

ENGAGE

- As you approach the text you may find these themes to be helpful.
 - Do to others as you want God to do to you
 - Be careful who you follow and imitate. Jesus is the ultimate guide.
 - Before correcting others, correct yourself and see your own deficiencies.
 - Fruit reveals the tree. Look at your tongue and your actions to know the condition of your heart.
 - Listen and do what Jesus says to endure life's difficulties.

EXAMINE

Luke 6:37-49

In today's lesson we will look at the world's favorite verse. However, once we properly understand what Jesus is teaching, we will find that it does not mean what many think this verse means.

Judging Others (6:37-38)

In the last lesson, Jesus left us with a very important principle: do to others what you want done to you. Jesus said that this disciple love their enemies. Jesus was not talking about feeling, but making a conscious decision to act in the best interests of all others, even our enemies. He commands us to do good, give, give above and beyond, and do not expect any repayment. As we come to verse 37 of Luke 6, Jesus is still preaching to his disciples. Jesus is going to adjust this principle so that we will grasp more deeply how we are to act toward our enemies.

When Jesus says, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged," Jesus is not saying that we must not judge people so that people do not judge us. Jesus is not teaching some sort of relativism that we just let people believe what they want to believe so that no one is judging each other. Jesus is talking about God judging others. Do not judge others and you will not be judged by God. Do not condemn others and you will not be condemned by God. Forgive others and you will be forgiven by God.

Previously, Jesus taught to do to others as you want them to do to you. Now Jesus teaches this principle: Do to others what you want God to do to you. Treat others, not only how you want them to treat you, but also how you want God to treat you. Jesus is not teaching that we can

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avoid the day of final judgment if we somehow be sure not to judge other people. No one can avoid the Day of Judgment. All must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The point is to be careful how you judge. Do not judge according to human standards. Perhaps more accurately and more contextually to the point of verse 36, do not judge mercilessly. Do you want God to judge you without mercy? Do you want God to judge you without compassion? God will apply the same standards of judgment to us that we apply to others. If we are quick to condemn others, then God will be quick to condemn us. If we are unwilling to forgive others offenses, then God will be unwilling to forgive our sins. If we are unwilling to give, then God will be unwilling to give to us. If we do not give generously, above and beyond, then God will not give generously, above and beyond, to us.

Verse 38 illustrates this point. Have you ever opened a bag of chips and thought you were getting ripped off? Or have you ever opened a box of food or candy and it was not full? You feel like you did not get all that you paid for. We want a full box. We do not want to purchase a bag of air. We want it full to the brim. This is the idea behind "a good measure." A good measure was one where the grains were put in and pressed down and shaken so that there is no extra space. The measure was good and full. Then the grain would be poured into a cone above the measure, running over. The cup will simply not hold any more because it is full of grain. Now notice the teaching: "For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Give a good measure to others, and God will give a good measure to you. Treat others how you want God to treat you.

Call to Righteousness (6:39-42)

Jesus tells a very short parable. A blind person cannot lead a blind person without both of them ending up dead. The idea is very simple: be careful who you follow. This seems to be directed at his disciples as a warning about following the Pharisees. They are spiritually blind. Jesus called the Pharisees blind repeatedly. They have the word of God, but do not possess the truth. They do not properly understand the scriptures and are laying a path to God that is false. They claimed to have the truth, but they didn't. They take texts and twist them and abuse them so that there is error and not what God intended for that scripture to mean.

Tack verse 40 on to this thought. Choose the right teacher. Why do we need to choose the right teacher? Jesus says the reason is that everyone who is fully trained will become like his teacher. That is why his disciples do not need to follow the Pharisees. Watch out for them. They are

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blind themselves and if you follow them you will both go off the path of God and into a pit. So choose the right teacher.

Who we choose to teach us is very important. We do not want men who will teach on topics that make us feel good about ourselves. We do not want teachers who do not respect the authority of God's word, but twist the scriptures to mean things that do not fit God's character or teachings. We want to hear the word of God.

I also think Jesus is being very subtle here since he is speaking to his disciples. Jesus is their teacher. Disciples should look like the teacher. You can follow men or you can follow Jesus. This is what our series of teachings on the gospel of Luke is all about. We want to know who Jesus is and what he taught so that we can be his disciples. We are not disciples of people. We are not disciples of history. We are not disciples of what the church of Christ always taught or what any church taught. We are not disciples of the reformers. We are not disciples of historical figures in the church. We are disciples of Jesus. We follow no one else.

Now look at verses 41-42. This is a humorous illustration. We have two people. One has a speck of sawdust or wood. All of us have had that moment where something got into our eyes, caused us pain, and uncontrollable blinking. The other person has a builder's beam in his eye. Let's observe the points Jesus makes.

Why do you see specks in others' eyes but do not notice the builder's beam in our own? We do not realize that we are blinded by our own flaws, mistakes, errors, and sins. We easily see and point out the flaws in others, but cannot see that we have the beam. Unfortunately, we seem to think that it is the other person who has the beam in his eye while we, if we have anything, only have a speck in our eye. Check yourself first. You may not see as clearly as you think you can. This continues the theme of Jesus' sermon: do to others as you would have them to do you.

Remove your own speck first, otherwise you are a hypocrite. This is the first time that Jesus has used the word, "hypocrite." Don't start trying to help other people until you are working on your own flaws. Jesus is not teaching that we cannot correct others until we get everything in our life corrected. We would never be able to help or correct anyone if this was what Jesus was teaching. Rather, Jesus is maintaining the theme of his sermon. When I see my own beams in my eyes and understand the difficulty of removing them, I will be more compassionate and merciful to others when trying to help them. When I see my own errors, I will be more forgiving. I will judge as I would want God to judge me because I understand that I am just as much of a sinner as the next person. I will grasp that I am no better than you and you are no

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better than me in our problems of fighting sin. Check yourself and don't forget your own beams when you go to help others with their shortcomings.

Call to Fruit (6:43-49)

Jesus concludes his sermon to the crowds with a call for fruitful lives. Jesus illustrates his final point with a story about trees. Good trees do not bear bad fruit and bad trees do not bear good fruit. Trees are known by the fruit they produce. Figs don't come from thorns and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. We know if we are disciples based on the fruit we bear. Your actions and your tongue reveal the abundance of the heart. We need to dig into this important teaching.

How many times have we tried to change our external behavior but have failed in our effort? Perhaps you are trying to stop drinking or trying to stop having outbursts of anger. Perhaps we have some sort of addiction or vices that we cannot overcome. We stop for a short time, but then we fall back into it. Perhaps we have a sharp tongue. Maybe we speak profanities and take the Lord's name in vain. Perhaps we are trying to stop internet pornography. Or we are trying to stop sexual immorality and promiscuity. I want us to look at what Jesus said: Bad fruit does not come from good trees. Bad fruit comes from bad trees. Good fruit only comes from good trees. What Jesus is telling us is that the problem is with our hearts. The reason we are not successful in bearing good fruit is that we have a serious heart condition. The only way to bear good fruit is to change the heart. The only way to overcome these addictions, vices, and sins that we struggle with is to change the heart. We cannot cultivate good fruit from a bad tree. We cannot understand why we cannot change or why we can't stop evil habits, addictions, and sins. Jesus has the answer. Your heart needs regeneration. Your heart is the problem which is leading to these sins. Stop only attacking the symptoms and address the heart. Stop trying to change the fruit without changing the heart. The fruit will not change until the heart changes. Figs are not going to come from thorns. Grapes are not going to come from a bramble bush. We have bramble bushes for hearts -- dried, parched hearts without any love for God. Discipleship is not about keeping rules. Discipleship is loving the Teacher and trying to be like the Teacher. Until I have a heart that loves Jesus because of what he has done for me, we will never bear the fruit of discipleship.

In verse 46 reveals that heart should lead us to obedience. What we do reveals who we are. We cannot say, "Lord, Lord," and not do what Jesus says. The person who comes to Jesus, hears his words, and acts on them is like a man who builds a house on a rock foundation. When the floods rose and the river burst against the house, the house could not be shaken because it was built well. People who listen and do what Jesus says and have a heart for him are going to have strong faith to endure the difficulties of being a disciple. However, those who listen but do not do what Jesus says are not doing to have faith to endure. They are like those who build a house

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on ground without a foundation. Without Jesus as your foundation, the flood waters will rise and the house will be destroyed. You will lose everything. Your faith will be lost. Your hope will be lost. Jesus must be your life foundation.

Luke 8:16-21

Jesus uses a parable to emphasize his teaching. When we keep this parable in its context we will see its relevance to how we hear. In fact, notice that Jesus' conclusion to this parable is, "Take care then how you hear." If you have something useful like a lamp, you use it! You have heard the word of the Lord. What are you going to do with it? Many hear the word of God without making any changes. You go to worship services, sit through sermons, but nothing happens. They are as useless as a lamp under a jar.

What are you going to do with what you have received in hearing God's word? Notice verse 18: "For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." To put this another way, if you are not seeking and striving for understanding, you will not understand any of it. Jesus' message provides light for those who listen and that light reveals our heart attitudes. When the word of God is proclaimed, what we do with the word shows which soil we are. We immediately learn the condition of our hearts. If you do not seek to understand God's word then you will not understand God's word. When the crowds did not come to learn the meaning of the parable then they were not going to learn the secrets of the kingdom of God. The disciples did because they came asking for understanding. We must not shy away from teaching and preaching the difficult doctrines and texts because God is looking for those who want to learn more about him.

Jesus' Family (8:19-21)

Once again the setting has not changed and the topic has not changed as we come to verse 19. Jesus' mother and brothers come to see Jesus but cannot because the crowd is so massive. Jesus declares who are truly in the family of Christ: those who hear the word of God and do it. This is the same as the good soil in the parable. The message of this text is to take care how we listen. How you listen to God's word shows if you are truly one of Jesus' disciples or not. How you listen shows if you are really in the family of Christ.

There is only one point to this lesson today. As you look at your spiritual life up to today, which soil are you? Have you been listening but not caring and not changing anything? Have you listened and obeyed, but have not grounded yourself in God's word so that times of trial rip you away from God? Have you listened but you are entangled by life's distractions, not following

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Jesus as you must, putting other things ahead of our Lord? Have you been listening and holding fast to God's word, and the fruit of your faith can be seen by all? Take care how you hear.

Questions

1. What does it mean to judge and condemn others? (37a) Why do we judge and condemn others? Why did Jesus encourage us to do instead of condemning others? (37b)
2. What are the positive results of giving? (38) Why can't a blind man lead a blind man? (39) Why do disciples need training? (40) What is the educational goal of a disciple? (40b)
3. What does it mean to have a plank in one's eye? (41-42) Why is it difficult to remove a speck from another's eye? How can one take the plank out of his own eye?
4. How can this parable be applied to us? What do we need instead of looking at other's weaknesses? (42b) How can we take the plank out of our eye? (1 Tim 1:15)
5. How can we recognize whether a tree is good or bad? (43-45) How can we know what is in the heart of a person? What do the words we say reveal about our hearts? (45)
6. If we call Jesus, "Lord," what must be our attitude toward his word? (46) How does the wise builder build his house? (47-48) What can we learn from him?
7. How can we dig deep and lay a solid rock foundation in our lives? (47) Who is our rock? What happens when we struggle to have even one word of Jesus in our deep hearts? (48b)
8. What is one like who hears Jesus' words but does not put them into practice? (49a) What happened to the foolish builder's house? (49b) *Are you a wise builder or a foolish builder?

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9. Verse 16. Where does one ordinarily put a lighted lamp? Why? Why does one not put it in a jar or under a bed? What is God's purpose in giving the word of God? (16, Ps 19:1, Heb 1:2)

10. Verse 17. What happens when the light shines in a room? Why do people not know God and themselves and the world? (Gal 4:8) Why might some people not like the light? (Jn 3:19) How does Jesus reveal the truth? (Lk 1:78-79)

11. Verse 17 again. How does Jesus drive out darkness? (2Cor 4:6, Ps 119:105) How can they come out from the darkness? (1Jn 1:7) How can they shine His Light into the dark world? (1Pe 2:9)

12. Verse 18. What does it mean to 'consider carefully'? What kind of attitude should we have in bible study?

13. Verses 19-21. Why do you think Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him? (19-20) How did he respond to the one who told him about them? (21)

14. Why did Jesus not give his attention to his mother and brothers? (21) How to be members of Jesus' eternal family? (21, Jn 5:24, 1Pe 1:3-4) Why is hearing God's word not enough? (21)

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