

CAPITOL STUDIES

FEBRUARY 26, 2025 • WEEK 7



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



Do Unto Others: Mercy & Love



BUMPER STICKERS SAY A LOT about our philosophies of life in ways we can all understand. “Do unto Others *before* They Do unto You”, “Don’t Get Mad, Get Even”, “Get All You Can”, “Can All You Get, Then Sit on the Can!”. Into our me-first world Jesus came to give us a telescopic view of another kingdom—an eternal place that turns our earthy system of values on its ear... But once we view life from His perspective, we begin to see that it’s our way of thinking that’s upside down, not His. He sets things aright. The fact is, as much as we cherish our lives, many of the things we hold so dear will one day pass away. Those who spend their strength on the temporal are like children playing a board game. They roll the dice, collect the tokens, and try to beat out the other players. Eventually, though, the game ends, and the pieces are put away. It no longer matters who came in first or second or who wound up last. The only thing that really counts is what remains after the game is over. What will remain after our game of life is through? Certainly not the revenge we thought would be so sweet, nor the toys we collected—they’ll be sold to the highest bidder. Only the mercy we showed and the love we gave will last. – Charles Swindoll¹

Arin Hess

Pastor Arin Hess,
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INTRODUCTION

“The Pharisees were desperately determined to not break the laws of God. Consequently, they devised a system to keep them from even coming close to angering God. They contrived a ‘fence’ of Pharisaic rules that, if man would keep them, would guarantee a safe distance between himself and the laws of God. Therefore, if God said we could not work on the Sabbath, then don’t even pick grain to eat, just to play it safe. Don’t even heal people because that might be a borderline case.”²

I. JESUS AND THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1-5

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

“Of the hundreds of Sabbath regulations that snared the Jews, four are particularly pertinent to our passage. On the Sabbath, Jews must refrain from all work, including reaping, threshing, winnowing, and preparing food. Unknowingly, the disciples would break all four regulations, and, of course, the patrolling morality police would be right there to catch them red-handed.”⁴ Jesus shows the Pharisees their legalism by reminding them of David eating the tabernacle showbread when there was nothing else to eat. David is their great forefather. “Jesus’ words asserted that he [Jesus] was greater than the Sabbath, for lordship declares supremacy. As such, Jesus Christ is greater than David. If David could override the Law without blame, how much more could the greater Son of David—Messiah himself—do so?”⁵ Jesus had created the Sabbath. He could certainly decide what He wanted to do in it. Are we as judgmental as the Pharisees? We all have our own “fences,” which are actually important in our Christian walk. However, if they are not God’s law, we have no right to enforce them on others. Paul reminds us in Romans 14 that each of us is to be “fully convinced in his own mind,” and to remember that all we do should be “for the Lord.”

Luke 6:6-11

On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. ⁷The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. ⁸But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And he got up and came forward. ⁹And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?” ¹⁰After looking around at them all, He said to him, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did so; and



his hand was restored. ¹¹But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

The embarrassed Pharisees are ready for battle now. What other Sabbath “laws” would Jesus break? Jesus knows what they are thinking and reveals their true heart with His question, “Is it lawful to do good or harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?” The Pharisees care more about their rules than people. Jesus’ look penetrates their eyes and their hearts as He heals the man’s withered hand. He is clearly Lord of the Sabbath, and the angry Pharisees are determined to do away with Him. Can you think of situations in our world today where personal agendas override what is good?

II. JESUS AND THE “SENT” ONES

Luke 6:12-16

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

A. Dependent on His Father

Jesus never acts independently of His Father. All night He spends in prayer with Him. “If the eternal Son of God could not function as Jesus without dependent prayer, how much more is it essential for us adopted sons and daughters? Too often we engage not in *dependent* prayer but in *obligatory or routine* prayer. Jesus didn’t say, ‘Apart from me you can do *something*.’ Rather, he said, ‘Apart from me you can do *nothing*’ (John 15:5, italics added).”⁶

B. Depending on His Friends

After His night in prayer, Jesus chooses twelve of His followers to be apostles—commissioned and “sent” ones. Jesus, like you and I, needed close friends who would be there for Him, those He would train for service in Judea but also to later take the gospel throughout the known world. These were ordinary men from many different walks of life. This means God can use you and me, too! “All through history God has chosen and used nobodies, because their unusual dependence on Him made possible the unique display of His power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced dependence on their natural abilities and resources.”⁷ It is interesting to note that the twelve are always listed in the same three groups of four. In the listing Peter always leads Andrew, James, and John. Philip leads Bartholomew (whose first name is Nathanael), Matthew (Levi), and Thomas (also called Didymus). And James the son of Alphaeus (also called James the Less) leads Simon Zelotes, Judas (also called Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus), and Judas Iscariot.





III. JESUS AND THE SERMON ON THE PLATEAU

Luke 6:17-19

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

After calling His disciples to Him, Jesus goes down with them to a “level place” where He again ministers to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. There does happen to be a plateau area on the side of the mountain near Capernaum where tradition says this sermon was preached. This message is very similar to the sermon in Matthew chapters 5-7, which is called the Sermon on the Mount. Are they the same? Luke does not include the section pertaining to Jewish law, but remember that he writes particularly for Gentiles. It is possible that Jesus preached this sermon on more than one occasion, but it is likely this is the same sermon, shared by two different writers, both equally inspired of God. In this sermon, Jesus focused on “attitudes: our attitude toward circumstances (Luke 6:20–26), people (Luke 6:27–38), ourselves (Luke 6:39–45), and God (Luke 6:46–49). He emphasized four essentials for true happiness: faith in God, love toward others, honesty with ourselves, and obedience toward God.”⁸

A. The Law of Opposites

Luke 6:20-23

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

Jesus looks at His disciples as He speaks. “Those who follow Him must operate under a set of values opposite that of the world. Those whom the world calls miserable, Jesus pronounces ‘blessed,’ or happy. The poor (v. 20)—or ‘poor in spirit’ (see Matt. 5:3)—will receive the spiritual riches of God’s kingdom. Those who hunger (Luke 6:21a)—or ‘hunger and thirst for righteousness’ (see Matt. 5:6)—will be satisfied with God’s truth. Those who weep with compassion for the needy will laugh in the end (Luke 6:21b). Those who are hated and persecuted for His sake will ‘leap for joy’ for behold, [their] reward is great in heaven.’(v. 23).”⁹ For the Christian, it’s an upside-down life indeed.



Luke 6:24-26

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

Those who live sacrificially for Christ in this world will reap rich rewards in heaven, but Jesus adds a warning for those who are living solely for themselves: if you live only for this present world, you are setting yourself up for pain and sorrow.

B. The Law of Love: Loving the Unlovely

Luke 6:27-37

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. ³¹Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. ³²If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. ³⁵But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

Right in the middle of this section is what we know as the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.* We know that well, but how well do we practice it? Do we love our “enemies”? Are we quick to claim our rights and become bitter? Or do people know we are children of the Most High because we are merciful like He is merciful? “Our heavenly reward will outweigh any personal loss on earth, so we can afford to spill our love on our enemies, do good to them, and lend money to those in need.”¹⁰ “The Lord explained in this sermon that the truly blessed life comes not from *getting*, or from *doing*, but from *being*. The emphasis is on Godlike character.”¹¹

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

We reap what we sow. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. If we give generously, God will not be out-given. “The picture is of grain poured into a container, pressed down and then shaken so that every





little corner is filled and the grain is poured in until it runs over. In the same way God will return to us our good favor toward others.”¹²

C. The Law of Love: Judging Others

Luke 6:39-45

And He also spoke a parable to them: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. ⁴¹Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴²Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye. ⁴³For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. ⁴⁴For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. ⁴⁵The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

In order to judge others rightly, we must judge ourselves first. Jesus uses humor here, accentuating the difference between the log and the speck. It’s always easier to see the wrong in others. We need help to see it in ourselves. Find an iron-sharpening-iron friend (Proverbs 27:17) and ask for a candid evaluation of your life. Pray daily as David did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). Then remove the log, so you can see how best to help others remove their specks.

D. The Law of Love: Loving God

Luke 6:46-49

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

A beautifully painted house will not necessarily stay strong in times of storm. The key to its strength is its foundation. Many in our world today profess to be Christians, but their actions show otherwise. There is nothing in their lives to indicate they are any different from those of the world.



CONCLUSION

Jesus says, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you’ depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:22-23). The Pharisees worked hard to keep the “commandments,” but their hearts were far from God. The keeping of “commandments” will not get us to heaven, but Jesus says, “If you love Me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Where is your foundation? Is your faith in Christ and Him alone for salvation? Do you love Him? If you love Him, are you keeping His commandments?

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Arin Hess".

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. Charles Swindoll, *The Origination of Something Glorious*, Insight for Living, Word Publishing, 1994, pg. 148, 152.
2. William L. Coleman, *The Pharisees’ Guide to Total Holiness*, Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1977, pg. 8.
3. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
4. Swindoll, pg. 134.
5. *Ibid.*, pg. 136.
6. R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 107.
7. *Ibid.* pg. 109.
8. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Victor Books, 1996, Volume 1, pg. 192.
9. Swindoll, pg. 144-145.
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 149.
11. Wiersbe, pg. 192.
12. Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, edited by Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, Regency Reference Library, 1980, pg. 155.



Personal Study Notes



Serving Civil Servants with Scripture

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
109th Legislature's
First Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room