

(Through the Bible) Luke 5-6

by Chuck Smith

Jesus' ministry is characterized by obedience, faith, and trust, and He calls His followers to leave their nets and follow Him.

Duration: 1:29:52

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-7, Luke 5:39 - 6:1, Luke 6:17-19

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Faith And Trust"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of simple obedience to the command of Jesus. He uses the story of Simon and his fishing boats to illustrate how success can come from following Jesus' instructions. The speaker also highlights the tendency of humans to focus on the flaws of others instead of examining their own faults. He encourages forgiveness and generosity, explaining that giving is a spiritual law that will result in blessings. The sermon concludes with a reminder to trust in God's provision and to be willing to step out in faith.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Luke's Gospel, chapter 5. The popularity of the ministry of Jesus is growing. Word is being spread around of the miracles that are being wrought by Him. And now wherever He goes, people are beginning to jostle and shove in order that they might get close to Him.

It made it difficult for Jesus to travel, to get around, because of the multitudes that, according to Mark's Gospel, at this point were thronging Him wherever He went. And so, here in Luke's Gospel, it came to pass that as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God. And that to me is always an exciting situation when people are pressing to hear the Word of God.

When this becomes such a priority in the lives of people to just hear the Word of God, they press to hear it. That He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, also known as the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee. Whenever you talk about a sea, somehow in my mind you get a vision of a sort of a salt body of water, but the Lake of Gennesaret, or the, it's actually to me more of a lake than it is the sea, is not salty water, but is fresh water, drinkable, and so yet it is known as the Sea of Galilee or the Lake of Gennesaret.

There were two ships that were standing by the lake, but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and he prayed him that he

would thrust out a little from the land, and he sat down and taught the people out of the ship. So in order to escape a little from the crowd that was thronging him, he commandeered Simon's ship.

He got in it, and he said, pull on out a little ways, in order that he might be able to teach the people without them pressing so close that he loses the sight of those that were behind. Now here in the area by Capernaum, there is sort of a good slope where the Sea of Galilee comes down, or where the banks come down into the Sea of Galilee there, so that just pulling out just a little ways from shore, you're sort of in an amphitheater type of a situation, which made it very conducive to teach the multitude of people who were thronging to hear the Word of God. Now when he was finished speaking to them, he then said to Simon, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft, for a load.

You're going to be pulling in a large catch. And so, Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing. Nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

Simon is objecting to the command in a polite sort of a way. Lord, I'm the fisherman. I know how to fish, and I know the time to fish.

And I know that the time isn't now. As the day gets warmer, the fish go to the deeper areas of the lake. And these nets were not really deep water nets.

They're sort of surface nets. They have the floats on the top, and they just cast them out as they are rolling around in a circle in the boat. And then as they complete the circle with the boat, having cast the nets around in the circle, then they pull the nets on into the boat.

And they are not deep water type nets. They would catch the fish in the shallower areas in the cooler part of the day or in the evening, which was usually the best time for fishing. So, they've been fishing all night, caught nothing.

So, you assume that this just isn't the time. Yet, nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net. Now, this to me is interesting because here we find men laboring all night with no results.

Now, suddenly, Jesus directs them to labor in the same area, and they have phenomenal results. And to me, this marks the contrast that usually exists in those efforts that are on our own and those efforts that are directed by the Lord. I think of all of the time and energy and money that is wasted by man-inspired efforts.

We see a task that needs to be done. We sit down and figure out what would be the best way to accomplish this task. We develop our programs, and then we develop the financing in order that we might fund the programs that we have devised.

And then we set up the committees, and we set up the ways by which we might implement that program. And certainly, in the church of Jesus Christ, we have seen some remarkably phenomenal programs established by man. We have some friends who were pastoring a church in the same denomination that we served for so many years where we got packaged programs from the denomination.

Quite convenient. You didn't even have to think of them. They thought of them for you.

All you had to do is get your committees and inaugurate them. And so in this, and of course every year you get two of them. You get your spring enlargement program, and then you get the Beat the Summer

Slump program.

And so this church was going to go all out. I mean, they had everything all lined out. You'd take a telephone book, and you'd cut up the pages, and each person takes a page of the telephone book, and they call all of the people on that page inviting them to church.

And then, of course, you have a person over that that calls everybody who's supposed to be calling people to make sure they've called the people they were supposed to call, you know. And then they filled helium balloons with numbers. And you turn them loose upwind from the city so that the balloons sort of drop down.

And so the numbers are then put in a barrel, and a person draws the number. And if you bring the number out of your helium, you know, it has a little note telling you there's going to be a drawing special prize if you're there and get the number, you know. So you get the, you know, people coming with their numbers so that they might get into the drawing and perhaps win this special prize that will be given away when the number is drawn out of the barrel.

And then, of course, you organize your transportation committees that if a person needs transportation, they'll drive out and pick them up and bring them to church and all. And I mean, it goes on and on and on. I mean, so many gimmicks you can't believe.

And so this particular church thought, well, we're going to really go into this, you know, big program. We're going to go full bore into it. And so I was talking to the pastor some six months after the program.

And I said, well, now it's been six months since the program was concluded. As you evaluate the results of the program, how many have you been able to add permanently to your church? And they said, well, there is an 85 year old man that we have to drive 25 miles to pick up and he really can't hear, but he doesn't get to see people very much. So he just loves to sit around where people are.

And he's the only one we were able to add to the membership, you know, after spending thousands of dollars and all of these programs to add to the church. There's man's way of doing it. And then there's the Lord's way.

Non-directed service can be very unfruitful, but directed service can be exciting. Now Jesus is directing Peter just launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft. And Peter, semi arguing, says, Lord, we've been fishing all night and we've caught nothing.

Nevertheless, at thy word, you know, you insist on him. We'll do it. Not really expecting anything because of his experience.

How many times I have met people who are discouraged because of bad experiences. How many times when we have suggested a solution to a person's problem, they'll immediately respond. Oh, I tried that.

But did you try it at the Lord's direction or did you try it on your own initiative? Makes a difference when the Lord directs you to do a thing. You can be sure when the Lord is directing your service that your service for the Lord will not be in vain. So when they had done this, they enclosed a great multitude of fish and their net began to break.

So they signaled to their partners, which were James and John, who were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and they filled both of the ships so that they began to sink. Success beyond their wildest dreams by simple obedience to the command of Jesus.

Now, the result of the success to me is significant. When we have devised programs and we've put in all of the human energy and the human effort, and we begin by the human effort to gain a response. You've got something that is working.

You've got something that is attracting people. What do you do with it? You franchise it. You carry it out other places.

You develop your success seminars and you invite others to come and learn how to bait your hook to make your lure more attractive so you can gather more fish. But when it is the Lord doing the work rather than developing your success seminars and being all puffed up over what's been accomplished like Peter, you just sort of fall at the knees of Jesus and say, Lord, I'm not worthy. Depart from me, Lord.

I'm a sinful man. Suddenly you're aware of God's work. You're aware of God's power.

You're aware of the presence of God and that is always a humbling experience. No man who has stood in the presence of God can be proud. Standing in the presence of the Lord, conscious presence of the Lord, is always a very humbling experience.

Depart from me, Lord, Peter said. I'm a sinful man. And he was astonished and all those that were with him at the draft of the fishes which they had taken.

And so also was James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, fear not, for from now on you're going to catch men. And so when they brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

The Lord brought them to the peak to the ultimate of success in their chosen profession and then called them to leave it, to follow him. Their little ships rowing to shore, weighted down in the water by the load of fish, the dream of every Galilean fisherman. And from that point of success, the Lord says, now from now on you're going to catch men.

And they left all and followed Jesus. Now, in the other Gospels, they do not give us the background to the call of Peter and John. And it would appear from the other Gospels that Jesus was just walking by the Sea of Galilee and he saw some fishermen mending their nets and he said, come, take up your cross and follow me or come, leave your nets and follow me.

And they dropped their nets and followed Jesus without even knowing him or seeing him. That is not so. These men had already experienced the Lord.

They knew the Lord. Jesus wasn't a stranger to them. They knew him.

Now he is calling them to a complete commitment in following him. Now it came to pass when he was in a certain city. Behold, the man was full of leprosy, who seeing Jesus fell on his face and begged him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

And he put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. He's going to give us a list of some of the miracles that Jesus was accomplishing, sort

of a variety of miracles.

The one directing them in catching the fish, sort of a miracle in nature. Now the miracle of the curing of an incurable disease. Leprosy was one of the most dreaded and loathsome diseases in the ancient world.

If a person had leprosy, he was to be ostracized from the community. Nobody could touch him. If they touched him, you would be unclean.

Jesus touched him. Now, in another case, when Jesus healed leprosy, he did not touch them. Jesus did not confine himself to a particular pattern in doing his work, and I'm glad for that because we so often are trying to find the formula as though it existed within a formula.

Jesus said, the wind bloweth where it listeth. You hear the sound thereof, but you can't really tell from whence it is coming or where it is going, and so is he that is born of the Spirit. God does not confine himself to our patterns, to our methods, to our ways.

In seminary, we had a class in methodology. As always, man is seeking to develop the methods or to learn the methods by which God works, but the interesting thing is that God doesn't work by any particular method. There are diversities of gifts and diversities of operations, yet it's the same Lord.

So there are different gifts, but even with the same gift, there are different ways by which that gift operates within the individual. The Holy Spirit dividing to each man severally as he wills, and so he always maintains the control of the method and the work which is to be done. At best, I can only be an instrument through which God does work.

So here we find Jesus touching the man, and the interesting question is, if thou wilt, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. So often when we pray, we say now, Lord, if it is your will, and I'm not putting that down. I feel that we should that that whether I say it or not is an underlying fact in every prayer that I ever offered to God.

I don't want my will to be done above God. Now, God, you set your will aside because this is what I want you to do. You know, the purpose of prayer is never the accomplishing of my will, except as my will has been molded and shaped and conformed to his will.

Always the purpose of prayer, the thrust of prayer, is the will of God, the accomplishing of the will of God upon the earth. And we need to remember that. Jesus said, nevertheless, not what I will, but thy will be done.

And that was at the end of the prayer. After he'd offered his request, then he made that statement. And that's not a bad statement for us to make.

After laying out to God the things that we desire, I think it is always wise to just say, but Lord, not what I will, but your will be done. Now, quite often, the Lord is willing to do those things that we desire. When he said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean, Jesus said, I'm willing, be thou made clean.

And he touched him and he was cured of his leprosy immediately. Now, in the case of the ten lepers that came to Jesus, he didn't touch them and they were healed as they went. In the case of this fellow, he was healed immediately.

Again, diversities of operations. He doesn't always work the same way. Now, the problem that would develop if he worked the same way is that if it didn't happen to me the way it happened to you, then I think, oh, God's not doing it for me.

So God keeps his ways diverse so that when I relate to you what God has done in my life, you then don't look for my experience that I have with God, but you look for your own personal experience. For God does not pattern himself in his work in our lives. And he may work in you in a totally different way.

And your reaction may be completely different than my reaction to the work of God. There is a value to testimony meetings, but there is always a problem with testimony meetings. Because through testimony meetings, so oftentimes we seek then to have a similar experience to someone else.

And the emphasis in the testimony meetings seems always to be experiential or you know, this is the way I experienced it. This is how God did it for me. This is what God did for me.

And then I begin to think, oh, well, God didn't do it for me that way, you know, and there must be something wrong with me because I didn't feel that, you know. I didn't see the lights flashing. I didn't get the tingling down my spine.

I guess maybe, you know, I don't have it because I didn't experience it like someone else. So God keeps working in a variety of ways so that we don't try to pattern God after our methods. So he was healed immediately.

Now, Jesus said to him, don't tell anybody, but just go and show yourself to the priest. A marvelous thing about the law of God, the book of Leviticus, is that God in the law provided the way by which a person of a incurable disease could be returned into society and into fellowship in the worship of God when he was cured of the incurable disease. Now that I really, I like that because God left himself space to work.

And this is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. This is the method by which he is to be restored into the full fellowship of the family. And yet, leprosy is incurable even to the present day.

Leprosy is incurable. It can be arrested and they can be brought to an arrested state now in what they call the Hansen's disease. But it is still incurable and it was incurable then and yet God made provision for him to work sovereignly even in incurable situations.

God always left himself that space to put into operation his higher laws that supersede the natural laws as we know them. So Jesus said, you know, take and follow the law, go show yourself to the priest and of course the priest would examine him, would see no white flesh, would see the area where the leprosy was all pink and new flesh and so he would set him in a house where he'd have to be for seven days and then he comes back and shows himself to the priest again, he examines him, doesn't find anything and then the fellow brings two doves and the one dove is killed and the blood is poured with water into a basin and the second dove is taken and immersed in this bloody water and set free and the second dove flying off the bloody water dripping off his wings as he takes off is a symbol of the disease being taken from the man and his full restoration now into the community. Can you imagine, can you imagine the emotions that a leper must have felt when he saw that dove flying away and suddenly he realized that he could be restored completely and fully into society.

Here he was hopelessly ostracized because of this loathsome, incurable disease and yet he always knew God has wrought a work. So Jesus told him, go and do what the law tells you to do, show yourself to the

priest, but Jesus could not hide. More and more people were hearing of the miracles that were being accomplished and the crowds were coming and thronging and he healed them and they came actually to be healed of their infirmities.

Verse 16 And Jesus withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. As we pointed out last week as we were studying the gospel of Luke the week before, Jesus, the humanity of Jesus is the thing that Luke points out. The son of man, the human side and because this is the particular emphasis of Luke's gospel, Luke makes more mention of the prayer life of Christ than any of the other gospels.

Luke gives us insight into the prayer life of Christ and so here again he shows us, he gives us a little insight into that prayer life of Jesus our Lord. Now all I can say is that if Jesus as the son of God felt the necessity of prayer, who do you think you are that you can get by without prayer? If he being the son of God felt it such a necessary part of his life, surely it ought to be a very necessary and considered to be a very necessary part of all of our lives. Again, the mystery of heaven I am certain is that men pray so little.

I'm sure the angels discuss this all the time. When they watch and observe us going through all of our calamities, all of our troubles and they're just waiting to be dispatched to help us and they watch and we, you know, we get knocked down and bloodied and we stand up and get knocked over again and I'm sure the angels say, well when is that not going to call? How long is he going to go on until he cries out for help? If he only knew what God has made available to him. The mystery of the prayerlessness of infirmed man.

Now it came to pass on a certain day as he was teaching that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and I like this and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. Now Jesus had begun to attract the notice and the attention of a hostile crowd. The Pharisees, the doctors of the law and they were coming all the way from Jerusalem up to the area of the Galilee because they heard of him and their purpose of coming was really of being more critical than accepting.

Here is a rising movement, a spiritual movement among the people. Now they have pretty well set themselves in a comfortable position as religious leaders. Here is a threat to them.

They must come up and listen carefully and examine him so that they can contradict him and show where he is at fault and to dispel any idea that this man might truly be of God and possibly the Messiah. While they were there, the power of the Lord was present to heal. And behold men brought in a bed a man which was taken with palsy and they sought a means to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.

But when they could not find a way that they might bring him in because of the multitude, they climbed up on the roof and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And so you can get the picture. This Jesus is sitting there in the house and and the people are all gathered.

The multitude is gathered around and suddenly there's a noise up on the roof and the tiles are being pulled back and then the ropes and here's this guy being let down right in front of Jesus. These guys are ingenious. I admire them.

I really do. They're determined. They've got a friend.

They want help for him and they're determined to get help. Now I'll tell you those are the kind of buddies you need. And so they come with him to the house carrying him in his bed.

They can't get in and so you know they're not to be stopped. And so they let him down. And that was you know good positioning really.

Let him down right in the front of Jesus. And when he saw their faith not the faith of the fellow that was let down. The faith of his friends that brought him.

That's great to be surrounded by friends who believe. And he saw their faith. He said to him man your sins are forgiven.

Now I imagine the guys up on the roof said no no no Lord that's not what we want. We want him to walk home you know. So often in their minds illness was related to sin.

You remember when the disciples were with Jesus and they saw the blind man. They said Lord who did sin that this man was born blind. Now they even believed in prenatal sins.

While you're in the womb you could sin. I don't know how but they believed that you could. So was it his parents or was it him.

Did he do some sin in the womb that he was born blind. Or was it his parents. And Jesus said no no no.

This man he didn't really answer why he was born blind. He just said that God may be glorified. I must do the works of God while I am with you.

And he healed the man. He never told them why the man was born blind. People misinterpret that saying well he was born blind for the glory of God to be revealed.

No. Jesus just said that he must work to glorify God and thus he healed the man. Never answered the question.

Except that he affirmed that neither he nor his parents sinned. He affirmed that it wasn't their sin. But they so often related illnesses to sin.

Which we haven't really divorced ourselves from that completely yet. And it's tragic that when we see a person who is suffering we say oh you must have really done something wrong you know. We were pastoring a church in Tucson years ago and one of the fellows in the church said he stood up and he said would you please pray for my wife tonight that God will help her to confess whatever sin she's been committing.

She's been sick for over a month you know. And so that idea that somehow illness is related to sin is not completely divorced from the minds of people. If illnesses were directly related to sin none of us would be strong enough to be here tonight.

And is it extremely wrong and extremely cruel to say to a person well if you just had enough faith you'd be alright. I was talking with Johnny Erickson and she was saying one of the most difficult things about her condition is that there are so many people who feel that they have a special anointing for her healing. And you know these evangelists and whatever who come up and lay hands on her and then say now stand up you know and then sort of say well if you only had enough faith you know you could get out of that wheelchair.

And that's one of the most difficult problems that she faces with her condition. That's cruel. It makes a hardship on her.

She's already in a difficult position but that only increases the hardship. Making a person feel guilty because they're in the condition that they're in because surely you must have done something wrong or you don't have enough faith to change your condition. Some of the greatest saints of God have had great physical maladies and actually it was the physical malady that created that depth of character and that depth of their walk and relationship with the Lord.

Jesus took care of the most important thing first. You know it's more important that your sins are forgiven than that you be healed. It's better to go into heaven maimed than to go whole into hell.

So Jesus took care of the most important thing first was the man's sins. Man your sins are forgiven. Of course he was knowing that the Pharisees and all were there watching and listening.

He was baiting them. I mean he just he was looking for a big blow up which he got and he was deliberately just baiting them. He knew what their response would be.

He anticipated it and he was deliberately creating it and the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason saying who is this which speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? Now they were right in their assumption. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus wanted them to make that assumption.

They were falling right into his trap. They were wrong in thinking that Jesus was speaking blasphemous. What Jesus was actually demonstrating to them was that he was God.

So in saying man your sins are being your sins are forgiven you. He is exercising his divine prerogative of forgiving sins knowing that only God can forget sins. David said unto God Lord against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this great sin in thy sight.

Thus if sin is against God then only God can forgive sin and Jesus was deliberately seeking to get this response and reaction which he did get and then he closed the trap. He said unto them what are you reasoning in your hearts? What is easier to say your sins are forgiven you or rise up and walk? Well it would be easier to say your sins are forgiven you. If you say rise up and walk you say your sins are forgiven.

You know who can look in a guy's heart and really see? I mean you can say that but how do you know it's really happened? How can you prove that the sins were really forgiven? How can you prove that your words really have authority? You can't prove it. There's nothing that you can see that can prove the authority of that. However if you say to a fellow who is lame rise up and walk it's very easy to quickly see how much authority you have in your words.

So Jesus said unto them but you may know that the son of man has the authority upon earth to forgive sins. He said to the man who was sick of a palsy I say unto you arise take up your couch and go home and immediately he rose up before them. He took up that whereon he was laying and he departed to his own house glorifying God and they were all amazed and they glorified God and were filled with fear saying we've seen some weird things today.

Now Jesus was here demonstrating to them his divinity doing it in a very clever way saying first to the man your sins are forgiving creating that response. How can you do that? Only God can do that. Only God has

that authority and thus by showing that his word did have authority by saying rise up and walk he is demonstrating to them that he is God.

Now after these things he went forth and he saw a publican now a publican was a tax collector. The Roman government assessed an area with a certain assessment and then they auctioned off the job of tax collector and the tax collector only had to pay to the Roman government that assessment anything he could collect above the assessment was his. So they were constantly looking for things to tax constantly grabbing people and taxing them for many things actually you had to pay a tax just to be alive under the Roman government.

They tax 10% of the fruit of your crop and 20% of your oil and wine. They had taxes on just about everything and you think that our government has been shrewd. All they have to do is read what the Roman government tax and we would really be crying even more than we are.

The people in those days classified tax collectors with murderers and thieves. They probably weren't so far off. Thieves to be sure.

In fact, it was extremely rare to find an honest tax collector. They were notoriously crooked. In fact, there was a monument that was raised.

They found records of a monument extolling a man because he was an honest tax collector. About the only one I guess in the Roman Empire, so much so that they made a special monument to this man. He was an honest tax collector, but that was a rarity indeed.

And so the Jews considered tax collectors quislings because they were really working for the Roman government and they made a law that a tax collector could not enter the synagogue. I mean he was a rank center. There's no way he could come into the synagogue ranking him with the murders and the thieves.

They would not allow him to worship God in the synagogue. Now here was a tax collector named Levi and he was sitting at his little custom house where he received his taxes and Jesus said unto him follow me and he left all, rose up and followed him and Levi had a big feast. Of course, he could afford it.

In his own house and there was a great number, he invited all of his tax collector friends to come and listen to Jesus. All of the publicans, he invited them to gather together and Jesus sat down with them. It's interesting how that when a person comes to a real relationship with Jesus Christ, the first thing they do is they grab their associates to tell them about it.

His associates, the only one that was associated with the tax collector was the tax collector. So in gathering his associates, he had to gather the tax collectors. They only had fellowship with each other.

No one else had fellowship with them. And so he gathered together all of these tax collectors and the scribes and the Pharisees murmured against him. They came to his disciples and they said, why are you eating and drinking with publicans and sinners? You see, a Pharisee, if he came near a tax collector, would grab his robe and hold it tight around him because he wouldn't want his robe to flip out and touch a tax collector because they were considered unclean.

And if he did that, he'd have to go home and bathe and change, you know, wash his cloak. And he couldn't go to synagogue for a day because it was unclean. He was unclean because his cloak touched a tax collector.

Now here is Jesus eating with him. That's even worse in their mind because when you're eating with someone, you're touching the same bread and you're eating bread that that guy touched. How is it you know you're eating with these publicans and sinners eating together was identifying with one another in a very intimate way.

And Jesus, they were murmuring to the disciples, they were bringing their complaints, but Jesus answered them and said, they that are whole need not the physician, but those that are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus went out where they were, met them on their own territory.

He ministered to the sick, those who were sick spiritually. I think that oftentimes in the church we begin to make ourselves sort of sterilized hospitals and we create almost a sterile environment where if the sinner would come in, he feels so totally uncomfortable because we're all sitting here in our sterile robes of righteousness. In England, we have a good friend Jim who pastors a Calvary Chapel affiliate in the area of I think it's Bradford, maybe not, northern part near Manchester.

And Jim's ministry is in the pubs. He goes down to the pubs three or four nights a week and has a tremendous ministry there in the pubs witnessing to the people who are getting drunk. And he's an outstanding witness for Christ.

Oh, he gets a lot of flack from the other ministers in town because he spends so much time in the pub. But he is following the example of the Lord going where they are at to reach them and to bring them out. And so they then brought up the question, why do the disciples of John fast often and they make their prayers and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.

And he said unto them, can you make the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and then shall they fast in those days. In those days when a couple got married, it was a two week party, a week before and a week after. The week before everybody would gather together and they'd have this big week-long party and then they would have the marriage and the consummation of the marriage.

And then they would have open house for a week where they would party for a week and the bride and the bridegroom would be the host of a party for a week and their special friends were invited to party with them for a whole week. Now their lives were extremely difficult and hard and this was probably the only time in their lives where they would have just a week off with doing nothing because they had to work so hard. And so it was that one week of their life of real partying now that they're married and then after that it was to work and to the drudgery of life as it was in those days.

Now those special friends that they invited to celebrate that week and party with them and all were called the children of the bride chamber. And so Jesus called his disciples the children of the bride chamber. The bridegroom was with them.

We're here to party. We're here to enjoy and to celebrate the fact that I'm with them. Now when I am gone then will be time for them to fast.

But as long as the bridegroom is with them you know they there's they're not going to fast. They're going to just enjoy the presence of the bridegroom. Then he spake a parable unto them.

No man puts a piece of a new garment on an old if otherwise then both the new makes a tear and the piece that was taken out of the new does not agree with the old. They didn't have sanferized shrunk in

those days. And so if you take a new patch and sew it into an old garment the first time you washed it the new patch not being pre-shrunk would shrink.

Of course the garment had already been washed enough that all of the shrinkage was out of it. But you put a new cloth into an old garment the new cloth as soon as you wash it would shrink and it just make the tear worse. So Jesus said you just don't put a new patch on an old garment.

It's only going to rip it up more. And also he said no man puts new wine into old bottles. Now when they poured the new wine into the wineskins there was a chemical reaction that created a gas.

So if you would pour the new wine into the old wineskins it would cause it to immediately ferment and this gas would be formed and the old wineskins of course were stiff because they were old. And being stiff no give to them the gas would develop and they'd just pop. And so you just didn't put new wine into the old skins but you put it into new skins that were still soft and pliable.

The gas would develop but it would just expand with the gas because there was a pliability in the leather and the wineskins were made of leather and so Jesus said you don't take the new wine and pour it into the old skins they're going to burst on you. You put the new wine into new skins. And both then are preserved.

And no man having drunk the old wine immediately desires the new for he says the old is better. Now he's talking about the old religious systems that he was coming up against. He's bringing a new breath of air into the religious scene that it becomes so stogy that no one could hardly stand it.

Now rather than coming in to reform that system putting the new cloth in the old garment or putting the new wine in the old skins he's developing a whole new skin for this new work of God. Now those who are used to the old traditional ways are always upset when something new comes along. They say oh the old is better.

And we see this demonstrated so often. New ideas new thoughts are so often immediately rejected. People get caught in their old traditional ways and they get upset if anything should come along.

Well the old wineskins burst. Chuck won one. Blessed are the flexible they shall not be broken.

May God keep us flexible. As I grow older I know the tendency is to get set in your ways. And I pray God don't let me grow old in that regard.

Help me to always be open to what you might want to be doing. I have observed in the history of the church however how many times when God wanted to do a fresh work upon the earth he had to go outside of the organized systems. Because the old skin couldn't handle the new wine.

And so we see this glorious fresh work of God. But he had to create a new skin in order to do it. And those who come from the old systems often are shocked and appalled at what they see.

Kids sitting on the floor. And they just can't handle what God is doing. Because it doesn't follow our structure.

It doesn't fit into our pattern. And all but yet God develops the new skins for his new wine. Now it came to pass on the second Sabbath.

Now he's going to deal with a couple of instances on the Sabbath. We've been introduced now to the Pharisees. They're beginning to really get into it and trying to find fault with Jesus and condemn him for the things he's doing.

And they condemned him for eating with the publicans. He, of course, spoke out against their condemnation. Telling them, hey, you guys are belong, you know, in their old skins.

And so I'm just going to not try and, you know, give you the new wine. We're just going to create a whole new system here. And now Luke points out a couple of Sabbath day experiences where he crossed the Pharisees.

Came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first. Now that's an interesting way of dating it. We don't know when the first Sabbath was, but on the second Sabbath after the first he was going through the cornfields.

And, of course, that was the wheat. The little thing on the top where all of the grains of wheat are called a corn. And so they were going through the wheat fields and the disciples began to pick these little corns of wheat and they ate them rubbing them in their hands.

Now around the latter part of May when the wheat is turned brown and getting dry. As you are in the area of the Galilee, it is a tremendous. It's called the bread basket of Israel because they grow wheat there and it grows so well.

The winter wheat does so beautifully up there. And so you can take this wheat and you rub it in your hands and then you hold open your hands like this and you blow it. Blowing off the chaff or the husk and then you can eat the wheat and it's extremely healthy.

It as you chew it forms a gum and you can just chew that gum all day or you can swallow it, but it's just very healthy. You're getting the raw fresh wheat and when I'm in Israel in that time of the year, I love to go through the fields and grab the wheat and do just like the disciples. Rub it in my hands and blow the chaff off and eat it and it's just so healthy and so good for you.

Now this was perfectly legal under the law. If you were hungry, you could go into a field and you could eat all that you needed to eat. You just couldn't carry it and can't take a sickle into the field and start harvesting your neighbor's field, but you could eat all that you needed in the field.

So it was perfectly legal for the disciples to go ahead and pick the wheat and rub it in their hands. However, not on the Sabbath day because you weren't to prepare food on the Sabbath day, nor were you to bear a burden and the weight of the wheat would constitute bearing a burden. So they began to find fault with the disciples of Jesus.

Why do you do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days? And Jesus answering and said, Did you not read so much as this that what David did when he was hungry and those that were with him, how he went into the house of God and took the show bread and ate it and gave also to those that were with him, which is not lawful to eat but for the priest alone. David was fleeing from Saul. He had his company of men with him.

He came to the house of God. He asked the priest for something to eat and he said, Well, I don't have anything. You know, they said, I'll take the show bread here.

Now it was not lawful for any man to eat the show bread, but the priest they were twelve loaves of bread that they set out on the table before the Lord representative of the twelve tribes of Israel and God's presence among the twelve tribes and they would leave it out there on the table for seven days and then the priest would eat it. Well, David came along. He was hungry.

His men were hungry when the priest said, I don't have anything to eat. David says, All right, I'll just take the show bread. And so he took the show bread and he ate it and he gave it to his men to eat.

Not lawful to do. However, human need transcends not grass, but it transcended. Thank you.

It transcended the law. Human need. Now the disciples had a human need.

Hungry. They were hungry going through the field. So they did what David did in essence.

The human need transcended the law and they ate and Jesus said that the Son of Man is Lord. Also, I rule over the Sabbath to fellows. So it came to pass on another Sabbath.

He was in Capernaum and he entered into the synagogue and he was teaching and there was a man whose right hand was withered. Now Matthew and Mark both tell us about this incident. Only Luke tells us it was the right hand.

But remember, Luke is a doctor and so he's interested in details of a person's problems physically. And so he's careful to note it was the right hand that was withered and the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath day that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts and he said to the man that had a withered hand, rise up and stand here in the middle.

And so the man stood up and Jesus said unto them. I'm going to 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? Now, if you were asked that question, how would you answer it on the Sabbath days is it lawful to do good or to do evil? When is it ever lawful to do evil? When is it ever lawful to destroy a life? So really they couldn't answer Jesus.

And looking around upon them all, he said to the man, stretch forth your hand. And he did so and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness, not gladness.

They were insane with their anger and they began to commune with one another what they might be able to do with Jesus. He's really beginning to irritate them now. We see suddenly how ludicrous their position is becoming.

And when your position becomes untenable because it is so ludicrous, then the only thing you can do is revert to violence. You know, you're whipped. Better fight.

You know, you don't have any reason. You don't have any, you know, you've been wiped out. And so what do you do? You fight because there's no reason to your position any longer.

So it should be noted that when Jesus said, stretch forth your hand, he was making of that man an impossible demand. The man could have argued. He could have said, Lord, I can't stretch forth my hand.

It's withered. Can't you see? I've never been able to use this hand. You think if I could stretch forth my hand, I would just have it hanging here by my side all the time.

And he could very easily have argued with Jesus and said, well, I just can't do it, sir. I wish I could, but I just can't do it because Jesus was making an impossible demand on him when he said, stretch forth your hand. However, rather than arguing with Jesus, he tried to obey him when Jesus said, stretch forth your hand.

He tried to obey him. Hey, all of a sudden he found that he could obey, but that's impossible. I can't do that.

But there it is. Jesus made an impossible command or demand of him. He chose to obey.

And in the very choosing to obey, the Lord immediately gave him all that was necessary to obey. Now, your problem is you're standing and arguing. Jesus is making impossible demands on you.

He's saying, be perfect. Even as my father in heaven is Lord, there's no way I can be perfect. You know, you know my question and you're arguing, aren't you? Jesus is saying, be strong.

Well, Lord, you think if I could be strong, I'd be wallowing in this weakness that I haven't and going through all of this misery. Jesus is saying, have victory. Lord, you think of how I want victory and on your arguing rather than obeying the moment you will to obey the command of Jesus Christ as impossible as it may seem.

In that very moment, he will give to you all that is necessary for you to fulfill that command. He does not command you to do anything but what he will not empower you and enable you to do it. If you will only will to obey.

I love it. Now, it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray again. Luke's giving us the inside of the prayer life of Jesus.

And he continued all night in prayer. You men that spend the all night vigils here in the prayer room, you know who is there with you every night? The Lord, he said, were two or three are gathered together in my name. I'm there.

He was used to praying all night. You're in good company. He spent the night in prayer.

Why? Because the next day he was going to be making some very important decisions from those disciples that were following him. He was going to choose 12 to be called apostles. Jesus prayed before important decisions were to be made.

I think that that is a tremendous example for us and we would be very wise to follow it when we have important decisions to make to spend some time in prayer seeking God's guidance in those decisions. So, when the day came, he called unto him his disciples. And from them he chose 12 whom he also named apostles.

And he gives us the name of the 12. Simon, who he also named Peter, Andrew, his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot, and Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor. And he came down with them and stood in the plain and the company of his disciples and a great multitude of people out of Judea and Jerusalem and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases.

So now he is drawing people not only from the south, the area of Judah and Jerusalem, but they're coming from the coastal northern areas of Tyre and Sidon to hear him and to be healed. And they were and they that were vexed with unclean spirits and they were healed and the whole multitude sought to touch him for there went virtue out of him and he healed them all. It is interesting that this declaration and of course, here you're talking a doctor is talking to you again, a physician, Luke talking about virtue going out of Jesus.

But it is interesting to me that this follows his night in prayer that this power. Now this dimension virtue begins to go out of it and people were coming up and touching him in order to be healed and he lifted up his eyes. And now from here to the end of the chapter, we have an abbreviated version of the Sermon on the Mount Matthew five, six and seven.

We have a longer version. There are some differences enough that some teachers do not believe that this is actually the Sermon on the Mount, but just another sermon in which Jesus touched many of the points that he touched in the Sermon on the Mount. There is enough difference that does support that particular theory.

So he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and he said, blessed be poor or yours is the kingdom of God. You may be poor in this earth and on this earth standards, but hey, you're blessed because the kingdom of God belongs to you. Blessed are you that hunger now you will be filled.

Blessed are you that weep now you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men shall hate you when they will separate you from their company and shall reproach you and cast out your name is evil for the son of man's sake. For my sake, Jesus said, rejoice in that day and leap for joy.

Now, I haven't seen any of you leaping for joy because someone was speaking against you at your job and got you in trouble and they only did it because you were a Christian. I've counseled a lot of people with long faces. They've come in just discouraged, defeated, ready to quit because of the trials they were going through at the job because they were a Christian.

Oh, you can't believe the hassle I've gotten this week. My foreman, he's really upset and all this kind of stuff. The Lord said, hey, when that happens, leap for joy.

Rejoice. Why? Because your reward in heaven is great. For in the same manner did they treat the prophets, but woe unto you who are rich for you have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full, you will be hungry. Woe unto you that laugh now, you're going to mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men speak well of you because this is how they treated the false prophets that I send to you, which here love your enemies.

Do good to those that hate you. Bless those that curse you. Pray for those that despitefully use you.

Now, suddenly Jesus is giving us a bunch of impossible commands. I'm ready to argue. Lord, how can I love my enemies? No way I can love my enemies.

And I don't want to do good to those that hate me. And I don't want to bless those that curse me. These are unnatural commands.

They irritate me. I find myself arguing with them. I really do.

I find myself arguing with these commands. Now, as long as I'm arguing with them, I'm going to always have a withered hand. I'm never going to change.

I'll always be trying to get even. I'll always be after the eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth. And seeking revenge.

And being eaten up by ulcers. But if I'll just will to obey God, I'm willing to love, but you're going to have to do it. I can't do it.

Well, if I'm willing, I will find that He will do all for me that is necessary for me to obey that command. My part is to be willing to obey. Not to argue with it, but just be willing to obey.

And in that willingness, you'll discover the secret of victory. And the Lord will give to you the capacity and the power to obey the commands that he has given. Now, he that will smite you on the one cheek or from the other.

And if he takes away your cloak, don't forbid him to take your coat also. For every man that asks of thee give. And to him who takes away your goods, don't ask for them again.

And as you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Now, so many of the teachers have put this in the negative. Don't do to anybody what you don't want done to you.

It was a very common thing. Hallel, Confucius and all of them had said something similar to this. But it was always negative.

You know, whatever is distasteful to you and you don't want done to you, just don't do that to someone else. A good rule to follow. Jesus put it in the positive sense.

Hey, not just a negative. Not just not hitting him because you don't want him to hit you. But he put it in the positive sense.

Whatever you would like people to do you, do that to them. How would you like them to treat you? When you've made a mistake, you want them to be kind and understanding and sympathetic. All right? That's the way you should be to them.

When they've made a mistake, kind, sympathetic and understanding. How you would like people to treat you, that's the way you are to treat them, Jesus said. And so he turns it from a negative to a positive.

And so it leads us into actual positive actions rather than just refraining from negative things. For if you love those which love you, so what? Sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those which do good to you, so what? Sinners do the same thing.

If you lend to those of whom you're hoping to receive a return, so what? Sinners also lend in order that they might get as much again. But, love your enemies, do good, lend hoping for nothing again, that your reward shall be great and you shall be the children of the highest. For he is kind to everyone, the unthankful, the evil.

Be ye therefore merciful as your father also is merciful. Now again, we find ourselves arguing, don't we? But these are commands of the Lord. Rather than argue, let's choose and will to obey.

Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and hear the law of giving. Give. It's a principle, it's a law.

We've learned to observe natural laws and live by them and profit from them. But we ought also to learn the spiritual laws and this is a spiritual law. It works.

You say, I don't know how it can work. I don't either, but I know it does. Give and it shall be given unto you.

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you meet it out, it will be measured to you again. Paul said, if you sow sparingly, you're going to reap sparingly.

If you sow bountifully, you're going to reap bountifully. Whatever measure you meet, it shall be measured to you. So in the giving, the Lord will give back to you in whatever measure you give.

However, he'll give back more because he'll give out good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. And so he speaks a parable. Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall in the ditch? And the disciple is not above his master, but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master.

And why do you behold the moat, the sliver that is in your brother's eye, and you don't perceive the beam, the four by six that is in your own eye? And I'm sure Jesus said this with a smile because it gives you a good picture of some guy with a four by six in his eye trying to pull a sliver out of his neighbor's eye. And so I'm sure that this was said with a smile and all. But oh, how typical it is of us, those who are so critical, ready to find fault with the next person, ready to point out their flaws and their weaknesses.

But oh, God help us. There is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that it ill behooves any of us to speak of the rest of us. You know, the Lord is saying, clean up your own act.

How can you say to your brother, brother, let me take this sliver out of your eye when you can't behold the four by six that is in your own eye? You hypocrite. First take the beam out of your own eye and then you'll be able to see clearly to pull the sliver that is in your brother's eye. For a good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit.

Neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. And every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs.

You don't go out and gather figs off of cactus. Nor from a bramble bush do you gather from a tumbling weed. You don't gather grapes.

Everything brings forth after its kind. And thus 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. And all you have to do is stand around and listen to a person's conversation. And it doesn't take long to reveal where their heart is.

Out of the abundance of the heart a man speaks. It comes out. And you know standing around listening to some people is like standing near an open cist pool.

You know what's in their heart. It stinks. And then Jesus asked a very interesting question.

One that we should all be asking ourselves tonight. Why do you call me Lord, Lord? And you do not the things which I say. You see, the title Lord implies mastery.

It implies servant. I'm the servant. He's the Lord.

In our culture, we don't understand what it was to be a slave. To not be able to own anything. To be the total property of another person.

To be required to obey implicitly without question anything that was demanded of you. We independent Americans can't even conceive of this. And so we find it easy to say, oh Lord, oh Lord, you know.

And yet how inconsistent it is if you call Jesus Lord and yet you don't obey. Now he's just given you a lot of things here to consider as far as obedience is concerned. Now, James says be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves.

As we read what Jesus is ideally requiring of us and commanding us to do and to be. And then we say, oh Lord, I don't think I can do that. Oh Lord, there's no way I can do that.

And then he responds, well, why do you call me Lord unless you're going to do the things I command you? You see, if you're not obeying what I am commanding, then I'm really not your Lord. It's exactly what he's saying to you. And so this really does create a cause for great self-examination.

Paul the apostle tells us when we come to the Lord's table, let a man examine himself for if we will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God. And I think that so often we're just prone to slough off some of the commands of Christ that we don't quite agree with or we don't want to go along with. And we pick and choose.

Oh, I like this one. Oh, this is my favorite. Oh, yeah.

You know, well, I don't know about that one. I sort of think that, you know, people interpret things different ways and I have a different interpretation, you know. But if I'm going to use the title of Lord, then I need to take a look at his commands and at least will to obey them, not argue with them, but choose to obey them.

Now, whosoever comes to me and hears my things and does them, I'll show you what he's like. He's like a man which build a house and he dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock and when the flood arose and the stream beat vehemently upon the house, it could not shake it because it was founded on a rock. The importance of digging deep and laying a good foundation for your faith in Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

Too many shallow foundations, too many people just building a superstructure without a foundation. Building on emotions, building on experiences, building on exciting times, building on the glory, glory, hallelujahs. But when the storm comes, if you haven't laid a good foundation on the rock, the house just isn't going to stand.

He that hears and does not is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth against which the stream did beat vehemently and immediately it fell and the ruin of that house is great. Now, both cases were subjected to the test of the storm. The Lord does not promise you immunity from problems, from trials, from hardship.

It's going to come to every man alike. Through life there are going to be difficult things that we're going to have to face that we cannot understand or rationalize as we try to think of a good, loving, just God and try to rationalize our current situation on the basis of a loving, kind, heavenly Father. The storm is going to come.

It'll beat vehemently. And if you haven't taken the time to lay a good foundation, you're going to find the whole system collapsing around you and you'll be swept away. How important we dig deep, that we obey, that we do the things that Jesus commanded.

We practice doing them rather than just arguing with Him telling Him why we can't do them and excusing our blights. He doesn't want you to excuse your condition. He wants you to change from your condition.

You say, I can't do that. That's exactly right. He knows that.

But do it anyhow. For when you will to obey all that you need to obey will be given to you in that moment. God, make us willing.

So we pray. Father, we thank You again for the study of Your Word. Lord, we do want to be doers of Your Word.

As we go back and we again muse on the commandments and we find those that do irritate us, those that grate on us, O God, may we just truly bow our hearts in submission and say, Lord, I can't, but I'm willing. And may we, Lord, receive that ability and capacity from You to be and to do all that You want us to be and to do. Help us, Lord.

We need Your help. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May the Lord bless you, keep you, fill you with His love, His Spirit, His strength, His power. May the Lord enable you as you go forth to do His will, obeying His commandments in Jesus' name.

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