

# The Gospel of Luke

## Lesson 9

### Picking Grain on the Sabbath

Luke 6:1-5

**Luke 6:1** 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*. <sup>2</sup> But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" <sup>3</sup> And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, <sup>4</sup> how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?" <sup>5</sup> And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

We should notice in this passage the excessive importance hypocrites attach to trifling things. On a certain Sabbath day, the Lord passes through a wheat field with His disciples who pluck some heads of grain, rub them in their hands to separate the grain from the chaff and then eat the grain. At once the hypocritical Pharisees find fault and accuse the whole lot of committing a sin. They say, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" They do not find fault in the mere act of picking the heads of grain; this action was sanctioned by the Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 23:25. In their theology, the supposed fault breaks the fourth commandment; they have worked on the Sabbath by using their hands to gather and eat a handful of food.

Each week twelve consecrated loaves of bread called the Bread of the Presence, which represent the twelve tribes of Israel, were placed on a table in the Temple. After its use in the Temple, the bread could be eaten only by priests. Jesus, accused of Sabbath-breaking, refers to a well-known story concerning David and his men in I Samuel 21:1-6. On one occasion, when fleeing from Saul, David and his men ate the consecrated Bread of the Presence because their need for food outweighed the importance of the ceremonial regulations. Jesus appeals to the same principle; basic human need often outweighs human regulations and rules. By comparing Himself and his disciples with David and his men, Jesus causes the religious leaders to consider the idea that if they condemn Jesus, they must also condemn David.

The exaggerated zeal of the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath does not extend to other clear commands of God. Obviously, from many instances in the Gospels, these same men who pretend such strictness on one little point are more than lax and even indifferent about other points of infinitely greater importance. While they stretch the commandment about the Sabbath beyond its true meaning, they openly trample on the tenth commandment by being notoriously covetous as in Luke 16:14, a precise characteristic of the hypocrite. To use the Lord's illustration, in some things the Pharisee makes a great fuss about straining a gnat from his cup, while in other matters he swallows a camel.

The state of anyone's soul swells with danger when secondary principles of religion occupy the first place, and the first things, ordained by God, fall below those things ordained by man. Equally, the Son of Man and the Lord of the Sabbath means what they always mean in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The words Lord of the Sabbath were never meant to imply that the Lord, by virtue of His divine authority, would alter, abrogate or water down the law of the fourth commandment. The Lord of the Sabbath intends to deliver the Sabbath from Jewish traditions and protect it from superstitious views used in its observance and to show the true spirit and manner with which the Lord intends it to be kept. When Jesus says He "is Lord of the Sabbath," He means that He has the authority to overrule the Pharisees' traditions and regulations because He had created the Sabbath, rightly placing the Creator above and greater than His creation.

### **The Healing of the Withered hand on the Sabbath**

Luke 6:6-11

**Luke 6:6** On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. <sup>7</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely *to see* if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find *reason* to accuse Him. <sup>8</sup> But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" <sup>10</sup> After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did *so*; and his hand was restored. <sup>11</sup> But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

In verse 6, Luke indicates the passing of another week. Once again, Luke presents Jesus in the Synagogue on another Sabbath where He finds a man with a withered right hand. Notice that Luke carefully records the scribes and Pharisees as they closely watch Jesus. What do the scribes and Pharisees want to see?" They want to see if Jesus will heal this man on the Sabbath. They want a reason to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing and bring Him before the Sanhedrin. Jesus knows their reason for being there and heals the man anyway. But before He heals the man He asks the scribes and the Pharisees a question, "*is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm, to save a life, or to destroy it?*"

Here, Jesus creates the opportunity to teach the scribes and Pharisees about the Sabbath. This teaching sets Jesus on a collision course with the traditions of the Pharisees concerning the fourth commandment. According to the law, can an act of mercy be performed on the Sabbath? In front of all the scribes and Pharisees the Lord heals the man knowing that His enemies see His every move and hear His every word. Boldly, He asserts His right to perform a deed of mercy even on the day when the Law says you should not perform any work. The fourth commandment was never meant to inflict injury on anyone. It never meant to forbid people from showing kindness on the Sabbath to the afflicted or attending to the needs of the sick.

## The Chosen Twelve from the Disciples

Luke 6:12-19

**Luke 6:12** It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: <sup>14</sup> Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; <sup>15</sup> and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; <sup>16</sup> Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. <sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. <sup>19</sup> And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing *them* all.

We must not speed past this passage without seeing an important fact. The prevailing thought that Jesus selected the twelve Apostles as He made His journeys around the countryside; however, He did not. In this passage, we see Jesus calling many to be His disciples and on this specific occasion, He gathers all the disciples together on the mountainside and selects the twelve men that He calls His Apostles.

Brothers	Simon Peter Andrew
Brothers	James John
Brothers	Matthew (Levi), the son of Alphaeus James, the son of Alphaeus Judas (Thaddeus), the son of Alphaeus
Individuals	Philip Bartholomew Thomas Simon, the Zealot Judas Iscariot

The chosen twelve, selected as apostles from vast numbers of men and women who were with Jesus that day on the mountainside, join Him on a level area where He charges them with their duties. Afterward, Jesus begins to heal those who need Him with just one touch.

## The Beginning of the Sermon on the Mount

Luke 6:20-26

**Luke 6:20** And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He *began* to say, "Blessed *are* you *who are* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> "Blessed *are* you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed *are* you who weep now, for you shall laugh. <sup>22</sup> "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> "Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold,

your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. <sup>24</sup> "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. <sup>25</sup> "Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe *to you* who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup> "Woe *to you* when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

The poor, the hungry, those who weep and those who are hated by men receive the blessing of the LORD. Do not misunderstand the Lord's meaning when He blesses them. Never should we suppose that simply being poor, hungry, sorrowful and hated by men entitles one to a blessing from Jesus. In this case, people in poverty find assistance from the grace of the Lord and their afflictions find help from His gospel. Spiritual poverty, hunger, sorrow and hatred have become the inevitable consequences of faith in Christ at the beginning of Christianity. Jesus desires to give these people comfort and consolation.

Few of our Lord's sayings are more flatly contradictory to the common opinion of the church and the world. What is more common in the world than the love of everyone's praise? To be universally popular is a most unsatisfactory trait, and one which a minister of Christ should always fear. Praise may cause a minister to stray from being faithful in his duty and honest in his declaring all the counsel of God.

## The Subject of Christian Love

Luke 6:27-38

Luke 6:27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. <sup>30</sup> "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. <sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*. <sup>35</sup> "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*. <sup>36</sup> "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup> "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. <sup>38</sup> "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."

These verses focus on one great subject – Christian love. Love stands as the greatest principles of the entire Gospel.

Jesus instructs the disciples and specifically His new Apostles with the first real lesson that He expects them to learn. He answers their question "Whom are we to love?" He tells them to love their enemies! Do good to those who hate you! Bless those who curse you! Pray for those who treat you badly! Their love must be like His love towards sinners! Their

love must be self-sacrificing and self-denying. They must forgo what they know to be right and submit to wrong rather than awaken any angry passion and create a quarrel. In this, they must be like their master in their love.

Luke repeats Jesus' words when He says, "Whoever hits you on the cheek ...." The thoughts in verse 29-30 must be interpreted with scriptural qualifications. They contain strong proverbial forms of expressing a great principle. If we were to press an extreme literal interpretation on them, we would be encouraging theft, burglary, violence, and murder. The earth would be given into the hands of the wicked. On the one hand, the Lord does not mean to forbid the repression of crime, or to declare the office of a magistrate or the police officer unlawful. Nor does he mean to pronounce all war unlawful, or to prohibit the punishment of evildoers or the disturbers of the peace. On the other hand, the Lord condemns everything that contains a revengeful, pugnacious, litigious, or quarrelsome spirit. He forbids dueling or fighting between individuals for the settlement of private wrongs. He commends forbearance, patience and longsuffering even under injuries and insults. He expects His followers to concede much, submit to much and put up with much, rather than cause strife. To return blow for blow and repay anger with anger reflects the behavior of a dog or a heathen, but not of a Christian.

**Romans 12:18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup> Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## **False Teachers**

**Luke 6:39-45**

**Luke 6:39** 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? <sup>40</sup> "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. <sup>41</sup> "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>42</sup> "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. <sup>43</sup> "For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. <sup>44</sup> "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. <sup>45</sup> "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

Great danger comes from listening to false teachers in religion! Such false teachers and their listeners become the blind leading the blind. Jesus asks the question "Will not both fall into a pit?" It is a good question worth answering. Jesus warns His followers by declaring that a disciple is not above his teacher. When a person hears unsound instruction, he will become unsound in his faith. No one can calculate the amount of evil unsound teaching has

brought on the church. Souls have been senselessly lost because a teacher does not know the way to heaven and cannot lead followers to that blissful place. To escape the danger of listening to false teachers, we must test all teaching with the Holy Scriptures; therefore, "Beware of the false prophets...!"

**Matthew 7:15** "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Paul says 'Examine everything...!'

**1 Thessalonians 5:21** But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;

John states:

**1 John 1:4** These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

If people trust blind guides, they must not be surprised if they are led into the pit; however, the blindness of a teacher or minister is no excuse for the darkness of the people. We are accountable for our choices.

### **Week and Strong Foundation**

Luke 6:46-49

**Luke 6:46** "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? <sup>47</sup> "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup> "But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

It has been said, with much truth, that no sermon should conclude without some personal application to the consciences of the listeners. This passage is no different and the Lord is setting the example. It is a heart-searching conclusion to a most solemn message.

In Luke 6:46 Jesus says, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like." The Son of God Himself had a vast multitude of followers by this time and some are just playing the game and pretending to honor Him, but He knows their hearts. He also knows that they have not obeyed His commands. The Lord exposes an evil which still exists in the church to this day.

**James 1:21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Can it be said that professing without practice has destroyed the Lord's work in tens of thousands of souls?