



Luke 5

Luke 5
Tape #8049
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter five. Jesus has begun His public ministry. He has gone through the cities of Galilee preaching, teaching and healing the sick. His reputation is growing. It is difficult for Jesus to go anywhere without being thronged by multitudes of people, many of them coming to hear the word but more of them coming in order that they might receive healing or help. And so Luke opens the fifth chapter with this incident.

And it came to pass, that, as the people were pressing upon him (5:1)

Hard to imagine what it must have been like trying to move through a village when word goes out and the people come and they begin to try and get as close to you as they can. Pushing, shoving, thronging about Him. And such was the case with Jesus. People wanting to get near, wanting to touch. And "they were pressing upon him,"

to hear the word of God, and he stood by the lake of Gennesaret (5:1),

Or what we know as the sea of Galilee, also known as the sea of Tiberias.

And He saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets (5:2).

Another time when Jesus was there at the sea of Galilee, these same fishermen were mending their nets when Jesus called them to leave their nets and to follow Him. This particular incident should not be confused with the incidents that are recorded by Matthew and Mark. For there, Jesus was calling them to follow Him which I believe they did. But now they've sort of gone back to the fishing again. They are this time cleaning their nets. When they are casting their nets into the sea you pick up all kinds of, the grasses and so forth that grow there in the sea, so it's necessary to clean your nets from the debris that is picked up when they're tossed out. And they are there washing their nets.

And Jesus entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and He asked him if he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship (5:3).

Because the people were pressing on Him so heavily, it made a convenient pulpit, it gave a little space between the people and Jesus. It gave Him an opportunity to address them without just being crowded and pushed. And so He sat there in Peter's ship and He taught the people that were there on the shoreline.

Now when he had finished speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught (5:4).

For a big catch. For a haul.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and we have taken nothing (5:5):

In other words, Lord, it's useless. There are no fish there today. It's just useless, Lord. We've toiled all night and caught nothing. But in accommodating, he said,

nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net (5:5).

No, Lord, I'm not doing this because I think we're going to get anything but just at Your word, just to make You feel good, I'll let it down. I'll toss it out. It was an act of obedience on the part of Peter, reluctant obedience but obedience. As far as Peter's experience and understanding it was going to be fruitless. But to his amazement,

When they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fish: and the net began to break. So they signaled to their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the ships, so that they began to sink (5:6,7).

And as the ships began to sink, it began to sink into Peter's mind what was going on. As he realized that this is not normal. This is a miracle. This man who had done so many miracles, this man who had healed his

mother-in-law of the great fever, also have power over the natural world, as would be demonstrated even later when Jesus on the same sea rebuked the winds and the waves. And so Peter now began to realize that Jesus was not just a mortal man but that He was more than just a man indeed. Perhaps even the Messiah. And with the recognition of Jesus as he saw Jesus in truth, he saw himself in truth. One of the most important things is that we do get a true vision of Jesus or a true view of Jesus because you'll never have a true view of yourself until you see yourself in His light.

Walking in the darkness of this world, we are so often deceived. We are prone to think of ourselves more highly than we should. We're prone to be very forgiving of our weaknesses and our sins. And we fail to see the truth about ourselves until we see ourselves in His light. And seeing ourselves in His light always brings conviction, the acknowledgment of sin and the confession of sin.

Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord (5:8).

Peter acknowledging his sin. Recognizing that he has really no place around Jesus because of his sin.

For he was astonished, and all those that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: So also was James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon (5:9,10).

And so as Simon said, Depart from me; Luke puts this little insertion, gives you a little bit of information. But then we come back to the conversation between Peter and Jesus, and there was no break there. Peter is saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

And Jesus said, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men (5:10).

It's sort of the second call to Peter. The first call was when he was mending his nets there at the sea of Galilee. Here is the second call. Now we know that there was a third call. Fishing had a real hold on Peter. It was his livelihood, it was his chosen profession. I believe he thoroughly enjoyed it. And when a man's work is his pleasure, he is a happy man. When you enjoy your work, it ensures real happiness and success. I believe that Peter really enjoyed fishing. It was just a part of his blood.

We remember that after Jesus died and rose from the dead, He told the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. And so they went up to Galilee to meet Him at the specified place and when Jesus didn't show up immediately, it was Peter who said to the other disciples, I'm going fishing. It was sort of again, Well, I guess this is all over, going back. This is where I made my living. This is how I made my living. This is how I know to make a living. I'm going fishing. And they said, We'll go with you. And again, they had a very similar experience in that they fished all night and caught nothing. You remember the story. In the morning Jesus was standing on the shore. They didn't recognize Him. And He called out over the water, Did you catch anything? And they said, No. He said, Why don't you cast your nets on the other side? And they cast their nets on the other side and immediately they were filled with great fish, so much so they couldn't even pull it into the ship. And when John saw they couldn't pull it in because of the multitude of fish, he said to Peter, It's the Lord. And Peter grabbed his coat and dove in and swam the shore and the other disciples came in a little boat pulling the net with them. When they got on the shore they found Jesus there and He'd fixed them some fish, broiled fish on the fire, He said, Come and eat. Then He turned to Peter and He said, Peter, you love Me more than these? (John 21:1-15)

The third call again at the sea of Galilee and it again involved fishing and empty nets and full nets. And this was the final, after this Peter didn't go back to the old life anymore. This was it, this was the commitment. So Jesus said, From now on you're going to catch men. The book of Acts records how successful Peter was in catching men.

And when they brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him (5:11).

They had servants and they left the ships with their servants and they followed Jesus.

And it came to pass, when Jesus was in a certain city, there was a man full of leprosy (5:12):

Luke being a physician is using again a medical term and it's a term that refers to an advanced state of leprosy. It wasn't just the beginning, it wasn't just a blotch on his skin. But there was a very advanced state of leprosy.

who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and begged him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him (5:12,13).

Now under the law, it was unlawful to touch a leper, Mosaic law. And some wonder why Jesus would violate the Mosaic law. My personal opinion is that He didn't. I believe that the action was simultaneous. That as the man said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou can make me clean. And I think the minute Jesus said, I will, he was cleansed of his leprosy. By the time Jesus touched him he was no longer a leper. I see it as just a combined action. And by the time Jesus touched him, the leprosy had already departed.

And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show himself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, according to the commandment of Moses, for a testimony unto them (5:14).

Let it be a witness to the priest. Just go and show yourself and do that which was commanded by Moses.

Back in Leviticus, chapter thirteen and fourteen, we have the Mosaic law concerning the leper. And all of the rules and the regulations that applied to a person with leprosy and the method by which a person who did have leprosy could be received back into the community. The examination by the priest and the setting apart for several days, the second examination and then when it was determined that there was no more leprosy, then there was to be certain sacrifices offered in certain ways and the leper would be received back into the community.

The interesting thing to me, we read there in Leviticus, "Now this is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Leviticus 14:2). That to me is a very interesting statement because leprosy was incurable and remains to the present time incurable. They are able now to arrest leprosy, which is now called Hansen's disease, and they can arrest it, they can stop its development, but they can't cure it. And yet the interesting thing to me is that God made provision for His supernatural overriding of the natural condition of a person which was incurable; and yet God made provisions for Him to operate and to cure that which was incurable so that that person could come back into the community. So God wants to work. And so, If You will, You can make me clean. Jesus said, I will. It shows how that God is desiring to work and has left the opening that He might work even in an incurable situation such as the leper. So I love that, "the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing."

But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Jesus: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities (5:15).

Some came to hear and others came just to be healed. I think that this is always the case. There are some who come just to receive the benefits. They're not really that interested in obeying the commandments of Jesus, following Him, but they would like to receive some of the benefits. The great healing campaigns always has a certain percentage of people that aren't really interested in committing their lives to the Lord. They're just interested in being healed of their infirmities and thus was the case even in the time of Christ.

With the great multitudes and the pressure that was there constantly, because of the multitudes and the pressing needs of the multitude, we find Jesus resorting to prayer.

He withdrew himself into the wilderness for prayer (5:16).

The greater the pressure, the more Jesus saw the necessity of getting alone in prayer. I think that Luke does a very commendable service to us in that he gives us a great insight into the prayer life of Jesus. And the thing that I think impresses me most about the prayer life of Jesus is that if He saw the necessity for prayer, being who He was, the very Son of God, if He saw the necessity of prayer, who in the world do we think we are that we can possibly survive the pressures of this world without prayer? That we can somehow get by without prayer. Jesus in His prayer life certainly indicates to us the importance of and the necessity of prayer. That prayer be a very integral part of your very being. That we learn to rely upon and depend upon the strength that comes from prayer.

And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by [they were the scribes], which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them (5:17).

So on this particular day, the critics were there, the Pharisees and the doctors of law. They've been attracted also. Now in the Galilee region at this time, there were ten cities around the sea of Galilee with a population of at least 15,000. They were known as the Decapolis. And so there was a very large population, much larger than there is today around the Galilee region. And coming up from Jerusalem, from the south, from Judaea, where the Pharisees, the doctors of the law listening and looking for flaws, seeking to find fault

and the power of the Lord was present to heal the people.

And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Jesus. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus (5:18,19).

So these resourceful men coming to the house where Jesus was teaching, finding that they couldn't get into the house, the multitude of people crowded around, climbed up on the roof, removed a few tiles, let the man down in front of Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee (5:20).

Sometimes there is a direct relationship between a person's sin and a physical malady that they might be suffering. For instance, the sin of promiscuous sex often leads to many forms of venereal disease. The syphilis and other venereal diseases that come as the result of promiscuous sex. It is thought by many Bible commentators that this man probably had syphilis. And it had advanced to the state where this man had become paralyzed or in a paralytic of sorts. With the palsy there was the constant shaking, the weakening of the muscles, the inability to walk. You had to be carried. And it could be that it resulted from some encounter, perhaps with a prostitute, who knows. But having developed the palsy as a direct consequence of his sin. Don't you know that it played upon his mind continually. If I had not, I wouldn't be in this condition. It's amazing how that one foolish mistake can cause a person a lifetime of suffering, pain, sorrow. We are making decisions all the time and one foolish decision can often be so costly. And for years you can rue a bad decision, a stupid move.

So many people find themselves physically incapacitated because of a foolish move in driving their car. A split-second decision. I know it's dangerous to pass, I know that it's a two-lane road, I know I can't see around the curve, but there hasn't been much traffic I'll take a chance. I'll pass. You sort of wait and hover and then you think, Go for it. You put your foot on the throttle, you pull up and then here is a truck, no place to go. Your body is smashed, your spinal column is broken, and you spend your life paralyzed because of one foolish split-second decision. Cost a lifetime of suffering and pain. Don't you know that you live that moment over and over and over and over again? That moment when you decided to go for it, to put down the throttle, to try and make it and you relived that foolish decision until it haunts you, it torments you.

And thus, I can imagine with this man, the sin whereby he contracted this disease that created the palsy. Probably over and over and over again, it tormented his mind and I think the most glorious words he could ever hear were the words that were spoken by Jesus when He said, Your sins are forgiven. Tormented conscience, you're forgiven.

David said, "O how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). And so I'm certain that there was a burst of joy in this man's soul when Jesus said, Thy sins are forgiven. I'm certain that there was also equally with his friends a bit of disappointment. I think that they probably thought, Lord, that's not why we tore up the roof and let this guy down. We want you to heal him. I do know that the Pharisees had an adverse reaction, Who does He think He is saying? Only God can forgive sins. And they were upset at the statement of Jesus. Now the question is, Were the Pharisees right in their assertion that only God can forgive sins? And the answer is yes, they were right. That is true. Only God can forgive sins.

When David sinned with Bathsheba and the subsequent plotting of the murder of her husband, as David prayed for forgiveness, he said to God, "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this great evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:4). Sin is against God. It may affect fellow man. You may lie about me and it might hurt. But you're really sinning against God that said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16). It is the violating of the law of God. That's what sin is all about. And because it is violating God's law, only God has the capacity and power to forgive sin. Only God can say, Your sins are forgiven. So they were correct in their assumption.

So then what is Jesus proving when He said, Thy sins are forgiven. He's proving that He is God, of course. This created a real turmoil.

The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies (5:21)?

Was it blasphemous if He were not God? Yes. If He were not God, He was speaking blasphemy.

Who can forgive sins, but God alone (5:21)?

But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What is it that you reason in your hearts? What is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven; or to say, Rise up and walk (5:22,23)?

What is easier to say? Easier to say your sins are forgiven. Now I may be a quack and I might wear a big cross and a robe and I might walk down the streets and just say, Your sins are forgiven. And walk around just telling everybody, Your sins are forgiven. And if you walked up and down Fourth street, Santa Ana, people would soon get familiar with the fact that there's some quack up on Fourth street with a robe and all that goes around saying, Your sins are forgiven. People would come up and they would say, Wait, he should be along pretty quick. And they would watch for you and you become sort of a notable character in the community who was a few bricks short of a load. They'd know that you were some kind of. So you could say that but how can you prove it? How can people prove that you couldn't really forgive sins? You can't see it, you see. That's an inward work within the spirit of man that can't be observed readily. In time it can be observed but it isn't observed readily.

But if you say to a man who is paralyzed there on the cot, Rise up and walk. That's a horse of a different color because now whether or not there is power in your words can easily be proved. If the man rises up and walks, then it proves that there's power in what you said. You spoke with authority and power. If the man just maybe struggles a bit, tries to get up and then falls back on the couch, then there's no power in what you said. And so it's easy to prove whether or not there's true power in the word that you spoke. So Jesus said, "What's easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven you; or to say, Rise, take up your bed and walk."

But that you may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (5:24),

I'm giving this, Jesus said, to you as a proof that you might know that I do have the power here on earth to forgive sins.

(he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto you, Arise, and take up your couch, and go to your house (5:24).

Alright, we're putting it on the line. This is it, it's on the line now. If the fellow lies there, Jesus is totally discredited.

But immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God (5:25).

Don't you know he did? I think he was probably glorifying God just as much for the fact that his sins were forgiven as for the fact that he was walking again. Glory, double blast. My sins are forgiven.

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God (5:26),

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that when they see your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). And certainly He was an example of that. When He would do these good works, the people would glorify God. He did them in such a way as they brought glory to God. He did not do them with a lot of flare and a lot of kinds of things that drew attention to Himself. But He did them in such a way not like in a circus environment but just in such a plain, natural way that it didn't draw a lot of attention to Himself but the net result was that people were glorifying God for the work that was done.

and they were filled with awe, amazement, saying, We have seen strange things to day. [Yes.] And after these things he went forth, and saw a [tax collector] publican, whose name was Levi [and we know him as Matthew], and he was sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me (5:26,27).

A tax collector was a hated individual. He was always considered a collaborator with Rome. He collected taxes for Rome and they had many different taxes the Roman government had exacted on them. They had the Poll Tax that everybody had to pay just for the right of living, no matter how rich or poor that was the same tax for everybody and that's just the right to breathe the Roman air. To live under Roman rule. Then they had a ten percent income tax that could be paid either in a ten percent of your crops or the crops sold and ten percent of the money. But there was a ten percent income tax. And then there were taxes for transporting goods. And they had everywhere along the line these little toll booths where you had to pay so much tax for how many wheels you had on your cart. You had to pay tax for the goods that you were transporting from one area to another. And it was at this kind of a, he was a Customs Officer actually and

Capernaum was one of those cities where it was on the route between Egypt and Damascus. So a lot of goods were passing through. He was there collecting taxes for Rome. Tax collectors were notable crooks.

And the interesting thing, they discovered in some of the writings in Greek they found this notation that marvelled that there was actually an honest tax collector. It was as though, that's about as weird as you can get. It's unusual a thing as you can find, an honest tax collector, because they were notably dishonest. Anything that they could collect above the quota was their own and thus all the tax collectors were very rich men, as well as hated. And here is a "tax collector named Levi, sitting there at his toll booth: and Jesus said to him, Follow Me."

And he left all [toll booth], rose up, followed Jesus. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of tax collectors and of others that sat down with them (5:28,29).

Having followed Jesus, he now wants to introduce Jesus to his friends. And about the only friends a tax collector had were other tax collectors. And so he invited all of these tax collector friends that they might meet Jesus.

And the scribes and Pharisees murmured to his disciples, saying, Why do you eat and drink with these tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (5:30-32).

A little further on in Luke's gospel we're going to find Jesus eating with another tax collector. That's the story of Zacchaeus there in Jericho. And you remember the story well. Short little fellow, and he was curious. He heard that Jesus was passing through. Being a tax collector he dared not mix with the crowd. They would pinch him, elbow him, and he would come out bruised if he dared to go into a crowd of people. So he went ahead of the crowd, climbed a tree, a safe place, in order that he might just watch Jesus as He passed by under the tree. To his amazement, Jesus walked right up to the tree, looked up and said, Zacchaeus, come on down. I want to come to your house for dinner.

And as Jesus was eating at the house of Zacchaeus, again these Pharisees and scribes were murmuring because He was eating with sinners and it was there that Jesus said, "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost" (Luke 19:10). So twice we find Him eating with tax collectors. Twice we find them finding fault with Him for doing so. But there's more to it than that.

Because in that culture, eating with a person had a connotation of becoming one with the person in their minds. Because of their habits of eating sauces, soups on the table, bowl of soup and not everyone had their own little individual bowl with their own spoon and very sanitized and sanitary. But with the soup you just had bread. And so the one bowl of soup, you'd all just dip your bread in it and eat it. No rules of etiquette that says you can't put the same piece back in the second time. Put it in and suck it, back in again. So eating was a real sharing of germs. What I've got, you're going to get. What you've got, I'm going to get. And they really looked at it as a uniting of persons, it's becoming one with the other person. And here He is eating with sinners. He's becoming one with sinners.

A Jew would never eat with a Gentile, never. That was strictly forbidden. Even Peter got caught up in that. When the Gentile church in Antioch where Paul was ministering. Peter came up to visit and he sat down and ate with the Gentiles until there were certain brothers from the church in Jerusalem who came up and they were sort of shocked and so Peter quit eating with the Gentiles and it caused a division in the church. So Paul rebuked him for creating a division. Until these brothers came from Jerusalem you ate with the Gentiles. And now you've separated yourself and it has caused a split here. Paul said I rebuked him to his face because he was at fault. But it was that old tradition. We're going to get that in just a moment, the traditions and the hold tradition is going to have upon people.

Jesus was identifying with sinners. Interesting. Because later on, He is to take the sins of the world upon Himself and He is to die for sinners. He's come to seek and to save that which was lost. No man is too far gone but God's grace can't reach him. Now some people don't like that. I understand there's quite a furor, a lot of stuff going on in the newspaper, letters to editors and so forth, a lot of people don't want Dahmer in heaven. And they're quite upset that he has made a profession of Christ before he was murdered in the prison. And so now there's a big debate on whether or not he's in heaven. And many, many people just don't want him there. But no man is beyond the grace of God. No man.

So having started now this criticism and finding fault, they carry it on. It's a bad thing to get in a critical mode. Because when a person once gets in a critical mode, it's hard to get out of it. You begin to find fault with everything. And you begin to wherever you go, you are looking now for the faults. You're not open to receive that which is valuable or good but you're picking, you're just judging. You're looking for something that isn't quite up to your beliefs or standards and you're tuned in to find what's wrong with what is being said. And that's sort of sad. But I've seen many people that have taken this twist in the road, this bend. And once they take that bend, it seems like they are now critical of everything. They feel that they have to voice their righteous opinion on every subject. Rather sad indeed. It's a Pharisaical kind of an attitude. That's the very same kind of a trap that the Pharisees were in. They were always looking to find fault. And so now it's begun, it's going to continue and only get heavier.

And they said to Jesus, Why is it that the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees [our disciples too]; but yours, here they are eating and drinking (5:33)?

Here at the house of Levi.

And he said unto them, Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast, while the bridegroom is with them (5:34)?

While the bridegroom is there, it's partytime.

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them (5:35),

That Greek word "taken away" is "taken away by force" referring to the cross. "The day will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them,"

and then shall they fast in those days. And so he spake also a parable unto them; No man puts a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a tear, and the piece that was taken out of the new agrees not with the old (5:35,36).

They didn't know anything about sanforized shrunk in those days so that new cloth when it was washed would always shrink. So you would make the garment several sizes bigger than it needed to be and then you'd wash it and get it down to size. But the shrinking of the cloth was always just to be counted on. That is why if you had an old garment, you wouldn't sew a new patch on it. Because the first time you washed it, the new patch would shrink and of course, it would just make the tear worst in the old garment. So it was just something they didn't do. They wouldn't patch a new piece of cloth onto an old garment because it'll just make the tear worse.

And no man puts new wine into old skins;(5:37).

The bottles were leather skins and He said you don't put the new wine in the old skins. If you did, it would cause an immediate fermentation process of the old wine that was in the old skin. You pour the new wine in, it would start an immediate fermentation process which would create the gases that would swell and it would burst the old skin and it would all just pour out. So you would put the new juice into new skins, supple leather skins.

else the new wine will burst the bottles, and it will be spilled, and the bottles will perish. But new wine must be put into new skins; and both of them are then preserved (5:37,38).

It's preserved in the new skin. He is talking to the scribes and Pharisees and they are locked in the old traditional systems. The old traditional religious systems, they're locked into it. And Jesus is saying, Look, I'm bringing new wine but you just can't put it in those old skins. A new piece of cloth but you can't sew it on to the old garment. Otherwise, it will just rip the garment. Or otherwise it will just break the old skins. I believe that reformation of an old religious system is probably an impossibility. Once the old skins get set, they are not able to receive a new work of God's Spirit. Too rigid. Sad but true. But there are so many people like the Pharisees who have been locked by tradition into an old religious system and Jesus said,

No man also having drunk old wine immediately desires the new: for he saith, The old is better (5:39).

You've seen it. People who are so set in their ways, they're not even willing to try. They are not interested in what God might be doing today. More interested in what God did 500 years ago or thousand years ago or whatever but not interested in what God might be wanting to do today because they're locked in their religious traditions. And so what Jesus is speaking about here is something that is quite common and continues to the present time. People who are locked in their old traditional systems just can't take a new

fresh work of God in their hearts and in their lives. Pharisees, how locked they were in their traditions. And how often Jesus came against them because of their rigid position in their traditions, rebuking them because actually they were putting their traditions above the word of God. Not just on an equal par with God's word but above God's word.

And so Jesus said, you just don't put the new wine in the old skins. So He was creating a new order with His disciples. That God might pour His Spirit and this new work of God's Spirit into the new skins. But even the new skins have become old. And so God when He desires to work a fresh new work seems to always go outside of the system and starts a whole new work. It doesn't take long, unfortunately, for systems to become rigid, to become established, to develop their own traditions and their own ruts. And it's so easy to get in a rut. This is the way we've done it, this is the way we've been doing it for the past fifteen years and I don't see any need for change or reason why we should change. And people get in ruts so easily. But just remember the only difference between a rut and a grave is the length and the depth. God keep us from the ruts lest they become graves.

Father, we thank You for the work, the fresh work of Your Holy Spirit. And God keep us ever supple, pliable. Keep us Lord from rigidity that would preclude our receiving any fresh work of Your Spirit. O Lord may we always be open to receive. Free us Lord from any traditions that may have begun to develop. And help us Lord to always walk in an openness before You, ready to hear, ready to receive, ready to respond, ready to obey. In Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.



Luke 6

Luke 6
Tape #8050
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke gospel chapter six.

Now it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first (6:1)

I don't know what the first Sabbath was. But "on the second Sabbath after the first." What we do find here in the beginning of the sixth chapter is the growing hostility of the religious leaders against Jesus and basically, this hostility was coming from the fact that Jesus was violating their religious traditions. And so we see in these first two incidences that Luke points out, they were angry over His violation of their Sabbath day rules. Not the Sabbath day law but their Sabbath day rules.

About 200 years before Christ, they began to add to the rules and regulations as they sought to interpret the law. And they had what they called the "Abdul" which was the fathers and the ideas of the teaching of the fathers and in it they said that it was not lawful to reap on the Sabbath day or to thresh on the Sabbath day. And later it was added that it was unlawful to winnow on the Sabbath day that which was threshed or it was also unlawful to prepare food. So,

Jesus was going through the wheatfields with his disciples; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands (6:1).

When the wheat is ready for harvest, it's dry and you can take that wheat and pick it off of the top of the stem and you can rub it in your hands and the purpose of rubbing it in your hands is to get the chaff off of the kernel. You rub it in your hands and then you can blow it and the wheat can actually be eaten just as it is off of the plant. The kernels are hard but not too hard.

If you have bad teeth I wouldn't recommend it. You can crack your teeth. But if you're like I am and you've met a dentist who believes in that song, Crown Him with Many Crowns, then you're safe to chew on the wheat again.

The disciples as they were going through were picking the wheat, rubbing it in their hands, blowing the chaff away and eating. They were hungry. That was perfectly legal. One of the benevolent laws is found in Deuteronomy chapter twenty-three, twenty-five, and that is, If you're going through the field and you're hungry, you can pick the wheat to eat. You just could not put a sickle to your neighbor's wheat. You weren't to harvest any of it but you could pick it and eat to satisfy your hunger. And so what they were doing was perfectly legal, passing through the field just to satisfy their own hunger, picking and rubbing it and eating the wheat.

But certain of the Pharisees said unto them [that is, to the disciples], Why are you doing that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? And Jesus answering them said, Have you not read so much as this, what David did, when he himself was hungry, and those which were with him (6:2,3);

Jesus is sort of chiding them. These are the men who know the scriptures. These are the men who pride themselves in the knowledge of the scriptures. Haven't you ever read what David did?

How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the showbread, and gave it to them that were with him; which is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone (6:4)?

The showbread was twelve loaves of bread that were put upon this little table in the holy place where only the priests were allowed to go. And every week they would change the loaves of bread. The loaves of bread represented the twelve tribes of Israel. And it was that they might be there in remembrance before God continually. But it was counted to be holy because it had been there before the Lord. But David was travelling with his men, he was actually fleeing from Saul and he came to the tabernacle and the priest who was a friend of David; he went in and told him his problems and so the men were hungry and they were really on the run. The priest didn't have anything but the showbread so he gave it to David and David ate the showbread and the men that were with him to satisfy their hunger.

David, of course, was revered by these men. He was one of the great heroes of the Bible. And Jesus is pointing out that this hero of yours did that which was not lawful to do. What Jesus is pointing out is that God's laws were for the benefit of man. And if you look at the laws of God, you find that they are for the benefit of man. You would all be much better off if you would keep the laws of God, physically, emotionally, spiritually. They are the rules for sound health. Spiritual health, physical health, emotional health. And thus though the law said that only the priest were to eat the showbread, here was a case of human hunger which overrides this prohibition.

The disciples were hungry and their hunger overrode the traditions of the elders which said you were not to reap on the Sabbath day or thresh or winnow or prepare food. And in reality they had done all four. They had picked the corn, they had threshed it by rubbing it in their hands, and then they winnowed it by blowing out the chaff. And actually they were preparing food. So they had violated all four. But hunger overrides, human need. God doesn't mean that the law should prevent us from taking care of basic needs. And that's never the intent or the purpose of the law. The law was intended to benefit man, not to hinder or hurt man.

So he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath (6:5).

So He said, I have precedence over the Sabbath even.

And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue (6:6)

We are told in the other gospels that this was the synagogue in Capernaum.

And He taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered (6:6).

Only Luke tells us it was the right hand. Matthew and Mark tell of this incident but you might figure that a doctor would note which hand it was and Luke tells us it was the right hand that was withered.

And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; [and their purpose was] that they might accuse him, might make accusations against him (6:7).

The scribes and the Pharisees quite often sat at the front of the congregation. The women were sitting on one side, the men were sitting on the other side. And they were there to make certain that the law was kept. If a question came concerning the law they would ask them as they sat there in these seats of judgment, more or less, to oversee and to make sure everything went according to the law. And so Jesus realizing that they were watching Him and that they were wondering whether or not He would heal this man on the sabbath day because that was against their traditions. You could not heal on the sabbath day. You could take whatever measures were necessary to preserve a person's life but nothing towards healing. Had to wait until the sabbath day was over before you could apply a bandage. You weren't to do anything to heal on the sabbath day. If human need supercedes and God's laws are for man's benefit, that goes against God's law. In fact, Jesus pointed out, If you have an ox or a donkey that falls in the ditch, because it's a sabbath day you don't leave it in the ditch and come back tomorrow to get it out. And if you have concern for a donkey that's hurting, how much more you should have concern for men who are hurting.

And so it is interesting to me to note that the Pharisees and the scribes associated Jesus with the man with a withered hand. That is, they knew that He would be interested in that man. They knew that Jesus could never face human blight without seeking to alleviate it. And here is a man with a blighted, withered hand. And they knew that Jesus would seek to help that man because of his condition. They knew that Jesus was interested in the man there in the congregation who had the greatest need. They understood that about Jesus.

Sometimes we don't understand Jesus. When we come into the congregation of God's people, sometimes we feel like, Oh, I really don't even belong here. We look around and everyone looks so holy and so spiritual and everybody is smiling and I feel so miserable. I really don't belong here. I'm in the wrong place. My needs are so desperate, my needs are so great. These people seem to have it all together. Well if you feel that way, cheer up. Jesus is more interested in you than everybody else. He's always interested in the person with the greatest need. And that man with the greatest need was the one that got Jesus' attention and He was interested in him. They knew that.

The enemies of Jesus oftentimes understood Him better than His own disciples or His own friends.

But he knew their thoughts (6:8),

He knew what they were thinking, He could see it.

So He said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth here in the middle (6:8).

He's not going to do anything in the corner. He's not going to say, Come outside. He's going to face them right, stand here in the middle. And with this man standing there with his limp arm,

Jesus said unto them (6:9),

These fellows who were there to keep order, the scribes and the Pharisees.

I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save a life, or to destroy it (6:9)?

It's the sabbath day, granted. "Is it lawful to do good, or to do evil?" You see, if it is in your power to help a person and you refuse to help, that's evil. If it's within your power to save a person's life and you let them go, that's evil. If a person is drowning and you have the capacity to pull them out of the water but you just watch them drown, that's evil.

Here was a man who was in desperate need, Jesus had the capacity to help him. And not to help him would be evil. And so He makes them face the issue that demonstrates the folly of their traditions. And of course, they really couldn't respond to that. It was the kind of logic that defied response.

And looking round about upon them all (6:10),

Mark said He was looking with anger. There was fire in His eyes. He was upset that they would withhold from this needy man just because it violated some dumb tradition that they had. And so looking upon them with anger,

he said unto the man, Stretch forth your hand (6:10).

At this point, this man can do one of two things. He can argue with Jesus and tell Him why he can't stretch forth his hand. He could tell Him of the stroke that he had that paralyzed him. Or the injury that he sustained or whatever whereby his hand became withered. And he could tell Jesus all the reasons why I can't do it. Or he can try to do it. He can will once more to stretch forth his hand. Though he had willed many times previously, nothing happened, he can try once more and he can will to stretch forth his hand. And he discovered the moment he willed to obey the command of Christ, though it was an impossible command, the moment he willed to obey, all that was necessary was given him to obey.

And he stretched it forth: and it was whole like the other (6:10).

Sometimes as the Lord faces the weakness in our life and He commands us to be strong, we so often begin to argue with Him and tell Him why we're weak. How many times Lord I've tried? I just can't do it, Lord. I just have a weakness. And we're giving Him all the excuses why we can't obey. But you will discover if you will to obey, everything necessary to obey will be given to you. That's the neat thing about the Lord.

He doesn't command you to do anything but what He will not give you the capacity to do it if you will only be willing to do it. Now the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees was,

They were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus (6:11).

From this point on they said, We've got to get rid of this guy. This is where the plot began to crucify Jesus.

And it came to pass in those days (6:12)

And I wrote out on my computer a whole neat little profile sketch of all the apostles and I left it at home. That's one of the problems of getting old is that you begin to forget things.

I was told this week concerning this fifty year high school class reunion where the fellows were together in the kitchen talking and the ladies were in the next room. And this one fellow said, Have you seen that new Wal-Mart store that they built? The guy says, No, where is it? He said, Oh it's on that street, you know the street, it's ah...what's that flower that has a long stem? And the guy says, A lily? No, not a lily. The stem has thorns on it. A rose? Yeah, rose, that's it. Rose, where is that new Wal-Mart store? You have to be a little older to really appreciate that one.

As I got to this scripture I remembered, I forgot. So, "it came to pass in those days,"

that he went out into a mountain (6:12)

I'll give to you these in another, I'll remember it and bring it. I still remember everything, it just takes me a little longer. "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain,"

to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God (6:12).

It is interesting that Luke in presenting to us the human side of Jesus gives us an insight into His prayer life that is not given to us in the other gospels. It is Luke that tells us that when Jesus was baptized, as He was praying the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. Here Luke lets us know that before choosing from the disciples twelve to be called apostles, He spent the night in prayer.

How important in choosing the leadership to be directed by God, to spend the night in prayer.

And so in the morning, he called unto him his disciples (6:13):

And of course there were many disciples.

and of them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles (6:13);

It is interesting that of these twelve that He named apostles, if I would ask you to just name the twelve Apostles, you would all probably start off pretty well with Peter, James, John, Andrew, and from there, we don't always remember the names of the others. It's because we are told more concerning Peter, James, John and Andrew than we are of the others. Some of them it's almost as though they dropped out of the scene after Jesus named them apostles. We don't read of them doing anything. We don't read of Thaddaeus who was also called Lebbaeus, we don't read of him doing anything. And thus we're not familiar with him. We wonder, Did they do anything? But it is interesting when we get to the book of Revelation and John takes us into the heavenly scene, the foundations of the wall are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles. So there is a very important role that they did play and it will come into play in the future.

Here is where history does help us some and from the early traditions in written history of the church, we find a little bit about these twelve apostles and the reason why we don't know of what they did from the biblical standpoint is that they didn't hang around Jerusalem.

Thomas went to Syria then to Phrygia and ultimately to India and there evangelized. In India today they have the church of Thomas which they relate directly back to the ministry of Thomas. All we know about Thomas is that he was sort of a melancholy, he was a doubter. When Jesus said, Lazarus is dead. He said, Let's go so we can die with him. Sort of a melancholy. And then when the disciples said Jesus is risen, we've seen Him. He said, I'm not going to believe unless I can actually see it for myself. And so we only know that side of him but we don't know how that he went to India and was crucified ultimately there in India for the cause of Christ.

I did a little research and have a neat little personality sketch of each of these fellows, where they ministered, how and all of them met their death by violent means with the exception of John the beloved who was arrested, went to Rome and Domitian, had him put in boiling oil. By a miracle it didn't harm him. He was then put in prison, exiled actually to Patmos. When Nerva replaced Domitian as the emperor of Rome, he then released John from his exile in Patmos where he went to Ephesus and he died at a ripe old age in Ephesus.

Polycarp and Ignatius were a couple of his disciples who became bishops in the early churches; Polycarp in Smyrna and Ignatius in Hierapolis. There's interesting little historic sketches on these fellows.

Saint Andrew was crucified on a X kind of a cross when he came to Odessa and that's become sort of a popular name now I think from one of the new Walt Disney movies or something. But he came to Odessa and there they crucified him on a cross, which was sort of an X shape. Two of the arms of the cross were implanted in the ground. That's where you get the Saint Andrew's cross, the X shape cross, because he was crucified in that kind of a X shape cross.

So "Jesus called unto him the disciples of whom he chose twelve, to be called apostles." Disciple is a learner and there were many. An apostle is one who has been called and sent out. So of those He chose twelve to be apostles.

Simon, (who was also named Peter) (6:14),

Jesus called him Peter. Petros, little stone, upon this rock I'll build my church. The rock of Peter's confession, Thou art the Christ.

Andrew his brother (6:14),

We know quite a bit about Peter because he comes into the record quite a bit, he's an outspoken kind of a guy. He's ready to act and he takes over leadership capacities in the early church. "Andrew his brother,"

we don't know too much about Andrew except that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus. He was the one that told Peter about Jesus. Come, we found the Messiah. And Andrew seems to have the reputation for bringing people to Jesus. When there were the people that were there on the hillside hungry, been with Jesus all day, nothing to eat and Jesus said, Have them sit down. He said, Do you have any food? Andrew said, There's a little boy here with five loaves and two fish but that's nothing with this crowd. And so he brought the little boy to Jesus. Later on we find that there were Greeks who came to Philip and they said, We want to see Jesus. Philip came to Andrew and Andrew came to Jesus and told Him about these Greeks that were wanting to see Him.

There is,

James and John (6:14),

whom Jesus called the sons of thunder. These were the guys who were ready to call down fire upon those that would oppose Jesus. Where they didn't want to receive Jesus they were ready to call down fire. They were fishermen, they were partners with Peter and their father's name was Zebedee, their mother's name was Salome. She was there at the cross when Jesus was crucified and one of the first women to come to the tomb. And then,

Matthew (6:15),

who we studied last week. He was also known as Levi. Then there was

Thomas (6:15),

Of which we spoke earlier, and then,

James the son of Alphaeus (6:15),

This is interesting because Matthew is also called the son of Alphaeus. Could it be that Matthew and this other James were brothers? We don't know for sure but it's possible. They were both called sons of Alphaeus. This James is also called James the less. The word less in Greek is actually little. So he was probably a short little guy and so they called him James the little, in contrast to James the brother of John who was probably bigger and more ruddy, being a fisherman. And then there was,

Simon the Zealotes (6:15),

Or the zealot. The zealot was a group of extreme nationalists. They would take vows to kill a Roman whenever they had a chance. These guys carry daggers under their cloaks at all times and they vow to kill every Roman they could get hold of. Matthew was a tax collector and considered a collaborator of Rome and hated because he was a tax collector by the common people and more so by the zealots. Interesting that Jesus would pick to be his companion zealot and a tax collector. But it's amazing the opposites that can come together in Jesus, how He is the common denominator and brings all men together. And then there was,

Judas [who was also called not Iscariot] the brother of James (6:16),

Now is this James the less? We don't know. If it is, then Judas, James and Matthew could perhaps be brothers. There are other James and Judes in the Bible. There is the author of the book of James which is not the James that we find in the brother of John. But the author of the book of James who is thought maybe to be the brother or stepbrother of Jesus. For we know that Jesus had several brothers and two of their names were James and Judah. And the book of Jude in the New Testament, he identifies himself as the brother of James. And so Judas the brother of James.

The only thing we know about this Judas actually is in the fourteenth chapter of John when Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and we shall come and manifest ourselves to him. He said, Lord, how is it that You'll manifest yourself to us, and not to the world" (John 14:21,22)? So that's his big thing. That's all we know from the biblical standpoint about Judas, except that he was numbered with the apostles. He's the brother of James. And then the other Judas who we know because of his dastardly deed,

Judas Iscariot (6:16),

who we are told, Jesus said, Have I not chosen twelve of you and one of you is the devil? And Jesus referred to him as the son of perdition. Paul refers to the antichrist as the son of perdition. But then we know that he was the treasurer. He carried the purse, John tells us, and when that woman poured the costly perfume on Jesus he was the one that said, Why this waste, we could have taken this perfume and sold it for

hundreds of dollars and given the money to the poor? And John said, He didn't say that because he was interested in the poor but that he was keeping the money. He was the treasurer and he was thieving out of the funds. He was embezzling. And so he was an embezzler, he was greedy, he was the one who then went to the rulers and made a covenant with them to reveal where they could arrest Jesus in private. For thirty pieces of silver he would turn Jesus over to them and came then into the garden leading the soldiers and betrayed Jesus with a kiss. And so we know then that afterwards he took the money back to the priest, tried to return it, they refused to take it, he threw it on the floor, and went out and hung himself. A sad story, Judas Iscariot.

We are told by John that Jesus knew from the beginning who it was that would betray Him. He was picked and perhaps even created by God for this purpose. It could be that he was indeed a devil. And sort of an incarnate devil but chosen and picked for this purpose to fulfill the scriptures that He would be betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver and so forth.

So we read that after He had gone into the mountain to pray, and now
He comes down, [we read], and stood in the plain (6:17),

What Jesus is going to say in the next section is very similar to what He said in the Sermon on the Mount. But He is saying these same things but in a different place. When He was on the mount, He called His disciples and He spoke to them and He taught them saying. He sat down and taught the disciples. Here He is speaking to a great multitude of people. And it's on the plains. But these are basic truths and basic truths bear repeating. And so Jesus no doubt repeated these truths many times in each community where He would go. He would probably share a part of these truths or all of these truths. These are basic truths about the kingdom of God and who is going to inhabit the kingdom of God.

So he came down with them, and He stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people [not just the disciples, now a great multitude] out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases (6:17);

The twofold purpose: they wanted to hear Jesus but many of them were in need and wanted to be healed of their diseases.

And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude just sought to touch him (6:18,19):

Can you imagine what that would be? Thousands of people crowding around you, everyone trying to get close enough to touch you. Because in touching Jesus,

there was virtue that went out from Jesus and the people would be healed (6:19).

And so it must have been extremely inconvenient and uncomfortable to be constantly shoved, to have people constantly grabbing you. What would you do if everywhere you went people would be crowding around grabbing you? I'm sure that you would say, Leave me alone! Give me space! But we never read of Jesus reacting in that way. In fact, it always tells us that He looked with compassion on them.

He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. Just wandering, searching.

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor (6:20):

Wait a minute, Lord. Blessed be ye poor. This is in contrast to verse twenty-four where He said, "But woe unto you that are rich." So blessed are the poor and woe to the rich. "Blessed be ye poor,"

because yours is the kingdom of God (6:20).

Matthew tells us that Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). The poverty of spirit is something that is considered a plus in the kingdom of God but it's considered a negative in the world. The man who is humble or perhaps a better word meek is oftentimes looked upon with disdain by the world. But God looks upon him with favor.

Blessed are ye that hunger now (6:21):

That goes often with poverty.

for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh (6:21). Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and will separate you from their company, and will reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake (6:21,22).

You as a Christian living in a non-Christian world are living in a foreign environment. And Jesus said, "Marvel not, if the world hates you" (1 John 3:13). "They hated me. You're not greater than the Master"

(John 15:18,20). If they did not receive Me, they're not going to receive you. Don't expect to win Mr. Popularity contest in the world because there is that friction and natural antagonism of the world towards the righteous. And "they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). "In this world," Jesus said, "you will have persecution, tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

So when you are reproached for Christ's sake, when people say evil against you because of your Christian witness. There he goes, Jesus people, won't listen to dirty jokes and all. And they begin to slur you, call you DJ because you don't listen to dirty jokes and this kind of stuff.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets (6:23).

Those who speak forth God's truth are not popular. Even among the nation of Israel, the true prophets of God were often persecuted. Jeremiah, one of the problems he faced was, one of the difficulties of his ministry was that there were a lot of false prophets that were contradicting what Jeremiah was saying. Jeremiah was saying, Because of your sin, because of your evil, because of your wicked ways, God's going to let the Babylonians conquer you and you're going to be carried away into Babylon as captives. The false prophets were saying, That's not so, the Babylonians will never shoot an arrow into the city. And they were giving all kinds of false assurances to the people, assuring them that God was going to protect them and all. You don't have to worry about the Babylonians. And thus there was no repentance. There was no turning to God. And they became a bane to the prophet of God. They persecuted the prophet of God because of the ill report that he was bringing to them. He was telling them that, Look God isn't pleased with those kind of living.

And there are those today that they don't want to hear that God is displeased with what I'm doing. They want to sin with impunity. And especially the homosexual community, they don't want to be condemned. They don't want to be told that that is sinful, that is wrong. That's against scriptures and so they have their own churches where they have their false prophets that say, Anything brother that you do, just if you feel good. And they come down and blow whistles and get upset down here because we dare to speak out what God's word has to say. And that offends people.

And so the scriptures say that when they really start getting on your case, rejoice, they did this to their fathers. Did this to the true prophets of God. But in contrast to Blessed are ye, He said,

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation (6:24).

You've received your reward or in modern parlance, Hey you've had it. It's been good.

Woe unto you that are full! for you will hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for you will mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets (6:25,26).

Be careful when the world begins to make you the Man of the Year. I don't know if you know who Time new Man of the Year is, it's just been announced. But I didn't, it was not really, I didn't mean that and it wasn't an intentional slur. And when you find out who the Time Man of the Year is, you'll understand what I'm saying. Oh boy, foot-mouth syndrome, and I'll get letters on this. Alright, I'll tell you, it's the Pope.

But I say unto you who will hear it, if you'll hear it this is what I say to you, Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for those who despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak don't forbid him to take your coat also. Give to every man that asks of thee; and of him that takes away thy goods don't ask for them again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise (6:27-31).

And as you look at that you say impossible. Not natural. It's not natural to love your enemies. And to do good to those that hate you and to bless them that curse you. And I agree, it isn't natural, it's supernatural. And if you try to do it in the natural, you're going to find yourself frustrated and miserable. You cannot do it apart from the work of the Holy Spirit within your heart. But you need to be open that the Holy Spirit might work in your heart. And if you find that there is someone that you just can't stand, you hate the thought of them, they so irritate you, they so go against your grain that you find that you're constantly being irritated by just thinking about them, then what you must do is say, Lord I recognize this is wrong. This is sin. You don't

want me to have this attitude. Lord, help me. Plant your love in my heart for them. And allow God to do it. You can't do it yourself.

Don't try and reform and say, Oh I'm going to love them. I'm going to love them, I'm just going to love them. Yes there is some good about them and there's got to be some good, I just haven't discovered it yet. And I'm going to love them. Next time I see them I'm going to just be loving to them. I'm going to do it. And so next time you see them, you go up and you smile and you say, Hi, how are you doing today? And they say, Didn't you brush your teeth? How come they're so yellow? You dirty, and all your resolve is down the tubes. You can't do it, it's just not in you. Only God can do it as He works in you by His Spirit. And that's why we have to turn the job over to the Spirit, it's too big for us. But the beautiful thing is God will do it in us. God will do for us what we can't do for ourselves.

Now you see, we have the same case here. Jesus is making impossible demands, just as impossible as the guy He said, Stretch forth your hand. I can't, it's withered. What's the matter with you? Can't you see? Thing's withered. And just as that was an impossible command, because he willed to obey it, God gave him the power. These are impossible commands but if you will will to obey it, the Lord will do it for you. He'll give you the capacity to do this.

As a Christian you are to be more than everybody else.

For if you love those which love you, what thank have you (6:32)?

That's no big deal.

for sinners also love those that love them (6:32).

You're not proving any, you're supposed to be more as a child of God.

And if you do good to those which do good to you, [no big deal], for sinners also do the same. And if you lend only to those that you hope to get the money back again, sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But you, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you will be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil (6:33-35).

God, our heavenly Father, He's kind. Look how He gives to people and nothing in return. How He gives to people life and health and so much and they never say, Thank you Lord. They never recognize God's blessing, they never stop to thank the Lord. They take all of these things for granted. And yet God blesses them and provides for them and there's no thanks. And thus, as His children being like our Father, we need to follow this example. But as I said, you can't do it apart from Him and His help.

Be ye therefore merciful, [again God our example] as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged: condemn not, and you will not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven (6:36,37):

So here are things where it comes back to you. Judge not, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. And the positive: forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete it out, it shall be measured to you again (6:38).

If you're giving out love in little drops, love will come back to you in little drops. If you're giving out love by the bucketful, it's going to come back to you by the bucketful. Whatever measure you mete it out, that's the way it's going to come back. It's just the law of reciprocity. Just the return. And the measure that you do it, it comes back to you.

And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect [or complete] shall be like his master (6:39,40).

And that's the whole issue, to be like Jesus. And if you will be complete, you will be like your Master.

And why do you behold the mote [or sliver or speck of dust perhaps] that is in your brother's eye, but you don't perceive the [six by twelve] that is in your eye? [The beam.] Either how can you say to your brother, Brother, let me get that speck of dust out of your eye, when you behold not the beam that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first cast the beam out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to

pull the sliver that is in your brother's eye (6:41,42).

It's so human nature, isn't it? I heard Dr. Dobson this past week as he was on his program and he was talking about this fellow in college, I think I mentioned it Thursday night, but he was talking about this fellow in college that he hated. And he just couldn't stand him. And just recently he got together with this fellow and he said, You know, I've got to confess something to you. He said, When we were in college together, I hated you. And he said, Knowing that you were here, I wrote down the reasons why I hated you. And he said, This is why I hated you. And he read off the reasons. And the fellow said to Dr. Dobson, Well to tell you the truth, I hated you and for the very same reasons that you have written. And he said he realized that he was actually looking in a mirror and he didn't like what he saw. But because it was in the other fellow, he hated him.

We're so prone to cuddle ourselves in our little faults. It's alright if I do it but don't you do it. And when we see others doing, and that's why parents so often get upset with their kids, too much like your dad. And you hate to see your weaknesses in someone else. And so we're so skillful we think in taking the sliver out of our brother's eye but in reality we've got this four by twelve in our own eye. And so first, He said, take the beam out of your own eye and then you'll be able to see clearly to take the sliver out. You hypocrites, He said. And then He said,

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good (6:43-45);

What is the fruit of your life? Is it love? Is it kindness? Is it graciousness? Merciful? Or is there anger? Is there judgment? Is there condemnation? This is the fruit that He's talking about. And a good tree brings forth good fruit. Corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good."

and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (6:45).

What's in your heart is revealed so often by what you say in the unguarded moments. Many times we are cultured enough to guard what we say. We don't just tell a person, sometimes well there are some people, I want to give you a piece of my mind. Are you sure you can afford it?

And then having said all of these things, Jesus said,

And why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say (6:46)?

In other words, I'm not just saying these as wonderful platitudes. You need to do them. James said, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. For a man who is just a hearer, but not a doer, is like a man who is looking in a mirror: sees the truth, but then he goes away, and forgets what he saw" (James 1:22-24). Immediately he forgets what was revealed there in the mirror. And so Jesus said, "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, if you don't do the things that I say?"

And I might say that calling Him Lord, Lord isn't going to buy you anything unless you do the things He says. He said, "In that day many will come saying, Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matthew 25:11). "Did we not prophesy in your name? and do wonderful works, healed people and all in Your name? And He said, I never knew you" (Matthew 7:22,23). You call Me Lord, Lord, but you weren't obeying the things that I said. And so Jesus then gives another parable. He said,

Whosoever comes to me, and hears my sayings, and does them [that's the key], I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock (6:47,48).

This is the man who hears the word and obeys, who does it.

But he that hears, and doesn't do it, is like a man without a foundation and he builds a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great (6:49).

So the importance of the foundation in our lives. Built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, a complete trust in Him. No confidence in ourselves or in our own flesh but our trust is in Him, the Rock and I build my house,

my faith on Him. Reflected in my doing the things that He commands. And it's manifested in the actual doing of it. Because if you hear it and you say, Oh yeah, that's right, that's good, oh yes I think a person should do that. That's a good thing, yes. But if you don't do it, it's sort of a deceptive thing because you say, Yes I believe that, yes I believe you should love your enemies. But if you hate them, then when the real test comes the house is going to go. You may look good, you may smile and look good but when the real test comes, when the rubber hits the road, you're finished, it's gone. Because there's no real foundation there in Christ. You have to dig deep, lay the foundation. And then it will follow, the works, the doing of the things He said.

Father, thank You again for the mirror. Help us Lord to see the truth. And may we react and respond to the truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.