

## ***Luke's Gospel: Chapter 6***

### ***The Sermon on the Plain***

#### ***Jesus Lord of the Sabbath and a man with a withered hand (Luke 6 v 1 to 11)***

To the Pharisees the issue was the keeping of the Sabbath, not stealing. The Law allowed travellers to 'glean' enough grain for a meal (Deuteronomy 23 v 25, Ruth 2 v 2). The disciples' action was a violation of the scribes' traditions, which said that to pluck grain was to 'harvest'. Jesus defended his disciples by reminding the Pharisees of the story of David and his followers in 1 Samuel 21 v 1 to 6, showing that human need is more important than ceremonial rituals...

- By calling himself the 'Son of Man' (v 6), who is Jesus actually claiming to be? See Daniel 7 v 13.
- Is it surprising that the Pharisees were eventually so upset (v 11)?
- The religious leaders saw the man with the withered hand as a test case or as bait for a Sabbath-controversy trap. Notice how Jesus treats the man with compassion. What lessons does Jesus teach here?

#### ***The twelve apostles (Luke 6 v 12 to 16)***

"He went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God" (v 12) – Jesus was about to choose His disciples. In one sense, there was nothing in Jesus' three years of ministry before the cross more important than this. These were the men who would carry on what he had done, and without them, the work of Jesus would never extend through the whole world.

No wonder Jesus gave this an entire night of prayer!

#### ***Strange blessings and strange woes (Luke 6 v 17 to 26)***

Verses 20 to 49 are the 'Sermon on the Plain', so called because in v 17 it says "he came down with them and stood on a level place" (or plain). Like the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew chapters 5 to 7, Jesus begins with 'beatitudes' – in this case there are four 'blessings', followed by four 'woes'.

It is important to remember that this is *not* simply Luke's version of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount: it is a different sermon. Jesus was an itinerant preacher, and such preachers often repeat themselves to different crowds, especially when teaching on a similar topic.

- Given that we live in a world that celebrates (a) getting rich, (b) eating well, (c) having a good time, and (d) being popular, how does Jesus' teaching on 'blessings' and 'woes' challenge us to live differently?

The poor, the hungry, and the weeping can all be 'blessed' because Jesus is here to meet their needs. 'Woe' is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat. The woes Jesus pronounces seem just as paradoxical as his blessings. What does Jesus mean by these strange sayings?

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### ***Love your enemies (Luke 6 v 27 to 36)***

- According to verses 35 and 36, what is the pattern and the source of unselfish love?
- In what practical ways can we demonstrate such love?

### ***Judging others, trees and houses (Luke 6 v 37 to 49)***

- What is Jesus' point in the story of the speck of sawdust and the log of wood (v 41, 42)? How do we fall into this trap? And how do we help someone who has 'gone off the rails'? See Galatians 6 v 1.
- Where do good and evil things come from, and how do they become evident (v 43 to 45)?
- How would you describe the person who lays the foundation of his house "on the rock" (v 48)? What about the person who builds his house "without a foundation" (v 49)? The two houses might look the same from the outside – but what's the difference? What do you think the flooding stream represents? How can we be sure we are building upon a foundation of rock?