamma 8.6. The word slaps translates the Greek word rhapizō as to slap or to strike with the open hand.

[Turn to him the other also](#) is not intended as a command for every circumstance (v.30) but is a vivid illustration of how love for one's enemies should look. This verse should not be understood as a prohibition against governments using military or police force, since in this context, Jesus is addressing individual conduct.

[Takes your cloak.](#) The point of both examples is that, even though believers will often be subjected to abuse or taken advantage of, they are to face such rejection differently from the world by being generous and compassionate, rather than retaliating.

³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

[Luke 6:30](#)

[Give to everyone who asks you.](#) Jesus again stresses that believers must be 'generous to a fault', even when someone [takes what belongs to you](#). The standards by which Jesus' disciples are to live are higher than the standards of the world. Christians should help those who are *truly* needy and therefore perhaps forced to beg but they are not required to give foolishly, or to organisations, or to a lazy person who is not in need, or where giving would bring harm rather than benefit. An example of this is: <<For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat">> (2 Thessalonians 3:10). We should especially be prepared to give to those who lack the basic necessities, especially out of our excesses. God has also ruled that we should give to a poor brother even when the year of release was near, i.e. a year in which all unpaid debts were cancelled: <<If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbour this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for cancelling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to>> (Deuteronomy 15:7-10).

We must be careful not to be too carried away with this one, as there are some people who will just keep taking from you as long as you continue to give, whether they have need or not!

³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:31

The Golden Rule (v.31) is to be practiced with respect to both friends and enemies alike. The way in which we want to be treated should determine the way that we treat others. This should come naturally for believers who love God with all their heart, soul and mind, and who love their neighbour as themselves.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that.

Luke 6:32-33

In vv.32-35 Jesus gives three examples of the Golden Rule (v.31). Reciprocity is insufficient because even sinners practice reciprocity. This can be seen in: <<Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" >> (Luke 14:12-14).

The first two examples: If you love and if you do good correspond to the first two commands in v.27 'Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you'.

³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:34-35

Love your enemies. God shows grace and care for all of his creatures; therefore Jesus' disciples are to imitate God and love both neighbour and enemy. In Luke 23:34a we read: <<Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" >>. Jesus fulfils his own teaching about loving one's enemies and highlights the fact that his death was providing the very basis upon which those who crucified him could be forgiven. This was prophesied by Isaiah with: <<For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors>> (Isaiah 53:12b).

Keeping the commands of v.35a results in your reward being great and was confirmed in v.23.

You will be sons does not mean 'you will become sons' but 'you will demonstrate that you are sons' by imitating God's care and compassion even for those who are evil.

Most High is an expression for God. This name for the true God comes from Genesis 14:18-22 where Melchisedek, the king of Salem, identifies Yahweh as 'God Most High'. It became a common title for the Lord among the monotheistic Israelites, especially in the Psalms. In it is the title for God that both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar hold in common and is a favoured name in the inter-testamental book of Sirach.

Whereas John is the 'prophet of the Most High', see Luke 1:76, Jesus is the 'Son of the Most High'. He is the promised successor to the throne of David.

³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

IV.c.vi [Luke 6:37-42 - Judging others](#)

This section begins with two negative commands (v.37a, v.37b), and two positive commands (v.37c, v.38a).

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

[Luke 6:37-38](#)

Do not judge. Do not condemn. Literally means ‘Stop judging and condemning’. Jesus is not ruling out the legitimate use of discernment, church discipline or law courts but is rather admonishing his listeners to discontinue their tendency to criticise and find fault with others. Judge not forbids pronouncing another person guilty before God. For with the judgment, you pronounce judgement on yourself also. Undue harshness and a judgmental attitude toward others will result in being treated in much the same way by God.

Jesus may have drawn on his background as a carpenter for his metaphor of a log in your own eye, which of course was hyperbole or intentional overstatement: <<then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye>> (v.42b). Jesus does not forbid all evaluation or even judgment of others, for ultimately the one who feels grieved and humbled over his own sin can help remove the speck from others. What Jesus does rule out is pride that views oneself as better than others. For, as Paul writes: <<Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted>> (Galatians 6:1).

Be judged. Be condemned but only by God.

Forgive and give emphasise the continual nature of these commands, and go beyond not judging and not condemning, to seeking the positive well-being of others. The result is it will be given by God in good measure, i.e. not meagrely, pressed down or filling all the space in the container, shaken so that grain will settle and fill the container even more fully, and running over so that a rounded heap will form at the top.

To forgive someone is not about forgetting what they have done. That sometimes does not happen. True forgiveness of a person, who has wronged or hurt you, includes actually wishing them well. As well as our Father forgiving us for forgiving others, our forgiveness of others gives us release and peace from the hurts of life.

Your lap indicates the folding of a man’s cloak with his arms underneath thus forming a container.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. In other words, God richly blesses such an attitude. This is confirmed by: <<For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you>> (Matthew 7:2), and: <<“Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more>> (Mark 4:24).

³⁹ He also told them this parable: “ Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?

Luke 6:39

The parable speaks of being blind to one’s own faults while judging others. We see this confirmed in Matthew 23:23-24 <<“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel>>, and similarly, in Romans 2:19-21 <<if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth – you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?>>. The latter passage is part of an in-depth analysis by Paul that shows the privileges the Jews had by having the law and their problems which were due to their misinterpretation of it.

⁴⁰ A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Luke 6:40

A student or disciple is not above his teacher. The ultimate goal of a disciple is to be like his master, a well-established belief in Judaism and the Greco-Roman world.

Fully trained means being like Jesus in every way.

⁴¹ “ Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Luke 6:41-42

Speck; plank or log. The hyperbolic nature of these verses refers back to the judgmental attitude of v.37. It is clear that not all judging is excluded, for when one sees one’s own sinfulness then others can be helped with the specks in their eyes. At the same time, Christians need to take great care concerning their own faults and not censuring others for things that they are guilty of doing themselves.

This is one of my favourite analogies in scripture as it is also one of my biggest failings. In my experience, hypocrisy in churches is one of the biggest ‘turn-offs’ for people investigating our faith.

IV.c.vii Luke 6:43-45 - A tree and Its fruit

⁴³ “ No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognised by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good

stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

Luke 6:43-45

This teaching can be taken in either of two ways. In one sense, observing good and bad fruit allows one to judge wisely in dealing with others. See v.42, that is also the context of Matthew 7:15-20, which says: <<" Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognise them>>. Maintaining the earlier balance of not judging yet not being naively accepting, Jesus teaches his disciples that they must be wisely discerning when professed prophets come into their midst. The life of the prophet and the results of his influence on others are the fruits that will indicate whether or not his message is consistent with the kingdom life of righteousness. The only thing bad trees are good for is firewood, a striking metaphor of the future judgment for false prophets.

In another sense, it applies to the disciples themselves for the fruit of a bad tree involves judging and condemning others, while the fruit of a good tree involves forgiving and giving to others and loving one's enemies. Luke 8:8 says: <<Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" >>, or Luke 8:15 <<But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop>>, and in Luke 13:6-9 <<Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down'" >>.

Either way the difference between a good and a bad tree involves the heart (v.45).

Evil man is an allusion to Satan or those who act in his ways.

Out of the overflow or abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. The true nature of people's hearts can often be seen when they speak off-the-cuff without reflection.

We can perceive what others are like, and similarly they can perceive who we are, by what is in our hearts and by what we say in times when we are off-guard or when we say what we truly think.

IV.c.viii Luke 6:46-49 - The wise and foolish builders

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 6:46-49

These two examples illustrate what it means to hear and to do Jesus' words (vv.47-48) and to hear but not to do them (v.49). Confession, apart from obedience, is worthless as confirmed in **Matthew 7:21** <<"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven">>, in **Luke 8:21** <<He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice">>, and in **Luke 11:28** <<He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it">>.

All the sayings of Jesus in Luke 6:37-49 can be found elsewhere, many of them in Matthew Chapter 7. They were some of the favourite sayings of Jesus and may have been used together for this sermon, or Luke may have used the opportunity to bring them all together.

Our actions and our hearts speak louder than words. It is not enough just to say we believe, we have to show it in our daily lives by living out our salvation according to God's will and the teachings of Christ.