

# LUKE

## Chapter 6

*Lord of the Sabbath*

**On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” 3 And Jesus answered them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?” 5 And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”**

**6:1** *on a Sabbath* – ἐν σαββάτῳ—There is a curious variant, σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ, roughly translated “Sabbath second-first.” It has respectable manuscript attestation and certainly is the more difficult reading. It suggests that the “second-first” designation identifies this Sabbath as “the first Sabbath after the feast of unleavened bread, but the second after Passover itself.” This would place this text in the context of the Passover. (CC)

*going through the grainfields.* διαπορεύεσθαι—As a compound of πορεύεσθαι, this is part of Luke’s journey vocabulary. It may even suggest Jesus’ journey to the “new” Sabbath, the first day of the week. (CC)

*rubbing.* To separate the kernel from the chaff. (TLSB)

**6:2** *some Pharisees* – τινὲς δὲ τῶν Φαρισαίων—Luke has “some of the Pharisees” as opposed to Matthew (12:2) and Mark’s (2:24) “the Pharisees.” For Luke, not all the Pharisees are opposed to Jesus. (CC)

*why...unlawful...Sabbath*—The Pharisees’ opening question operates in the old way of the Law: Why do you do what is not lawful? (6:2). The word of the Lord answers with the new way of the Gospel: “The Son of Man is *Lord of the Sabbath*” (6:5). The nomistic question does not apply to him and his (cf. 1 Cor 6:12; Gal 5:23). (CC)

τί ποιεῖτε—The plural “why do you do” is directed to the disciples of Jesus and thus brings the disciples into the controversy (cf. Lk 5:30). This is the second time opponents address the disciples but get a reply from Jesus (cf. 5:30–31). (CC)

ἔξουσιν—Four out of the five instances of this word in Luke occur in the midst of a Sabbath controversy, and three of them are from this passage (6:2, 4, 9; 14:3; 20:22). The impersonal refers to what is either permitted or not permitted according to the Law. (CC)

**6:3** *what David did.* Between these two opposing views on the Sabbath stands Jesus’ demonstration from Scripture (Lk 6:3–4). He refers to the incident reported in 1 Samuel 21, when Ahimelech the priest gave to David and his men the “bread of Presence.” The Sabbath per se was not an issue in the 1 Samuel situation, but when they ate the “bread of Presence,” David and his companions did something that was *not lawful* for them because they were not priests and the bread was holy. (CC)

*Jesus' point rests on two important assumptions. First, incidents in the life of David are revelatory of the days of the Messiah, the Son of David. Second, Jesus is the Messiah. When one grants this, then the issue is resolved. Critical to this point is the involvement of David's companions/Jesus' disciples in the eating. Jesus is the Messiah and therefore Lord of the Sabbath; the freedom of his Lordship extends to his disciples—they are not bound by the OT regulations that only stood to point to the Messiah. (CC)*

**6:4** *bread of the Presence.* τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως—Literally, the Greek is “the loaves of the presentation.” These loaves were set in the presence of God in the Holy Place. The Greek is the LXX translation of three different Hebrew phrases: מִן־לֶחֶם, “row/line of loaves” before Yahweh (Ex 40:23; cf. 40:4); לֶחֶם מִן־לֶחֶם, “loaves of the row/line” (1 Chr 9:32; cf. similar expressions elsewhere in 1 and 2 Chronicles). (CC)

**6:5** *Lord of the Sabbath.* Jesus has the authority to overrule laws concerning the Sabbath, particularly as interpreted by the Pharisees (see Mt 12:8; Mk 2:27). (CSB)

Jesus claims a divine right here, namely, the right to reapply a commandment for His disciples' benefit. This makes even more explicit the messianic claim. (TLSB)

κύριός ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—The Greek word order places “Lord of the Sabbath” in the premier position. On “Son of Man,” see comments at Lk 5:24.

**6:1–5** Jesus reapplies the Third Commandment to reveal the blessings of the Sabbath. When we consider laws and their application, God would have us see not simply how laws restrict but also who and what they protect. All God's Word is written for our benefit, that we may enjoy the inherited blessings of His mercy. • “ ‘You shall observe the worship day That peace may fill your home, and pray, And put aside the work you do, So that God may work in you.’ Have mercy, Lord!” Amen. (LSB 581:4) (TLSB)

#### *A Man with a Withered Hand*

**6** On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. **7** And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. **8** But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there. **9** And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” **10** And after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. **11** But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

**6:6** *was teaching* – On διδάσκω and Jesus' teaching in the synagogue, see comments at 4:15–30. The second sentence is a compound one connected by καί, with stress on the second half of the sentence, which describes the condition of the man. This prepares for the miracle. (CC)

**6:7** *see whether he would heal on the Sabbath* – θεραπεύει—The verbs in indirect discourse are as they would be in direct discourse. The present tense has future thrust: “Is he going to heal?” This must be shifted into past time in English. The present tense appears to suggest that healing was Jesus' normal, habitual practice. The Pharisees and scribes hope to catch him healing on the Sabbath. (CC)

Second time the Pharisees and legal scribes charge Jesus with breaking the Sabbath (cf vv 1–5). They are eager to find fault with Him. (TLSB)

**6:8** but he – δέ occurs twice in this verse. The first one is adversative, “but”; the second is conjunctive, “and.” Jesus speaks to the man to heal *even though* he knows the thoughts of the Pharisees. (CC)

*knew their thoughts* – διαλογισμούς—On Jesus’ omniscient ability to discern “thoughts” see 5:22; 9:46–47; 24:38. This verse provides another example of how “the thoughts” of people are revealed through their response to Jesus, as prophesied in 2:35 (διαλογισμοί). (CC)

*come stand here*. So there would be no question about the healing. (CSB)

**6:9** *is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good*. Jesus had been enduring questions and attacks from the Pharisees and now took the initiative by putting the questions to everyone in the synagogue (see note on Mk 3:4). (CSB)

Question exposes the superficiality of Jesus’ critics, who apparently put a ritual observance (resting from work on the Sabbath) above a moral obligation (to heal and save life). (TLSB)

Although Gen 2:3 reads, “So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation,” God did not cease working in his creation. After the fall into sin, God worked mightily to restore his people. And the second time the Sabbath command is given (Deut 5:12), the reason is not *creation* (as it was in Ex 20:9–11), but *redemption*, the exodus deliverance (Deut 5:15), which anticipates the final salvation accomplished by Christ at his “exodus” (Lk 9:31). Jesus affirms this redemptive purpose in Jn 5:17, where, in a Sabbath controversy over his healing on the Sabbath, Jesus says: “My Father is working still, and I am working.” In view of the eschatological nature of Sunday in Luke’s time sequence, the work the Father and the Son are still doing is the *re-creation* of the world on the Sabbath that has no evening—the eighth day, the first day of the new creation. (CC)

*to do good* – ἀγαθοποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι—Outside the parallel in Mk 3:4, the only other time ἀγαθοποιέω will be used in the synoptic gospels is Luke’s account of Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:33, 35). This act of “doing good” will inform his later instructions about it in this chapter. And except for its parallel in Mk 3:4, this is the only time κακοποιέω is used in the synoptic gospels. ἀγαθοποιέω occurs most frequently in 1 Peter (2:15, 20; 3:6, 17) and occurs together with κακοποιέω in 1 Pet 3:17: “For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God’s will, than for doing wrong.” Peter captures why Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath begins Jesus’ suffering for doing right, for his Sabbath miracle infuriates the Pharisees, who begin to plot against him. (CC)

**6:10** *looking around at them*.† Jesus wanted to see whether anyone objected to his question or the implied answer, but no one was bold enough to do so. (CSB)

As before, Jesus knows their thoughts (5:22). As the man with the withered hand stands before them, he asks the scribes and Pharisees the same kind of question they asked him when his disciples were eating grain: “What is permitted on the Sabbath?” More specifically, “I ask you whether it is permitted on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” (6:9). The question is stark. There is no opening to discuss urgent cases, emergencies, or extenuating circumstances. The religious leaders are stymied. Obviously, it is not permissible to do evil or

destroy life on the Sabbath. Sickness is an evil condition that destroys life. So how could they condemn Jesus for curtailing evil and restoring life on the Sabbath? (CC)

**6:11** *they were filled with fury.* Because they could not withstand Jesus' reasoning. Already they were plotting to take his life (Jn 5:18). (CSB)

The Pharisees began to plot against Jesus. (TLSB)

ἄνοιας—This can also carry the stronger meaning of fury, senseless rage, or even folly (BAGD) R. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity I*, 176, notes that the meaning “folly” may have implications for Luke's gospel:

The choice of the word ἄνοια [not in the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark], which can refer to foolishness and a general lack of comprehension as well as madness, may prepare readers for a later manifestation of a fateful “ignorance (ἄγνοια)” which will lead to Jesus' death (Acts 3:17; cf. 13:27). This ignorance can be overcome by repentance, but it persists to the end of Acts, where it is emphasized in Paul's closing statement about Israel's ears that do not hear, eyes that do not see, and heart that does not understand (Acts 28:26–27). (CC)

Anticipated here are Jesus' difficult words to his disciples after his first passion prediction, namely, “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; whoever loses his life on account of me, this one will save it” (9:24). Jesus knows that his actions will lead to the cross. His disciples too are called to do good and to save life by the Gospel, even if that brings accusations and death. If the disciples want to follow Jesus, they must be willing to forgive sins in the context of a new, Christological table fellowship on a new day. This is where God's goodness and salvation may be found. (CC)

*discussed with one another – διελάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους*—On διελάλουν see Lk 1:65, where John's acquaintances are filled with fear and are talking about his circumcision and naming. On πρὸς ἀλλήλους see, for example, how the shepherds (2:15), the people (4:36), and the Emmaus disciples (24:14, 17, 32) talk to one another about the events surrounding Jesus. (CC)

**6:6–11** Jesus, despite facing severe criticism, has mercy on the man with a withered hand. As God grants you opportunity to show mercy, act with care and confidence. Goodness and life are God's great blessings for you and for all in Jesus. • “As You, Lord, have lived for others, So may we for others live. Freely have Your gifts been granted; Freely may Your servants give.” Amen. (LSB 842:2). (TLSB)

*The Twelve Apostles*

**12** In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. **13** And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: **14** Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, **15** and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, **16** and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

**6:12** Characteristically, Jesus spent the night in prayer before the important work of selecting his 12 apostles. (CSB)

*He went out to the mountain to pray.* Recurrence of the prayer motif. Presumably, Jesus prayed over His upcoming appointment of the apostles. (TLSB)

διελάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους—On διελάλουν see Lk 1:65, where John’s acquaintances are filled with fear and are talking about his circumcision and naming. On πρὸς ἀλλήλους see, for example, how the shepherds (2:15), the people (4:36), and the Emmaus disciples (24:14, 17, 32) talk to one another about the events surrounding Jesus. (CC)

To prepare for this selection and naming, Jesus “goes out” to pray. It was his custom to withdraw alone to uninhabited places to pray (cf. Lk 5:16). At this point, he goes up a mountain. Throughout the OT mountains were selected by God to be locations where he revealed himself and his will. Therefore, a mountain is an appropriate place for Jesus to entreat his Father for guidance. Dramatic divine revelations occurred on Mt. Sinai = Mt. Horeb (Exodus 3; 19–24; 1 Ki 19:8–18); Mt. Moriah = Mt. Zion (Genesis 22; 1 Ki 8:10–11; Is 6:1–3; Joel 2:32); and Mt. Carmel (1 Ki 18:16–46). Cf. also the references to mountains as the dwelling place of God, the place of salvation, and the place where God’s messianic King reigns. Moreover, this importance of mountains continues in the NT with Jesus’ transfiguration on a mountain (9:28–36), his death on Mt. Calvary (23:33), and his ascension from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12; cf. Lk 24:50–52). (CC)

Luke notes twice at 6:12 that Jesus was at prayer—indeed, all through the night. The prolonged period of prayer shows how significant an event this is for Jesus and the church. It is critical that the selection be God’s selection (cf. Acts 1:24). In this section of the four-fold foundation of the church (Lk 4:16–6:49), Jesus had already prayed extensively; 5:16 suggests that his periods of prayer may have been even more frequent than recorded. Here, his all-night prayer vigil is the setting during which he selects twelve to be his apostles (see textual note on 6:13). (CC)

**6:13** *he called his disciples.* Among those who came to hear Jesus was a group who regularly followed him and were committed to his teachings. At least 72 men were included, since this many disciples were sent out on an evangelistic campaign (10:1, 17). Later, 120 believers waited and worshiped in Jerusalem following the ascension (Ac 1:15). From such disciples Jesus at this time chose 12 to be his apostles, meaning “ones sent with a special commission.” (CSB)

Gk *apostolos*, “person sent with a commission.” Later, Jesus authorized these 12 to preach, heal, and cast out demons (9:1–6; cf 10:1–16). (TLSB)

προσεφώνησεν ... ἐκλεξάμενος—There is one main verb, προσεφώνησεν. The following participle, ἐκλεξάμενος, could be construed as a coordinate main verb: Jesus summoned all his disciples and from them selected twelve to be apostles. But the participle is more likely circumstantial: Jesus, having selected the Twelve through prayerful dialog with the Father during the night, in the morning summoned only these twelve disciples and also (at that time or later) called them apostles. This understanding fits better with 6:17, when Jesus descends from the mountain *with the Twelve*, while the rest of the disciples are waiting on the plain below. (CC)

Jesus had already acquired a band of followers (5:1–11, 27–28, 30; 6:2), and this group apparently waited on the plain below while Jesus prayed through the night (6:12, 17). Then in the morning, he summoned or called to himself his twelve chosen disciples. This account chronicles the selection of the Twelve and the giving to them the name “apostles.” Jesus prays for them during the period of darkness so that when the day comes (6:13), the call of the Twelve might take place in the light. In the future, Jesus will again pray for his followers during the periods of

their greatest darkness so that they might again see the light (e.g., 22:31–32; cf. Jn 15:18–16:4). (CC)

Here (in Lk 6:13) then we see the three words Luke uses for Jesus' core group of followers: "disciples" (μαθηταί), the "Twelve" (δώδεκα), and "apostles" (ἀποστόλοι). These three words appear together at significant moments in the gospel: here at the call of the Twelve, the commission of the Twelve (9:1, 10, 12, 14), and the Last Supper (22:3, 11, 14, 30). Curiously, after the Last Supper, the Twelve are never referred to as disciples, but only as the Twelve (22:47), and after the resurrection, only as the Eleven (ἐνδεκα; 24:9, 33) or apostles (24:10). (CC)

Acts 1:21–22 gives us the qualifications for an apostle, as Matthias is chosen to replace Judas. An apostle must have been (1) present with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and (2) an eyewitness of the resurrection. The hearer knows from the prologue of Acts that an apostle is sent to proclaim the Good News, to deliver the traditions of Jesus to the church (cf. Lk 9:1–6; 10:1–12). An apostle is an official representative who speaks and acts for the one who sent him in the matter for which he was commissioned. As Jesus will tell the seventy(-two) in what is called *the Christological principle*, "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me; and the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (10:16). In the life of the church, the hearer will have heard and seen the testimony of apostles who represent Christ and speak for him. Christ is indeed present in the teaching, healing, and suffering of the twelve apostles and in those ministers who follow in their train in the prophetic and apostolic ministry. (CC)

**6:14–16†** Lists of the apostles appear also in Mt 10:2–4; Mk 3:16–19; Ac 1:13. Although the order of the names varies, Peter is always first and Judas Iscariot last. In each of these lists the first, second and third groups of four names are the same, as are the first, fifth and ninth names. Such similar arrangements may indicate that the Twelve "hung around" in three groups, with Peter, Philip and James son of Alphaeus being the leaders, respectively, of each group. (CSB)

There is probably no great theological reason for the order of the names except for the obvious ones: placing Peter first, since he is the "first among equals" and the most prominent of the Twelve in Luke-Acts, and placing Judas last because he is the betrayer. They are the best known of the Twelve, and in many ways the most important apostles. There is some sense in placing them in three groups of four: Simon/Peter and his brother Andrew, then James and John the sons of Zebedee comprise the first tier. Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas are the next tier. James the son of Alphaeus; Simon, the one called zealot; Judas son of James; and Judas Iscariot make up the final group. This makes three groups. The prominent leaders come first (Peter, Andrew, James, and John). The moderately well-known ones are next. Of these four, only Matthew/Levi and Philip are mentioned in Luke-Acts outside the lists here and in Acts 1:13, but Philip, Bartholomew/Nathanael, and Thomas all are prominent in John's gospel. The least known (except for Judas) are listed last. In the last group, each one receives a qualification after his name that helps identify these least-known apostles (son of Alphaeus, zealot, son of James, Iscariot). (CC)

**6:14–16** Several apostles were called by more than one name (e.g., Cephas is also known as Simon and Peter). This fact best explains differences found in the names listed here, in Mt 10:1–4, and in Mk 3:16–19. (TLSB)

All twelve, with the exception of Judas Iscariot (South Judah), were from Galilee. That whole region was predominately rural, consisting of small towns and villages. Its people were not elite. They were not known for their education. They were the commonest of the common. They were fishermen and farmers.

There were ranks among the people of that day: (S)

- Priests and Sadducees
- Scribes and Pharisees
- Rural People
- Publicans & Sinners
- Slaves

Simon/Peter and his brother Andrew, then James and John the sons of Zebedee comprise the first tier.

- Peter & Andrew – Fishermen
  - ❖ Peter – Renamed by Jesus to Peter (meaning rock), his original name was *Simon bar Jonah*; was a fisherman from the Bethsaida "of Galilee"
  - ❖ Peter – He was crucified upside down on an x-shaped cross. According to church tradition it was because he told his tormentors that he felt unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus Christ. – In Rome AD 64.
  - ❖ Andrew – The brother of Simon/Peter, a Bethsaida fisherman, and a former disciple of John the Baptist.
  - ❖ Andrew – Was crucified on an x-shaped cross in Patras, Greece. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. His followers reported that, when he was led toward the cross, Andrew saluted it in these words: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it."
  - ❖ Andrew – He continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he expired.
- James & John – Fishermen – Sons of Thunder – L & R of Jesus
  - ❖ James – The Roman officer who guarded James watched amazed as James defended his faith at his trial. Later, the officer walked beside James to the place of execution. Overcome by conviction, he declared his new faith to the judge and knelt beside James to accept beheading as a Christian.
  - ❖ James – Was beheaded in AD 44, first of the Twelve to die (since the addition of Matthias)
  - ❖ James – Son of Zebedee, was a fisherman by trade when Jesus called him to a lifetime of ministry. As a strong leader of the church, James was ultimately beheaded at Jerusalem.
  - ❖ John – no biblical record of death, he is believed to have died of natural causes due to old age. Members of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that John was immortalized and he will live to see the Second Coming of Christ.
  - ❖ John – Faced martyrdom when he was boiled in huge Basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome. However, he was miraculously delivered from death. John was then sentenced to the mines on the prison Island of Patmos.
  - ❖ John – He wrote his prophetic Book of Revelation on Patmos. The apostle John was later freed and returned to serve as Bishop of Edessa

in modern Turkey. He died as an old man, the only apostle to die peacefully.

Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas are the next tier.

- Philip – Fisherman – Witness – Bean Counter
  - ❖ From the Bethsaida of Galilee
  - ❖ Was crucified in AD 54.
- Bartholomew/Nathanael – Fisherman – Guileless
  - ❖ Usually identified with Nathanael, who is mentioned in Jn 1:45-51
  - ❖ Was flayed alive (skinned) and then beheaded; some sources locate his death at Derbend on the Caspian Sea.<sup>[23]</sup>
- Thomas – Fisherman – Skeptic
  - ❖ Aramaic T'oma' = *twin*, and Greek *Didymos* = *twin*. Doubting Thomas.
  - ❖ **Was stabbed with a spear in India during one of his missionary trips to establish the church on the sub-continent. AD 72**
- Matthew – Tax Collector
  - ❖ **Suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, killed by a sword wound.**

James the son of Alphaeus; Simon, the one called zealot; Judas son of James; and Judas Iscariot make up the final group.

- James (Alphaeus) – Less – Little
  - ❖ Generally identified with "James the Less", and also identified by Roman Catholics with "James the Just"
  - ❖ Stoned at age 90 then clubbed to death.<sup>4</sup>
- Thaddaeus – Judas (Son of James) Momma's Baby
  - ❖ In some manuscripts of Matthew, the name "Lebbaeus" occurs in this place. Thaddeus is traditionally identified with Jude.
  - ❖ Was clubbed to death then beheaded.
- Simon – The Zealot
  - ❖ Some have identified him with Simeon of Jerusalem.
  - ❖ Was sawn in half in AD 74.
- Judas – Traitor – Young Zealot – Jehovah Leads
  - ❖ The name Iscariot may refer to the Judaeen towns of Keriath or to the sicarii (Jewish nationalist insurrectionists), or to Issachar. Also referred to as "Judas, the son of Simon."<sup>[Jn 6:71] [13:26]</sup> He was replaced by Matthias as an apostle shortly after Jesus' resurrection.
- Mathias – Judas' replacement, was stoned and beheaded.

**6:14 Bartholomew.** Seems to be (in the Synoptics) the same as Nathanael (in John). Nathanael is associated with Philip in Jn 1:45. (CSB)

**6:15 Matthew.** Another name for Levi. (CSB)

*James son of Alphaeus.* Probably the same as James the younger (Mk 15:40). (CSB)

*the Zealot.* See note on Mt 10:4. (CSB)



**6:16** *Judas son of James.* Another name for Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18). (CSB)

Family relationship reference used here distinguishes this Judas from Judas Iscariot and from the writer of Jude. Apparently, this James was also known as Thaddaeus. (TLSB)

*Judas Iscariot.* Probably the only one from Judea, the rest coming from Galilee. (CSB)

Only Luke concludes the list of the Twelve with the word “betrayer.” A reference to the passion of Jesus rings in the hearer’s ears. All those named here will abandon Jesus in his hour of need, but then all except Judas will be restored (cf. Lk 22:32; Jn 17:12). The apostles themselves will then suffer rejection and persecution as they represent him who was betrayed. (CC)

**6:12–16** Jesus chooses 12 men as His apostles, an office specifically appointed by Jesus for the early years of the Church. Today, Jesus continues to call people for various roles of service in the Church, depending on God’s order, our gifts, and the Church’s needs. There are no self-appointed offices in God’s Church. He calls people and extends His care by His gracious and good will. • “Make them apostles, heralds of Your cross; Forth let them go to tell the world of grace. Inspired by You, may they count all but loss And stand at last with joy before Your face.” Amen. (LSB 682:5) (TLSB)

*Jesus Ministers to a Great Multitude*

**17 And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, 18 who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19 And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.**

**6:17-49** Luke begins the larger section (6:17–49) with Jesus standing on a level place. This could be a level place in the hill country, even on the side of the mountain on which Jesus prayed, the same mountain referred to in Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). Jesus’ healing and teaching take place in this locale after he has come down from the mountain where he prayed and selected the Twelve. (CC)

These crowds came from everywhere, from all of Judea, from the holy city of Jerusalem, and from the coastal towns of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre and Sidon lie outside of “Judea” and represent the pagan/Gentile nations (cf. 10:13–15). The crowds are drawn to Jesus especially because he is the healer they seek. As Luke puts it, “power [δύναμις] was going out from him” (9:19; cf. 8:46). The hearer has seen power come from Jesus to heal (5:17; cf. 8:46). This overwhelming support of the crowds and Jesus’ disciples contrasts with the negative response of the Pharisees and scribes when Jesus healed the paralytic. Here the hearer sees coming together those who will make up the church: Jesus, the teacher and healer; the twelve apostles; the other disciples (the seventy[-two]); and the people coming for healing from unclean spirits and diseases. The prophecy of Jesus in his first sermon in Nazareth is coming true (4:18–19). He is present in the world as the Messiah, who brings release (ἄφεσις) from creation’s bondage to sin. The final words summarize this: “and he was healing all” (9:19). (CC)

**6:17** *with them* – μετ’ αὐτῶν—This refers to the twelve apostles Jesus just named, who come down from the mountain with him. (CC)

*stood on a level place.* Perhaps a plateau, which would satisfy both this context and that in Mt 5:1. (CSB)

The teaching that follows is sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain. Not surprisingly, much of the material recorded here also appears in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). Jesus repeated His teachings at various times and locations, as speakers commonly do. (TLSB)

*crowd* – ὄχλος πολὺς μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ—The crowd of disciples out of which he chose the Twelve seems to be waiting for him when he comes down from the mountain. (CC)

There were three audiences: the crowd of people, the disciples, and the Twelve from among those disciples. (CC p. 283)

*people* – ὄν λαός, which sometimes is a term for the faithful remnant of God’s people, see textual notes and comments at 1:10 and 18:43. (CC p. 265)

**6:18** *came to hear and be healed* – οἱ ἦλθον ἀκούσαι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰαθῆναι—The antecedent—those who came to hear and be healed by Jesus—includes the great crowd of disciples and the great multitude of people (6:17). ὄν ἀκούω as a technical term for catechumens, see comments at 5:1, the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49), the parable of the sower (8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18), and Jesus’ discussion of the new kinship (8:21). ἀκούσαι and ἰαθῆναι are both infinitives of purpose. (CC)

**6:19** *sought to touch him* – ἐζήτουν ἄπτεσθαι αὐτοῦ—The imperfect implies continuous, almost desperate seeking to touch Jesus (infinitive of purpose), and the reason is stated by the causal phrase introduced by ὅτι: “because power was going out from him.” (CC p. 265)

They realized that power was coming from Him and healing them all. As great crowds came to have Jesus heal them, they also came to hear Him preach. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:17–19** Jesus preaches and ministers to the crowds. Jesus continues to touch our lives today through the ongoing ministry of His life-giving Word. • “Lord, Your words are waters living When my thirsting spirit pleads. Lord, Your words are bread life-giving; On Your words my spirit feeds. Lord, Your words will be my light Through death’s cold and dreary night; Yes, they are my sword prevailing And my cup of joy unfailing!” Amen. (LSB 589:3) (TLSB)

### *The Beatitudes*

**20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. 22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.**

**6:20–49** Luke’s Sermon on the Plain, apparently parallel to Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). Although this sermon is much shorter than the one in Matthew, they both begin with the Beatitudes and end with the lesson of the builders. Some of Matthew’s Sermon is found in other portions of Luke (e.g., 11:2–4; 12:22–31, 33–34), suggesting that the material may have been given on various occasions in Jesus’ preaching. (CSB)

**6:20-26** The structure of these beatitudes and woes is parallel, with the woes reversing the status of the beatitudes. The first beatitude speaks about the poor and the first woe about the rich; the second beatitude speaks about the hungry and the second woe about those who are filled; the third beatitude speaks about those who are crying and the third woe about those who are laughing; the fourth beatitude speaks about those who hate and the fourth woe about those who speak well. There are other parallels as well: the first three beatitudes and woes contain ὅτι (“for”), and the fourth beatitude and woe contain ὅταν (“when”) clauses; the second and third beatitudes and woes speak of “now” (νῦν); the fourth and last beatitude and woe contain the expression “for according to the same things their fathers did”—to the prophets (beatitude) or false prophets (woe). (CC p. 285)

**6:20–23** See Mt 5:3–12. The Beatitudes go deeper than material poverty (v. 20) and physical hunger (v. 21). Matthew’s account indicates that Jesus spoke of poverty “in spirit” (Mt 5:3) and hunger “for righteousness” (Mt 5:6). (CSB)

As in the Sermon on the Mount, the first words Jesus speaks are blessings (cf Mt 5:1–12). (TLSB)

When one enters the Christian community by Baptism, these beatitudes describe the character of those who belong to this community. Luke’s hearers then and now should see beyond themselves to the One who was poor for them, who hungered in the wilderness for them, who wept for them as he entered Jerusalem, who received hate, insults, and exclusion for them, who was cast out and crucified outside of Jerusalem as evil – the Son of Man. The Christological character of the beatitudes would not be lost on Luke’s hearers, who see themselves only in terms of how they see Jesus, who understood their baptismal incorporation into his body and into all that he brings. The catechumen, who enters the Christological life through Baptism, is taught about the stage of this life by being told in the gospel how Jesus lived his life in a hostile world that put him to death. Those who join his community will live in this same life in this same world. This Christological reading applies not only to the beatitudes, but also to the rest of the Sermon on the Plain, beginning with the woes that show life without Christ (6:24-26), the imperatives of catechesis that point the way to this Christological life (6:27-38), and the goal of catechesis that describes the enlightenment, the fruit and the foundation of this life (6:39-49). (CC p. 287)

A beatitude is a declaration of blessedness. The state of blessedness that believers enjoy results from the fact that God is in communion with them through his Son, Jesus Christ. (CC p. 267)

A beatitude describes Gospel gifts that pertain to each and every believer. A beatitude may function like a Gospel invitation, in which the blessings of the Gospel are held out as enticements to bring or to keep the hearer in God’s kingdom. (CC p. 268)

Some of the beatitudes function in a manner similar to that of an absolution. Particularly the beatitudes of 6:20–23 are intended to comfort afflicted believers with the assurance that God knows their plight, looks upon them with favor, and will deliver them, filling their need with blessings to the point of overflowing. Like an absolution, a beatitude is a speech act. (CC p. 268)

Most of the beatitudes draw on the Gospel theme of the Great Reversal (the idea that the first shall be last, the last shall be first, also expressed in many other kinds of reversal). The Great Reversal runs throughout Luke and is particularly prominent in the Magnificat. (CC p. 268)

The Great Reversal is strongly eschatological, and so the beatitudes contain the tension between the suffering of believers *now* versus the blessed comfort they will enjoy *then* in the eschaton.

*Already* they possess those blessings through faith in the promise, but those blessings have *not yet* been fully realized. (CC p. 269)

The most important feature of the beatitudes is that they are *Christological*. *All God's blessings are found in Christ, and Christ is the source of every blessing*. Therefore it would be a misuse of the beatitudes to suggest that they are principles or guidelines that inform people of the way they should live so that God will reward their efforts with blessings. That would turn the beatitudes from Gospel into Law. Instead, the purpose of the beatitudes is to instill and strengthen faith in Christ alone. (CC p. 269)

Several important aspects of blessing as described by St. Paul in the context of Eph 1:3 also apply to the Lukan beatitudes. First, the blessings are not rewards for a Christian's supposed accomplishments, but rather are a consequence of election in Christ. (CC p. 270)

Second, *all* God's blessings are in Christ, and every believer receives *all* these blessings—"every spiritual blessing" (Eph 1:3)—by virtue of being *in Christ*. Neither Jesus nor Paul sets up degrees of blessedness, as if some Christians possessed more or greater blessings than other believers. (CC p 270)

Third, these blessings are "*spiritual*" blessings. Therefore the beatitudes are abused if it is suggested that they are principles to live by in order to achieve success in the things of this world, whether that be one's occupation, finances, or relationships. (CC pp. 270-71)

The "spiritual blessing" (Eph 1:3) of the Spirit as the "down payment of our inheritance" (Eph 1:14) highlights the eschatological dimension of blessedness (cf. also "inherit blessing" in 1 Pet 3:9). God's blessings are stored up and waiting "in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3), and the full enjoyment of them must wait until the believer joins Christ there. (CC p. 271)

The OT blessings certainly do include and are the result of God's grace, favor, and imputed righteousness. Sometimes the blessing is also expressly related to the work of the Holy Spirit (Judg 13:24–25; Is 44:3). (CC p. 272)

The following was an article in USA Today in late July 2004 entitled (How many can pass the I'm blessed inspection test?) "For years now, I have taken my neighbors' cars to be inspected. It's a little gift I give them, one of those random 'acts of kindness' if you speak bumper sticker. Most people hate the chore. And it doesn't help any that the inspection station is the District of Columbia isn't in the best part of town. But for some perverse reason, I enjoy the outing. Maybe it has to do with the fact that it's never my car. All pressure is off. Pass, fail – it doesn't really matter to me, although I'm happier when I can bring good news back to the neighborhood. You passed! I always make the trip early in the morning. The station is on the other side of town, so I have to drive across the National Mall to get there. It's one of the few times during the year I get to see the sun rising behind the Capitol, the mist rising off the Tidal Basin, the commuters barreling down the Southeast Expressway with road rage in their eyes. I could do without the last, but two of three isn't bad. So there I was the other morning, waiting in line – Lane 4, to be exact – reading the paper, when I was finally told to pull up to the garage entrance. A man about my age waved me closer, then opened my door. It was 6:55 a.m. 'How are you doing, this morning?' he asked. 'Fine,' I said, bit startled at his perkiness. 'And you?' 'Blessed,' he said. 'Blessed.' I walked into the inspection station and down the long glass hallway where residents can view their cars going through the paces. He said 'blessed,' I thought to myself, blessed. There he was dealing with more-than-likely unhappy people, standing outside on a steamy July morning, and he felt blessed. I can't get the man out of my mind. Why does it seem the people

who appear to have the worst jobs often seem to be the happiest? (I'm not talking about the clerk at my local CVS, who is most unhappy to be there.) I'm talking about the woman here at the newspaper whose job it is to clean the bathrooms. She's the happiest woman in the building. Always smiling. Always say hello. She just had an operation and is now back. Happy as ever. The men who painted my house this summer were happy. I couldn't understand a word they were saying but they were in the hot sun, singing away. Lunch under the tree out front was even a festive affair, constant laughter floating up to my window. And why is it the people with the most seem the most unhappy? (I'm just asking the questions here, folks. I don't have the answers.) Earlier this summer, a senator's wife got into an altercation with another shopper at a local garden center. If I remember correctly, it was over mulch and loading of said mulch into the trunk of the car. Someone was being blocked, I think the senator's was doing the blocking. In the end, charges were filed, lawyers were called, people went to court, 'no comments' were issued. The judge should have just ordered them all to get their cars inspected. Lane 4.

**6:20** *disciples* – οὗς μαθητάς—This word for “disciple” comes from μανθάνω, “to learn.’ ’ Although μαθητής does not occur in the LXX it seems to be equivalent to the Hebrew תַּלְמִיד, which only occurs once in the OT (1 Chr 25:8) but is common in the Talmud (whose name is closely related to it). The Hebrew term designates a student who sits at the feet of a rabbi. Early Christians called disciples “catechumens” or “hearers of the Word” (see comments on 5:1). Both disciples and catechumens learn about the kingdom through the teaching of Jesus. μαθητής occurs frequently. In Acts, “disciple” is the equivalent for “Christian.” (CC p. 278)

Disciples are learners, students, or in early Christian parlance, *catechumens*. Here they are taught by Jesus in the same way the early church would later teach catechumens. (CC p. 283)

*blessed* – μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί—Luke includes no verbs in the beatitudes and the woes. Most Hebrew blessings and curses likewise are nominal sentences without verbs. Verbs are supplied only in brackets in order to capture the force of the original. On μακάριος, see comments at Lk 1:42 on εὐλογημένος. This translation follows the KJV's “blessed” instead of “happy,” found in some translations, since “happy” implies a human emotion, while “blessed” implies that God's grace and favor rest upon the person. The promise of bliss for those who are blessed is eschatological, not temporal. The blessing of joy does not come from being poor, but from the promise of God's kingdom that comes to those who understand the eschatological meaning of their poverty. (CC pp. 278- 279)

*poor* – These are those who refer to those who have only empty hands to bring before their master. They are “beggarly poor” in this context those who know that “all of their righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Is. 64:6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

An emphasis in Lk. Because Jesus blesses the “poor in spirit” in Mt 5:3, the poverty spoken of here may include spiritual humility. (TLSB)

*yours* – ὅτι ὑμετέρα—Each of the first three beatitudes and woes is followed by a subordinate causal clause (translated “for”) that is in the second person. This distinguishes Luke's beatitudes from Matthew's, which are in the third person. The causal ὅτι is not found in the fourth and final beatitude and woe, marking them as separate from the others and functioning as summaries of the previous three beatitudes or woes. (CC p. 279)

*kingdom of God* – ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ—The present tense indicates that the possession of the kingdom of God is a present reality by God's grace. (CC p. 279)

**6:21** *now* – νῦν—This word occurs in the second and third beatitudes, which separates these two beatitudes from the first and last. It contrasts with the future tense in the causal clause, i.e., χορτασθήσεσθε and γελάσετε. This suggests a parallelism between the first and last beatitudes and one between the middle two. It does not indicate that one is more significant than the other, for all four are equally important. It simply suggests that there are different accents. (CC p. 279)

*hunger* – We have an insatiable appetite to know more about Jesus and His Word. Like a person who has been starved devours bread, the believer devours the Word. We hunger for the bread of life, and Jesus feeds us as a Shepherd in Word and body and blood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

Like poverty, this hunger may have a spiritual aspect. (TLSB)

*you shall be satisfied* – χορτασθήσεσθε—This is a theological passive: you will be satisfied by God. (CC p. 279)

For those who are hungering, God fully satisfies us by richly and daily forgiving our sins in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*you will laugh* – They will do this even as we “weep” in this place of tears and sin, God’s ready mercy and grace flow down to us in His means of grace until that day when the Lord “will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 21:14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:22** *whenn people hate you...exclude you* – ὅταν—This word occurs twice and replaces ὅτι as the introduction to the subordinate clauses that describe the state of blessedness. They are temporal instead of causal. This returns us to the first beatitude, which suggests a present condition or one that will soon be a reality. The first ὅταν clause is completed by the final clause “on account of [ἐνεκα] the Son of Man.” The second ὅταν clause expands the first one and explains what it means: you will know you are hated when they exclude you (ἀφορίσωσιν), insult you (ὀνειδίσωσιν), and throw out your name as evil (ἐκβάλωσιν τὸ ὄνομα). L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 107, notes that “the three verbs therefore move from attitude (hate) to action (setting apart), to speech (scorn).” (CC p. 279)

Here Jesus speaks of the persecution and suffering that come to those who by faith belong to Him. Hate leads to setting apart, scorn, and ridicule. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*on account of the Son of Man* – When we confess Jesus, we are also willing to suffer for His sake (1 Peter 4:14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:23** *rejoice* – χάρητε and σκιρτήσατε may suggest joyful dancing, such as accompanies a wedding. σκιρτάω occurred earlier at 1:41, 44, while χαίρω denotes the joy of a feast in 15:32. (CC p. 279)

This is an image of people leaping who cannot contain themselves because of the good fortune that has come to them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:20–23** Jesus blesses the crowds and describes their estates in this life and the life to come. Even amid sorrows, God’s blessings prevail. • Set my heart, dear Savior, on Your blessings and promises, that I remain steadfast in all circumstances. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jesus Pronounces Woes*

**24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. 26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.**

**6:24–26** The four woes are exact opposites of the four blessings just uttered (vv 20–23). Particularly noteworthy is the contrast between the persecution awaiting Jesus’ followers (v 22) and the popularity of those who please men (v 26). (TLSB)

**6:24** *but* – πλήν—This strong adversative begins the woes to show the contrast with the previous beatitudes. (CC p. 279)

*woe* – οὐαί—Woes are found in the OT, particularly prophetic texts, and indicate that the person stands under the judgment of God (e.g., Is 5:8–23; Amos 6:1; Hab 2:6). Jesus warns of “woe” in other places in Luke (10:13—Chorazin and Bethsaida; 11:42–52—Pharisees; 17:1—those who tempt others to sin; 21:23—pregnant women during the last days; 22:22—the betrayer). (CC p. 279)

*to you* – ὑμῖν—The antecedent, those to whom the woes are addressed, is not specified. It is general enough to be addressed to all those who fail to understand that God’s kingdom comes in Jesus, which in the course of Luke’s gospel will include all Jesus’ disciples until after the resurrection. But the hearer knows that the religious establishment fits these categories best. (CC p. 279)

**6:24–26** This section is a point-by-point negative counterpart of vv. 20–22. (CSB)

**6:25** *woe...laugh...weep* – οὐαί, οἱ γελῶντες νῦν, ὅτι πενθήσετε καὶ κλαύσετε—James 4:9 is remarkably similar and illustrates how the traditions in the gospels also shaped the epistles: “Be wretched and mourn [πενθήσατε] and weep [κλαύσατε]. Let your laughter [ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν] be turned to mourning [εἰς πένθος] and your joy to dejection.” (CC p. 280)

*laugh now* – The self-righteous have no time for true sorrow over sin and repentance. For them eternal matters can wait. They laugh and enjoy now the pleasures and lusts of sin in this life, spurning personal responsibility and accountability for their actions. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:26** *when all people speak well of you* – If we are known by the friends we make, we will also be known enemies we make. Jesus warns that those who want to be merely “men-pleasers” or “friends of men” rather than suffer “because of the Son of Man” will be cursed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

**6:24–26** Jesus condemns those who live for today, neglecting the ways of God and the care of His people. When pride and self-interest allure you, turn to the Lord in repentance. Daily He provides for all your needs and forgives you by grace. • Hear my daily confession of sins, O Savior, and set my heart on things above. Amen. (TLSB)

*Love for Enemies*

**27 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 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. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 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. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

**6:27-34** The second section of the Sermon on the Plain is called “The Imperatives of Catechesis” because of the sixteen imperatives that occur in 6:27–38. There is a natural connection between this section and the previous one. If the beatitudes and woes describe the characteristics of disciples or catechumens, who are incorporated into Christ in Baptism, this imperational section describes the shape of the catechumen’s life as he shares in the life of Christ. The beatitudes describe “being” and this series of catechetical imperatives describe “doing.” (CC p. 291)

**6:27-28** *love...do...bless...curse* – ἀγαπάτε ... ποιείτε ... εὐλογεῖτε ... προσεύχεσθε—These four imperatives are present tense, suggesting continuing action, and they are second person *plural*. (CC p. 280)

Jesus clarifies how love for an enemy expresses itself concretely—in blessing and interceding for them. Later in Luke’s accounts, Jesus and Stephen fulfill this command in remarkable and similar ways (Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60). (TLSB)

**6:27** *Love your enemies.* The heart of Jesus’ teaching is love. While the Golden Rule (v. 31) is sometimes expressed in negative form outside the Bible, Jesus not only forbids treating others spitefully but also commands that we love everyone—even our enemies. (CSB)

Jesus takes love, the heart of His teaching, to an unexpectedly deeper level by commanding that His disciples love their enemies. (TLSB)

In the first section, the eight imperatives begin with the imperative that will govern the next six: “Love your enemies” (6:27). This radical command is a call to action, not just emotion, for to love one’s enemies requires an unnatural act of the will. Your enemies are those who hate and persecute you, and the final beatitude (6:22–23) describes hateful persecution in detail (cf. 1:71 in the Benedictus: “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us”). The context here is religious persecution, which Jesus pictures as an inevitable consequence of being part of the baptized community. The general attitude that Christians must have is love for all who persecute them “on account of the Son of Man” (6:22). (CC p. 292)

**6:29** *offer him the other also.* We are not to have a retaliatory attitude. (CSB)

*cloak ... tunic.* The cloak was the outer coat, under which the tunic was worn. (CSB)

Give the inner garment also to one demanding the outer one. Note how this command goes beyond the one spoken by John the Baptist (3:11). (TLSB)

To survive one had to have an outer garment, but Jesus instructs his followers to give up both the inner and the outer garments. This is not to surrender to a robber, but to the persecutor who hates



the believer so much that he would take away the outer garment that is essential to survival. The Christian is not even to struggle to hold on to the inner garment but willingly to allow his persecutors to strip him naked. The believer may be stripped of his property as well, and he should not demand back from those who take his things (Heb 10:34). Disciples must be prepared to be treated violently and stripped of their clothes and their material goods. If they have the mind of Christ in the beatitudes, then they will accept such persecution as to be expected (cf. Jn 15:18–21, 25). (CC p. 293)

The hearer cannot help but think of Jesus' passion, when he himself willingly was beaten and stripped in fulfillment of such prophecies as Is 50:4–11. Jesus himself had no possessions or property except the robe he wore, and even that he gave up without demanding it back. Again, the Sermon on the Plain is Christological, and everything Jesus asks of his disciples, he himself has first done on their behalf. (CC p. 293)

See Exodus 22:26 and note below:

“If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.” (ESV)

Shows the high value of garments, due to the labor and material required to make them by hand. Each evening, out of compassion for the borrower (who needed it to keep warm at night), the lender should return the cloak used as collateral. This large, square outer garment was wrapped around the body or draped over the shoulder, similar to a Roman toga, and reached down to the knees.

**6:31** *as you wish that others.* The Golden Rule. Jesus sets down a variation of “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lv 19:18). (TLSB)

**6:32–34** People typically do favors in order to gain favors. The Roman saying “I give so that you give” (*do ut des*) perfectly encapsulates the spirit of this ethic. Jesus, however, expects more of His followers. He commands them to reflect God's love by giving without expecting any payback. (TLSB)

**6:32** *what benefit is that you you* – ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν—This is translated literally as “grace” instead of “credit” (RSV and NASB) or “thank” (KJV) to emphasize that God's grace is a gift that moves the recipient to give freely without expecting “thanks” or “credit.” (CC p. 280)

The golden rule in terms of *quid pro quo* is something even unregenerate sinners are capable of doing occasionally. But as the beatitudes state, those in Christ are enabled by his grace to do what Christ does, and this is most clearly expressed in the ability to give above and beyond the golden rule. (CC p. 294)

**6:35** *but* – πλήν—This strong adversative brings us back to the theme “love your enemies.” (CC p. 280)

*expecting nothing in return* – μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες—The textual variant μηδένα (⋈ W Ξ pc sy<sup>s-p</sup>) suggests the translation “despairing no one.” This is an attempt to ameliorate the difficulty of the usual meaning (“despair”) in this context. Most translations are similar to “expecting nothing in return.” (CC p. 280)

Lk repeatedly emphasizes the undeserved and unconditional nature of God’s mercy. Cf 7:36–50; 15:11–32; 18:9–14. (TLSB)

**6:36** *b e merciful* – οἰκτίρμονες ... οἰκτίρων—This adjective only occurs elsewhere in the NT in James 5:11. Cf. οἰκτιρμός in Rom 12:1: “by the mercies of God”; 2 Cor 1:3: “the Father of mercies”; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12). It is often used in the LXX in connection with ἐλεήμων. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265, notes that “the concept is close in meaning to ἔλεος (cf. 1:50 note; 10:37) but stresses more the idea of sympathy and pity shown to the unfortunate and needy.” J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 641, notes that God is said to be merciful (οἰκτίρων) in the LXX at Ex 34:6; Deut 4:31; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2. (CC pp. 280-81)

*even as you your Father is merciful.* God’s perfection should be our example and goal (see Mt 5:48). (CSB)

**6:27–36** Jesus overthrows the common ethics of human culture to emphasize the Father’s ways of love and mercy. God calls you to have self-sacrificing love. Pray for wisdom and patience with yourself as you put God’s ways into practice. The Father of all mercy will hear your plea. He is ever ready to forgive and strengthen you. • Lord, lead me to love the ungrateful and the evil, even as You have loved and cared for me. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *Judging Others*

**37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” 39 He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. 41 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 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.**

**6:37-38** After a great climax in the sermon: “Become merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (6:36), there come practical examples of how this mercy is to be shown to others. The prohibition against judging or condemning is not about legitimate judicial decisions in a court of law, but rather, it refers to judgments of believers against unbelievers, and particularly those judgments in the Christian assembly among believers (e.g., Romans 14). These would not simply be the normal kinds of petty criticisms that take place in every community, but judgments and condemnations about doctrine and life that are made without substantial evidence or are based on a faulty understanding of God’s standards. Above all, since Jesus’ disciples represent him and he represents the Father, Jesus does not want his disciples to misrepresent God. If they themselves are judgmental or legalistic, they sully God’s character as a God of grace. While it is true that God will also judge all people, he reveals himself through Jesus and his disciples as a God who delights in showing mercy, not in condemnation (Ezekiel 18, especially v 32). Therefore, Jesus’ disciples are to be characterized by mercy and forgiveness and thus portray God’s character to the world. (CC p. 295)

**6:37** *judge not.* Jesus did not relieve his followers of the need for discerning right and wrong (cf. vv. 43–45), but he condemned unjust and hypocritical judging of others. (CSB)

Because one’s behavior toward others often ends up being paid back in kind—indeed, sometimes even to a greater degree—Jesus continues urging His disciples to be long-suffering. In particular, He prohibits condemning others and instead commends forgiveness. (TLSB)

*judge...condemn* – μή κρίνετε ... μή κριθήτε—In this section (Lk 6:37–38) there are four present, active imperatives (implying continuous action) in the first part of each sentence (the first two stated in the negative and balanced by two positive imperatives). The first two are in synonymous parallelism, as are the last two: “do not judge” parallels “do not condemn,” and “forgive” parallels “give.” Each of the four imperatives is followed by a corresponding passive verb. The first two passives are aorist subjunctives with μή, a strong negation; the last two are future. These four passive verbs are theological passives with God implied as the subject: you will not be judged or condemned *by God*, and you will be forgiven and it will be given to you *by God*. (CC p. 281)

*forgive* – ἀπολύετε—“Forgive” is best here (RSV, KJV, NIV) although “pardon” (NASB) or “acquit” also fit the context as antonyms of “judge” and “condemn.” The Lukan theme of forgiveness employs a variety of vocabulary. ἀφίημι is the more common Lukan verb for “forgive,” occurring thirty-one times in Luke; see especially 5:20–21, 23–24. Its noun ἄφεσις (“release”) occurs twice in the programmatic verse 4:18. ἀπολύω occurs fourteen times in Luke, often meaning “let go, dismiss, send away,” but with the connotation of God’s grace and favor on the departing person in 2:29; 8:38; 9:12. Jesus uses it in a physical healing in 13:12. In the passion narrative, it describes the “release” of Barabbas (23:18, 25), though Pilate wished to “release” Jesus (23:16, 20, 22). (CC p. 281)

“If you forgive, you have this comfort and assurance, that you are forgiven in heaven. This is not because of your forgiving. For God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because He has so promised, as the Gospel teaches. But God says this in order that He may establish forgiveness as our confirmation and assurance, as a sign alongside of the promise” (LC III 95–96). (TLSB)

**6:38** *into your lap*. Probably refers to the way the outer garment was worn, leaving a fold over the belt that could be used as a large pocket to hold a measure of wheat. (CSB)

A generous portion of grain could be poured into the fold of one’s cloak over the belt. Cf Ru 3:15. (TLSB)

μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον σεσαλευμένον ὑπερεκχυννόμενον δώσουσιν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν—Jesus uses the image of corn or grain poured into a vessel where it is pressed down and shaken to make room for more to the point of overflowing, then poured into the fold of a garment (like a pocket) and taken home. The prophet Amos said much the same thing as Jesus did here, but in negative form, when he condemned Israel for selling grain with dishonest scales and small measuring containers (Amos 8:4–6; cf. Micah 6:9–12). (CC p. 281)

Market practices for packing grain to guarantee a good deal. (TLSB)

**6:39** *told them a parable* – εἶπεν δὲ καὶ παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς—This phrase connects this third and final section of the sermon (Lk 6:39–49) to the previous section (6:27–38). Jesus now resorts to parabolic language to make his point. This is the third time παραβολή is used in Luke (after 4:23; 5:36). Its use here anticipates its frequent use in chapter 8 (vv 4, 9, 10, 11) and the rest of the gospel. (CC p. 281)

Jesus uses overt catechetical language to begin this final part of the sermon: “A blind man is not able to lead the way [ὁδηγεῖν = ὁδός, “way,” + ἡγέομαι, “lead”] for a blind man, is he?” (6:39). The verb “lead the way” (ὁδηγεῖν) alludes to the catechetical theme of the “way” (ὁδός; see 1:76). A leader in the way is a teacher or catechist, and the greatest one is Jesus, the speaker of this sermon. “To lead the way” is the verb used by the Ethiopian eunuch to invite Philip to open up the Scriptures, which the eunuch did not understand: “How can I, unless someone guides [ὁδηγήσει] me?” (Acts 8:31). The language of sight versus blindness was established as a Lukan theme beginning with the Nunc Dimittis continuing with the Nazareth sermon, where part of Jesus’ messianic ministry is to open the eyes of the blind (4:18). Jesus does so, both physically with his healing of a blind man as his final miracle before entering Jerusalem (18:35–43) and spiritually with the Emmaus disciples, whose closed eyes (24:16) are opened in the breaking of the bread (24:31, 35). In early Christian literature, Baptism and catechesis were considered “enlightenment” and baptized catechumens were called “illuminantes” or the “enlightened ones.” (CC)

Correspondingly, Jesus speaks of disciples and their teachers with the goal of the disciple being fully trained (κατηρητισμένος, another catechetical term) so that he might be as his teacher—so that the disciple might be like Jesus. Catechesis has as its goal Christian formation: to become like Jesus. Catechesis is dependent on the relationship between teacher and disciple, especially when few catechetical texts are available, as in the church of Luke’s day and in some missionary settings today. (CC)

As we read this verse, it helps to understand that the ground in Palestine is rocky. In Jesus’ time, stone was often dug out from alongside the roads and used to resurface them. This left dangerous pits. Two blind people trying to lead one another would only hurt one another instead. Both would fall into the ditch or pit. This pictured the pit of hell in Jesus’ parable, and that’s just where people end up when they are spiritually blind but keep on insisting they have perfect sight. (LL – Luke)

The first parable concerns the importance of being able to see before daring to lead others. The blind don’t make good guides. The disciple who is not himself enlightened dare not take on the responsibility of teacher. (PBC)

**6:40** Refers to apprentice training. (TLSB)

**6:41-42** Jesus continues His parables about self-deception and the true spiritual sight. Even in our day of protective glasses and goggles, we know how quickly something so small as a speck of sawdust can irritate an eye. To whom does one turn? Certainly not to one who has a plank sticking out of his head. In the Greek of the NT, we read that Jesus was actually painting a picture of someone with a plank or beam in his eye trying to remove a dried twig or piece of straw in someone else’s eye. How ridiculous! Neither of these people could see well enough to help the other! (LL – Luke)

**6:41** *speck ... log*. Jesus used hyperbole (a figure of speech that overstates for emphasis) to sharpen the contrast and to emphasize how foolish and hypocritical it is for us to criticize someone for a fault while remaining blind to our own considerable faults. (CSB)

Hyperbole was a form of humor in Jesus’ day. No doubt people smiled knowingly as they pictured people with huge beams in their eyes, obsessing over a speck of sawdust in the eye of another. (TLSB)

**6:42** *take the log out of your eye* – ἄφες ἐκβάλλω—Here an aorist imperative (ἄφες) comes immediately before an aorist hortatory subjunctive (ἐκβάλλω). (CC p. 281)

*you hypocrite* – ὑποκριτά—In this context, a hypocrite is one who does not see the beam in his own eye. “Hypocrisy” (ὕποκρισις) will be used of the Pharisees (12:1). “Hypocrite” will be used two other times in Luke, of the crowds concerning their inability to analyze the times (12:56) and of a synagogue official and his company concerning the Sabbath (13:15). Cf. Didache 8:1, where the Jews are called “hypocrites.” This term would apply equally well to Christians seeking a legalistic means to salvation, including a return to Judaism and its restrictions (e.g., the Judaizers in Galatia). On the etymology of “hypocrite,” see J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 642–43, who notes that in the synoptic gospels, “the noun *hypokrites*, ‘hypocrite,’ is found only on the lips of Jesus,” and it is not found in John. (CC pp. 281–82)

Undue judgment and criticism lead to hypocrisy and are not to be tolerated. To illustrate this kind of hypocrisy, Jesus resorts to a hyperbolic saying: “Why do you see the speck that is in the eye of your brother and do not consider carefully the log that is in your own eye? ... You hypocrites, first throw out of your eye the log, and then you will see clearly to throw out the speck that is in the eye of your brother” (6:41–42). The idea of a log or large beam of wood in one’s eye is hyperbole, even ridiculous. So the picture of a person who is not even aware of the log and tries to perform the delicate task of removing a speck from someone else’s eye while he himself cannot see clearly is ludicrous. Since a log obviously would prevent sight, the saying is similar to the earlier one about a blind man leading a blind man. Being blind in itself is a serious handicap, but not a sin (cf. John 9, especially v 41). But to presume to teach others when the ostensible teacher does not know “the way” is arrogant hypocrisy. (CC)

This kind of hypocrisy is deadly because it negates everything Jesus has taught so far. It is the way of darkness, because eyes filled with logs cannot see properly. Catechesis removes the logs and enlightens. These words are directed to the disciples, because this type of hypocrisy is a characteristic common to all people, although the Pharisees are a prime example. The disciples must beware of not becoming like Pharisees as they inherit Jesus’ teaching and ministry of catechesis. To become “superior” to their teacher, Jesus, is to become like a Pharisee. Throughout the gospel are many examples of those who think they are better than Jesus as they constantly put him to the test (e.g., Luke 14). (CC)

Greek word referred originally to an actor wearing a mask. It was then applied to those pretending to be who they were not. (TLSB)

Hypocrite! Jesus says. “Clear your own spiritual sight first. Use God’s Word, God’s truth to remove the misbeliefs that keep you from clearly seeing reality. Until you do that, you cannot show someone else the truth. (LL – Luke)

This term applied to such as person shows how serious Jesus is when He warns against fault-finding. As used by Jesus this word has a more general meaning than just one who pretends to be what his is not. It is a strong term of condemnation often applied to Pharisees; here it is directed to one claiming to be a disciple of Jesus. Any disciple who desires to correct the lives of other must see very clearly before daring to correct the lives of others. (PBC)

**6:37–42** Jesus teaches the disciples to judge mercifully and lead faithfully. We can never outgrow our good teacher, who by grace judged and declared us not guilty while we were yet dead in our

sins. His grace in our lives—measured, pressed, and shaken—always runs over. • Grant me a forgiving heart, merciful Judge, even as You have forgiven me. Amen. (TLSB)

### *A Tree and Its Fruit*

**43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

**6:43–45** An example from nature underscores how and why hypocrisy is invariably exposed. Ultimately, bad trees yield bad fruit, while good trees produce useful fruit. (TLSB)

**6:43** *good...bad* – καλόν ... σαπρόν—A tree that is good in quality cannot produce rotten fruit because that would be contrary to its *character*. καλός accents the good quality that produces that which is good. (CC p. 282)

**6:44** *is known* – γινώσκεται—God knows what kind of tree each one is. Jesus is teaching his disciples to recognize the linkage between one’s true nature and the manifestation of it in the final results. (CC p. 282)

**6:45** *good man brings out good* – ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν—Luke switches from καλός to ἀγαθός to continue his accent on quality. Perhaps the reason for the change is that καλός tends to be used of inanimate objects and ἀγαθός of human beings. (CC p. 282)

*heart* – καρδιά—This word has already occurred frequently in Luke and will occur a number of other times. Here it occurs twice as a synonym for the mind. This corresponds with Luke’s use of “knowledge” for faith. Out of the good treasures of the heart (mind) and out of the abundance of the heart (mind) will come good things and good speech. (CC p. 282)

The sermon now moves to a straightforward illustration and application of what has already been clearly established. Again, the issue is the Christological character of a disciple and the fruit of that character. The opening illustrations of plants and their fruits lay down the principle from which the application is made. “Character precedes action. A person’s deeds therefore revealed the state of the ‘heart.’ The fact that this natural progression could be camouflaged, of course, is what gives ‘hypocrisy’ its sting.” (CC p. 298)

Over time, what lies hidden within the heart becomes visible in our words, actions, and reactions. (TLSB)

**6:43–45** A person’s words and deeds—not appearances—are the true marks of one’s character. In repentance and through the Gospel, the Lord grants you a pure heart, set free from sin by God’s grace. • Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might bear the fruit of faith. Amen. (TLSB)

*Build Your House on the Rock*

**46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears 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 that house was great.”**

**6:46** *Lord, Lord* – κύριε κύριε—Jesus has been called “Lord” by Elizabeth (1:43), the angel at his birth (2:11), Peter (5:8), and the leper (5:12). Jesus called himself Lord of the Sabbath in 6:5. (CC p. 282)

*what I tell you* – οὐ ποιεῖτε ἃ λέγω—The immediate referent of “the things I say” is the Sermon on the Plain. (CC p. 282)

The disparity between verbal commitment and faithful practice always plagues people (cf Ezk 33:30–33). (TLSB)

**6:47-49** This parable demonstrates the futility of merely paying lip service to God’s Word. In the end, the house of the foolish builder cannot withstand life’s storms. In contrast, life’s torments are often defining moments for those who faithfully follow Christ, for they reveal the unshakable strength of a faith rightly placed in Him. Hus: “Christ grounds and builds his church on himself, the Rock, when he so influences her that she hears and does his words, for then the gates of hell do not prevail against her” (*The Church*, p 73). (TLSB)

*hears...does them* – ἀκούων μου τῶν λόγων καὶ ποιῶν αὐτοῦς ... ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας καὶ μὴ ποιήσας—In both 6:47 and 8:21 Jesus refers to those who “do” (ποιέω) the Word. The idea is similar to 11:28, where he pronounces as blessed those who hear and “keep” (φυλάσσω) the Word. See textual note on 11:28 for an explanation. (CC p. 282)

Note the three participles in this verse: coming, hearing, and doing. This is the movement from evangelization to catechesis, Baptism, and living as one alive in Christ. On ἀκούων as a term for a catechumen, see comments at 5:1. On “hearers of the Word” see 6:18 (ἀκούσαι αὐτοῦ) and 6:27 (τοῖς ἀκούουσιν). (CC p. 282)

**6:48** *foundation* – θεμέλιον ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν—In Luke “foundation” occurs only here (6:48–49) and 14:29. Lk 4:16–30 is the programmatic foundation of Christ’s ministry. The apostolic foundation of the church is laid with Peter and Matthew (the first gospel writer) in 5:1–32 and the other apostles in 6:12–16. Thus the church’s foundation is Christ and the apostles (cf. θεμέλιος in Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:10–12; Eph 2:20; 1 Tim 6:19; 2 Tim 2:19; Heb 6:1; 11:10; Rev 21:14). In light of Mt 16:18 and of the likelihood that Matthew’s gospel preceded Luke’s and was utilized by Luke, πέτραν (“rock”) here may well allude to Peter and the church’s apostolic foundation. (CC pp. 282-283)

*to shake* – σαλευῖσαι—See Lk 7:24 in reference to John the Baptist and 21:26–27 in reference to the final judgment when the Son of Man comes in a cloud. On remaining unshaken in the judgment, see also Heb 12:27–28. (CC p. 283)

*great* – μέγα—This is placed last in the sentence for emphasis. (CC p. 283)

**6:46–49** Jesus authoritatively teaches about the ethic of God’s kingdom. Unfortunately, His teachings are so radically demanding and countercultural that even the most dedicated believers fail to live up to them. It is good news indeed, then, that Jesus does not merely command long-suffering, forgiveness, and love of enemies. He Himself puts them into practice, lovingly bearing with us and forgiving us! • Lord Jesus, lead me to know the blessings of a life that reflects Your divine qualities of compassion, forbearance, and forgiveness. Amen. (TLSB)