



Sabbath Problem, Selection of Apostles, and Sermon Luke 6

Introduction

As Jesus' fame spread, He gathered followers and called disciples. The Pharisees, who were reproved by John the Baptist as hypocrites, began following Jesus to scrutinize His activities, wondering what to make of Him.

Outline of Luke 6

- I. Sabbath Controversies - Luke 6:1-11
- II. Selection of Twelve Apostles - Luke 6:12-16
- III. Sermon on the Plain - Luke 6:17-49

I. Sabbath Controversies - Luke 6:1-11

A. Plucking Grain on the Sabbath - Luke 6:1-5

1. The second Sabbath - 6:1

Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. Which Sabbath was it? There are many theories about which one it was, but the simplest asserts it was the Sabbath after the one in Luke 4:31 when the demon-possessed man was delivered. Luke continues his narrative after that event and describes two more Sabbath incidents that also irritated the Pharisees. Add to these the Sabbath healing of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and the Pharisees could no longer suppress their smoldering hostility. They expressed it openly (John 5:1-10).

2. The grain-picking disciples - 6:1

And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands.

3. The nit-picking Pharisees - 6:2

The Pharisees either observed them doing this or heard about it and hurried to question the disciples, "*Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?*"

4. The law and the Sabbath

Moses had said, "*When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain*" (Deuteronomy 23:25). It was lawful to pluck a handful to satisfy hunger, but not to harvest or thresh a large amount to carry away. To this simple, compassionate, and just rule the rabbis, scribes and

Pharisees had added complicated regulations that equated plucking with reaping and rubbing with threshing. It was the Pharisees' law, not Moses' law, which was being used to accuse the disciples.

The rabbis held exaggerated views of the Sabbath. When open conflict erupted over the disciples' action, our Lord appealed to Scripture, as always. Matthew and Mark record the same incident.

5. Jesus' defense of his disciples' actions - 6:3-4

"Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him? How he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" (1 Samuel 21:1-6). The showbread was the bread in the tabernacle and could be eaten only by the priests after it had been replaced with fresh bread (Leviticus 24:5-9).

David was fleeing from Saul. He was hungry and had nowhere to get food for himself and his men. It was more important to sustain life than to follow the law. Furthermore, priests were not only allowed to work on the Sabbath but had to do so, meaning there were exceptions to the law. However, only God, who gave His law, has the right to overrule it without penalty. In His mercy, He chose to allow David to eat the bread reserved for priests. David was in the service of God, he was God's anointed (1 Samuel 16:13), chosen by God to be king. Likewise, the disciples were in the service of the Lord.

6. Jesus' conclusion - 6:5

And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." This is a clear statement of His deity. Mark adds, "*Man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man*" (Mark 2:27). This declares freedom from restricting rules and traditions that distort the true meaning of God's provisions. The Sabbath was originally given by God as a sign of His covenant relationship with Israel, and as a merciful means of worship. People were excused from work on the Sabbath. It was a day set aside for worship and enjoyment of God. The only way to make sure they would not work was to forbid work one day a week.

However, the rabbis institutionalized the Sabbath and complicated it with countless rules which "explained" what constituted work. A day which was intended for

joy and release became a legalistic encumbrance. Adding to God's Word usually does that. That which God meant for our good becomes a nightmare of restrictions. Will you declare the Son of Man Lord of every part of your life?

B. Healing the Man with the Withered Arm -
Luke 6:6-11

1. Another Sabbath - 6:6

On a different Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue where there was a man with a withered arm. Worship was never dull with Jesus there.

2. A hard-hearted group of Pharisees and scribes - 6:7

The scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus closely to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath. They had moved from being observers to being critics. They thought if He healed the man they would have an accusation against Him. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus nevertheless asked the man to stand. Jesus challenged their thinking, *"I will ask you one thing, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"* The answer was obvious, but they were silent. The correct answer would have been to agree with Jesus in healing the man. Jesus waited and looked around the room in anger, *grieved by the hardness of their hearts* (Mark 3:5).

3. A healed man - 6:8-10

Jesus told the man to stretch out his withered arm, requiring him to cooperate in the miracle. Then in full view of the audience Jesus restored the man's arm to fullness and use.

4. A hostile reaction - 6:11

This act of compassion and authority filled the Pharisees and scribes with rage. All the synoptic gospels record their active plot to kill Jesus (Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:6).

How rigid are your traditions of worship? Must worship include robes for the pastor and choir, only one style of music, a certain way of dressing, a particular liturgy? Do you become disagreeable if others do not conform to your preferences? Or is there joy and freedom in your worship of God?

II. Selection of Twelve Apostles - Luke 6:12-16

A. After Prayer - Luke 6:12

1. Alone

During this time, perhaps because of the plot to kill Him, Jesus went alone to a mountain to pray.

2. Earnest

He prayed all night to God. Do you set aside uninterrupted time, and occasionally extended time, for prayer?

3. Result

Jesus decided to choose a few men whom He would prepare to carry on the work of God when He was no longer physically on earth. As a result of prayer, He knew who they would be.

B. The Twelve

1. From the disciples

From those already following Him, Jesus chose twelve. If you want to serve God do not wait, follow Him today.

2. Apostles

He named them apostles, meaning "sent ones". A disciple is a "learner", an apostle is a "goer". There were twelve, which seems to represent the twelve tribes of Israel, either literally or symbolically. One of them was a traitor. How this could be an answer to prayer has been debated ever since.

The list of the twelve apostles occurs four times in the Scriptures: Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13.

<u>MATTHEW</u>	<u>MARK</u>	<u>LUKE</u>	<u>ACTS</u>
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew, his brother	James	Andrew	James
James, son of Zebedee	John	James	John
John, his brother	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew, tax collector	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James	James	James
Lebbaeus Thaddaeus	Thaddeus	Simon, the Zealot	Simon
Simon, the Canaanite	Simon	Judas, son of James	Judas
Judas Iscariot	Judas	Judas Iscariot	

There are a few things to notice. Simon Peter becomes simply Peter in Acts. He is always first and Judas is always last. Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphaeus are always the leaders of the same group of four. Simon the Canaanite is also Simon the Zealot. Bartholomew is probably also Nathaniel.

III. Sermon on the Plain - Luke 6:17-49

B. Content

A. Comparison with Matthew

1. Blessings and woes - 6:20-26

1. Sermon on the Mount

Matthew places Jesus seated on a mountain. Luke says He came down to a level place with His disciples where He healed many in a great multitude of people from as far north as Tyre and Sidon.

The Sermon begins in like manner in Matthew and Luke except that Luke gives an abbreviated version with four blessings and four woes. Luke places his emphasis on the poor, *Blessed are the poor*, whereas Matthew adds *poor in spirit*.

2. Length of sermon

2. Showing mercy - 6:27-36

It may strike the reader that the sermon in Matthew is much longer than the sermon in Luke. Matthew, who compiled data, consistent with his teaching gospel, probably gathered sayings from several occasions when Jesus taught and included them in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5-7). Some of the sayings are found in various places in Luke.

Next is the section on showing mercy by loving enemies, turning the cheek, giving, and doing good. In the middle is the Golden Rule, *"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."* This is the incomparable guide to Christian behavior.

3. To His disciples - Luke 6:17-20

3. Warning not to judge - 6:37-42

In both gospels the sermon is directed to Jesus' disciples. Many people claim to live by the Sermon on the Mount yet they do not follow Jesus. They are mistaken. First, the sermon is not directed to anyone who is not fully committed to the Christian life. Second, it is not possible to "live by the Sermon on the Mount" without the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells believers. In order to have the Holy Spirit, a person must believe in Jesus and receive Him as Savior and Lord (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-10). See applications at end of lesson.

- This section has four stern commands:
- *"Judge not, and you shall not be judged."*
 - *"Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned."*
 - *"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*
 - *"Give, and it will be given to you."*

The reason and result is you will get what you give. As you treat others so you will be treated. This is a spiritual law and is built into a moral universe by God the Creator.

Judging others requires self-examination. In order to see or remove a small speck from another's eye, you must first remove the huge plank from your own eye. The imagery is comical but true. What sin in your life is blurring or distorting your vision? Have you criticized someone lately? The finger that is pointing at another causes three fingers to point back at you. The apostle John wrote, *He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen* (1 John 4:20)? How does this truth reflect upon your life?

4. Fruitfulness and obedience - 6:43-49

The sermons in both Matthew and Luke close with two analogies. The first is an analogy of good trees bearing fruit and bad trees not bearing fruit. Would others say that your life is thorny or fruitful? What do your words reveal about what is in your heart?

The second analogy is of building on the rock foundation of Jesus' words or building on sand with no foundation. What is your life built upon? Please consider this question carefully. Those who build upon the rock will not be shaken, but those who build on sand are doomed to fall.

Applications

1. Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you believed, having put your faith in Him as your Savior and Lord? If so, the Holy Spirit testifies to you that you are a child of God (Romans 8:16). If you are not sure of your position in Christ, or have any questions, please speak with your discussion leader and ask for a Disciplers Assurance Letter.
2. How serious are you about following Jesus? Which sayings in the sermon do you need to apply? Will you begin today to share the high calling of Christ with others?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. Why do you think the Pharisees and scribes wanted to get rid of Jesus?
2. What did you learn that was new or interesting about the selection of the apostles?
3. Which part of the Sermon on the Plain was meaningful to you? In what way was it meaningful?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 7:1-10.

4. What situation did Jesus find when He returned to Capernaum?
5. a. How did the centurion make his appeal to Jesus?

b. Why were the elders very willing to cooperate with him?
6. a. What shows the centurion's attitude toward Jesus?

b. What shows the centurion's faith in Jesus?

c. How did the centurion compare himself to Jesus?
7. a. In what three ways did Jesus respond to the centurion's faith?

b. ♥(Heart Question) How is your faith like the centurion's?

DAY THREE: Read Luke 7:11-20.

8. What situation did Jesus find in Nain?
9. a. What emotion did Jesus feel?

b. What did He say to the woman? What did He say to her son?

c. What did her son do?

d. What did the crowd do?

10. a. What question did John the Baptist have?

b. ? (Thought Question) Why do you think he asked this?

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 7:21-35 and Matthew 11:1-19.

11. a. How did Jesus answer John's question (Luke 7:21-23)?

b. What do you think Jesus wanted John to know?

12. a. Give some points of Jesus' testimony to John.

b. What did Jesus want the crowd to understand about John?

c. How can you be greater than John the Baptist?

13. How were the groups divided over John (Luke 7:29-30)? _____ and _____
versus _____ and _____

14. a. How did Jesus compare the crowd to children?

b. Do you think this describes some people today? If so, how?

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 7:36-39.

15. What unexpected thing happened in a Pharisee's house?

16. Describe the attitudes of the hosting Pharisee and the woman.

17. ♥ (Heart Question) What attitude do you think you would have had?

DAY SIX: Read Luke 7:40-50.

18. a. What question did Jesus ask Simon, the Pharisee?

b. What answer did the Pharisee give?

c. Do you agree with the answer? Why or why not?
19. a. How did Jesus compare Simon to the woman?

b. What reason did Jesus give for forgiving the woman's sins?

c. What question did the guests have?

d. What is your answer to that?
20. a. What did the woman have that Simon did not have?

b. In what way are people today like Simon?

c. In what way are people today like the woman?