

# Truth for Today

*The Bible Explained*

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast Date:** 11 September 2016

**No.** T0954

**Speaker:** Mr. Peter Ollerhead

## Luke's Gospel: Teaching on discipleship (Luke 6:27-49)

Good morning and welcome to *Truth for Today*, where we are continuing with our study of some verses from Luke 6. Last week my colleague, David Anderson, took us through the teaching contained in Luke 6:12-26, which cover the appointment of the twelve special disciples, along with the blessings that we sometimes call "The Beatitudes and warnings to rich and careless persons". This teaching, in Luke's Gospel, is occasionally called the Sermon on the Mount, because it has similarities with the account in Matthew 5:1-7:29. This, I judge, is a mistake, for though there are similarities, there are important matters that are not included. I tend to follow the reasoning of Campbell Morgan, who wrote in *The Gospel According to Luke* his commentary on this Gospel: "The occasions were different; the places were different. In this discourse He repeated things He said in the Sermon on the Mount, but it is characterised by remarkable omissions; and things are found in it that are not found in the Sermon on the Mount. He was speaking not to the twelve only, but to a great multitude of His disciples."

Along with the 'multitude of disciples', there was also a large number of persons from Judea, Jerusalem and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who were also listening to the Lord Jesus.

I have raised the place and occasion of this ministry to show that this teaching was for many different persons, who were, according to Luke 6:27, urged to listen. Having said that, I believe the twelve disciples were to be the main pupils of the instructions outlined in our passage, which is Luke 6:27-49. These twenty-three verses can be divided into three sections for ease of study.

1. Luke 6:27-38, the Lord declares love to be the main impetus of life for those who follow Him;
2. The reason for this teaching, in Luke 6:39-45, is to make disciples;
3. Which leaves our passage to be concluded in Luke 6:46-49 with His claims for the absolute necessity for hearing His words and acting upon them.

After that rather lengthy introduction, we begin our study by looking at the opening clause of Luke 6:27: "*But I say to you who hear...*" I want to emphasise this statement, for it is so important. It is no use any one reading Scripture yet ignoring the voice of the Lord speaking to us. We shall return to this injunction at the close of our talk, but I feel it is incumbent to stress the necessity of reading and listening to the Word of God.

### 1. The Lord declares love to be the main impetus of life for those who follow Him

Now, to look at the first section, we can see the critical nature of 'love' as the main principle of our lives, for we get the word 'love' repeated in Luke 6:27, Luke 6:32 and Luke 6:35. Due to pressure of time, we will look at Luke 6:32 and Luke 6:35 only: "*If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? ... For even sinners do the same. ... But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil*" (Luke 6:32, 33, 35)

I ought to have said earlier that all quotations of Scripture are from the English Standard Version. All I wish to draw from these Luke 6:27-35, at this point, is the supreme importance of love in the believer's life. One could be forgiven for asking the question as to how we express love to all we meet in our every-day life. Christian love is a matter of our will, not our emotions. I love my wife and children because they are my near relatives. I do not need to be instructed to love them. When it comes to love as a feature of my character, governing my dealings with others, then 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, where the features of Christian love are outlined, tells me how I should act. The indwelling Spirit of God gives me the power. It was just as difficult to live the love-life in the apostles' days as it is in ours, but it is still necessary for us to behave the way the Lord has instructed us to.

To further explain what I mean by acting in love towards others, to whom we are not emotionally attached, we shall look at 1 Corinthians 13:4 which states: "*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.*"

All of us can be patient and kind. We do not need a degree in theology to act in such a manner, neither do we have to wait until we have been a Christian for many number of years. Being kind, patient, not envying or boasting, nor

arrogant or irritable, are the types of actions that the Lord is looking for in His disciples. It is not natural for a person to act like that towards those who despise and hate them, yet that is what is required of us.

Now we must move on to look at further aspects of the first section of our study. There are further positive elements that the Lord requires from those that follow Him. *"Doing good"*, (Luke 6:27), *"blessing and praying"*, (Luke 6:28). I check myself at this point to ask if I pray and bless those who don't agree with me and ridicule my beliefs. Perhaps, I could go further and ask how many of us pray as a general habit of our lives? Recently, I was reading an article about the Great War, in a Christian magazine from 1916, where the question was posed as to how often the church prayed for statesmen and those in authority. The suggestion was that if Christians from all countries had prayed regularly for their rulers would there have been a war. We do not know the answer, though it is a question worth asking.

To return to the verses of Luke 6:27-49, we learn that those to whom we should demonstrate our love also include our enemies, those who despise, those who hate and those who curse. Love can also be passive, as we can read in Luke 6:29: *"To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either."*

These are not principles to govern either international relations or normal civic rights of our society, but they should regulate the life of the believer. This was the path trodden by the Lord Jesus, as Peter informs us in 1 Peter 2:21-24, *"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."*

We also know from Romans 5:10 that *"the Lord Jesus died for us while we were enemies."* Though we could never travel the road to Calvary in the same way as the Lord, we should seek to emulate His attitude.

The words of Luke 6:31 are sometimes termed the "Golden Rule": *"And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."* This guidance, for the whole of life, is found in other ancient writings, though in a negative form. What the Lord does is to give the Rule a positive edge. His followers must not only refrain from acts that they personally would not like done to them, but rather must they actively engage in doing acts of goodness.

Between Luke 6:32 and Luke 6:34, we have a trio of illustrations of how the behaviour of Christian believers must be better than that of non-believers, in both thought and deed. I must stress, however, that Christians do not have a monopoly of good works. Even those with no allegiance to God display some ethical virtues and express them consistently. They love those who love them. We on the other hand love others because He first loved us, redeeming us into His family. We do not love others simply because they love us. Similarly we do good to all men, not only to those who do good to us. Here we reach another check-point, where we can ask ourselves whether we are doing more than our work colleagues, or neighbours, would in similar circumstances.

It is worth looking at Luke 6:35 more closely, for it would be easy to assume that we earn our sonship with God: *"But love your enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."*

This verse is not teaching salvation by merit, for we cannot earn salvation. Believers are to be what, through grace, they really are, which is *"the sons of the Most High."* The day is coming when the world will fully recognise the children of God, as Romans 8:18-19 state: *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."*

Surely, we are willing to accept the privilege and responsibility of discipleship in view of that glorious day, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed to a wondering universe in all His greatness and majesty. As GW Frazer (1830-1896) wrote in one of his hymns:

*"And when the day of glory  
Shall burst upon this scene,  
Dispelling all the darkness  
Which deep'ning still had been;  
Oh, then He'll come in brightness,  
Whom every eye shall see,  
Arrayed in power and glory;  
And we shall with Him be."*

Such sentiments were very real for the Apostle Paul. Are they for us?

The last two verses of our first section refer us back to acting in love towards all. If you have your Bible open, you will read that Luke 6:37-38 have to do with not judging, not condemning, but rather forgiving. The request not to judge does not mean to have no discernment. Rather, it is that we should be careful not to harshly criticise or censure others. As we saw in 1 Corinthians 13, "*Love ... does not rejoice at wrongdoing, bears all things, believes all things, and hopes all things*" (1 Corinthians 13:6-7). The teaching in Luke 6:38 is the practical working of the previously mentioned "Golden Rule".

## 2. Making Disciples

If you can recall, I mentioned in the introduction that the second section of our passage covers Luke 6:39-45. We must now turn to this section, though before we do, can I welcome any who have just joined us in this study of Luke 6:27-49, which is coming from *Truth for Today*. Our theme is 'Discipleship' and Luke 6:39-40 impart an important truth in the form of a parable: "*He also told them a parable: 'Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.'*"

It was not only the Pharisees who needed to heed this stark warning, for the words apply to all schools where training and teaching occur. In that day all the disciples of a rabbi dedicated themselves to their master's teaching and manner of life. The Lord taught as One having authority. He was not blind, for He claimed, on many occasions, that He had been sent from God and was speaking the words of the Father. His disciples had to pay attention to His doctrine in order that they should be fully trained.

The verses following, though humorous, are also savage in their denunciation of pride and arrogance: "Why do you see a speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye. You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye" (Luke 6:41-42).

This teaching applies just as much to the Christian disciple as to the Pharisee. We are all liable to apply the full force of Christian teaching to others when, as disciples, each of us should absorb the lessons, from the Lord, into our own lives before we begin to teach others.

The Lord Jesus goes on to illustrate the truth of His saying in Luke 6:43-45 by referring to nature. The truth being emphasised is that everyone when they are fully trained will be like their teacher. A good tree will not bear bad fruit; neither will a bad tree bear good fruit. Grapes are not gathered from briers, nor figs from thornbushes. Notice that the end in view is "fruit". This thought is continued in Luke 6:45, where the Master urges His disciples to be those with good things stored in their hearts, so that these good things are evident when they speak. This challenge comes to each one of us. Are we those who hear the voice of the Lord and store up good things in our hearts, so that we can bear fruit for the Lord's glory?

## 3. The Lord's claims for the absolute necessity for hearing His words and acting upon them

This emphasis upon the critical nature of the Lord's teaching is continued in our final section, which is the famous story of the wise and foolish builders in Luke 6:46-49. The story is so well-known that all I shall do this morning is emphasise the closing verse: "*But the one who hears [my words] and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of the house was great*" (Luke 6:49).

If the listeners assumed that all of the teaching we have considered this morning was directed against others, especially the Pharisees, then these closing verses were a direct challenge to them. They could not avoid the implication that it was directed towards all who professed to follow Jesus. It was not acceptance of His words only, but the necessity of doing them. As the Apostle James wrote to some believers in his day, "*Faith without works is dead*" (James 2:26). We can discuss the deeper meaning of the words of the Lord, but until we actually start to follow Him and allow His words to be the foundation of our lives, then it is all theory.

Many years ago, I shared a desk at night-school with another apprentice, who was ignoring the lecture, but still writing vigorously. At the close, I asked him what he was writing and if I could read it. He looked at me with a knowing smile, confessing he was on trial as a Methodist local preacher and he was writing his sermon for the following Sunday. He also said that I wouldn't understand it, as it was theology. My point is that we are all liable to consider the Lord's words 'theology', and not applicable to our everyday life. We must live as the Lord's disciples in the work-a-day world. As Benjamin Ramsey wrote:

*“Long as my life shall last,  
Teach me Thy way!  
Where'er my lot be cast,  
Teach me Thy way!  
Until the race is run,  
Until the journey's done,  
Until the crown is won,  
Teach me Thy way!*

May we all, through His grace, continually seek to be His disciples in the world that we live at this moment.

Good morning and thank you for listening.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.