**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 14** Luke 6:12-26 Blessing and Woes!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe pages 76-81.
3. How does Jesus’ sermon apply to us today?
4. What four essentials to happiness can be identified in Jesus’ teaching?
5. Read Luke 6:12-16.

**Authority to Call!**

The theme of Jesus’ authority is written large over chapters four through six of Luke, extending through the present text, where it culminates. Beginning in 4:6-7, Satan offers Jesus an easy way to authority and victory, saying, “To you I will give all this authority and their [the kingdoms of the world] glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” Next in 4:28, 29, after Jesus’ initial exercise of authoritative teaching, Luke describes his horrifying rejection: “When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.”

Undaunted, Jesus went to Capernaum, where his authority was then recognized. Luke records in 4:32, “They were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.” And again, in verse 36, “And they were all amazed and said to one another, ‘What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”

Following this, Luke links a series of episodes that explicitly demonstrate Jesus’ authority. In 4:38-44 we see Jesus laboring into the night healing and rebuking both demons and illnesses. Then in 5:1-11 his authority is showcased in his calling Peter, James, and John to fish for men. In 5:12-16 his dramatic healing of the man full of leprosy demonstrated his authority and ability to eradicate the effects of sin. In 5:17-26 Jesus coupled his healing of the paralytic with the sovereign declaration of his authority to forgive sins (v. 24): “‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the man who was paralyzed—‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.’”

This is followed in verses 27-32 by an assertion of authority in his calling of the arch-sinner Levi to become his follower. The authority motif carries on in Jesus’ claim that he is the divine bridegroom and the implicit giver of new wine in verses 33-39. Then in chapter 6 Jesus made a dramatic declaration of his authority in verse 5 by proclaiming, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

Now in verses 12-16 the authority theme peaks in Jesus’ calling of the twelve apostles. This was an act of momentous importance for the nation Israel and for the church. *Twelve* apostles were named in implicit reference to their call to minister to the twelve tribes of Israel. Ultimately their names would be preserved in the very architecture of Heaven (cf. Revelation 21:14). The call of the Twelve affords us an opportunity to reflect on where and how Jesus got his authority, and the effect of his authority upon the lives of his followers.[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. To where did Jesus retreat, and what did he spend the entire night doing?
2. What important matter was He more than likely praying about?

**A Dependent Authority!**

*His Dependent Prayer*

We begin by seeing that Jesus’ authority was rooted in prayer: “In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God” (v. 12). It was Jesus’ custom to get away by himself to pray…

But what is even more arresting is that “all night he continued in prayer”—the entire night! If he began after sundown at, say, 8:00 p.m. and prayed until sunup (6 a.m.), he spent ten hours in focused prayer (the Greek word translated “all night he continued” expresses persevering energy). As Jesus prayed on the mountainside, the moon ran its nocturnal course, the night’s temperature modulated with the hours, and morning dew dampened his robes.

Why Jesus’ lengthy engagement with the Father? Because he had huge decisions to make regarding who should comprise the Twelve. Jesus was a human being just like us, except   
that he was without sin. And though he was God, he placed the exercise of his attributes   
(his omniscience, for example) at the discretion of the Father. Thus, he did not possess all knowledge, and his unaided knowledge was not sufficient to know whom to choose.

Moreover, Jesus had numerous disciples, so it is conceivable that during some of those ten hours he presented them individually to his Father, so the nod would be given to those who were to become the Twelve. Three years later, at the end of his life, Jesus would lift the Twelve to God in prayer saying, “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word” (John 17:6).

*Our Dependent Prayer*

The spiritual logic is inescapable. If the eternal Son of God could not function as Jesus without dependent prayer, how much more is it essential for us adopted sons and daughters. What folly if we frame our lives with prayer as window dressing but do not really pray.   
What arrogance to understand Jesus’ necessity but reject it for ourselves![[2]](#endnote-2)

1. Read Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; 5:16; 9:18, 28-29; 22:32, 41-46; 23:34, 46.   
   What do you learn from Jesus’ example of prayer?

* From the above verses, what were some of the things Jesus prayed for?
* According to Hebrews 7:25, what is Jesus doing in heaven right now for us?
* Describe your prayer life? Why do you think men find it so difficult to pray?
* According to Hebrews 4:14-16, what should we do, particularly when we feel weak, tempted, and in need? (Of course, we should do this every day!)

1. Apparently, when Jesus called his disciples there were a large number of men following him. From this group, Jesus chose twelve men and appointed them to be apostles. Explain the difference between a disciple and an apostle?
2. Read Acts 4:13.
3. What type of men did Jesus choose to be part of the Twelve apostles?
4. What lesson do you learn from this?

**Closing Reflections**

Jesus’ authority while here on earth was a dependent authority—he lived a life of   
dependent prayer. But his incarnation and death were followed by his glorious resurrection and ascension.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

The exercise of his all-power, all-presence, and all knowledge is at his sovereign discretion. How dare we live in anything but humble, prayerful dependence upon him who was our model while here on earth and who is now our intercessor and sovereign Lord. The logic of spirituality demands a life of dependent prayer.

Jesus’ authority is eternally effectual. He sovereignly called twelve nobodies whose names will be forever written on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem (except for Judas Iscariot, who was replaced by Matthias). And when he chooses nobodies like us, he writes our names on the eternal Book of Life (cf. Revelation 20:15).

As it was with the apostles, the calls to ministry that come to each of us are also endowed with the power to live out the call. Our ordinariness is the occasion for his extraordinariness, our weakness for his power.

Because all authority in Heaven and on earth are his, nothing makes sense except absolute submission to his will and a humble, prayerful dependence in every part of our lives.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. Read Luke 6:17-26 along with Matthew 5:3-12.

**A Point of Clarification**

When the rising sun ended Jesus’ night-long prayer, he knew the names of those who would be the Twelve. So, the Lord immediately summoned his disciples, who by then had become a considerable number, and announced the twelve names to the throng. We surmise that Jesus instructed his followers about the meaning of his sovereign choice, perhaps answering some questions and calming some fears.

Then with the sun standing high, Jesus initiated a signal public event. “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, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases” (vv. 17, 18a). The vast assembly would naturally have fallen into concentric arcs. Close about Jesus were the Twelve, self consciously aware of their new status. Around them gathered a larger contingent of disciples, learners ready to assist in any way. Beyond them ranged a rich mixture of humanity that had come some distance to see and hear Jesus, from the port cities in the northwest and from the southern hamlets of Judea as well as from the great city of Jerusalem. This was the first time the Twelve stood with Jesus in a public, official capacity. The air was charged with the dramatic tension…

Notice that the sermon is introduced in verse 20 with the phrase, “He lifted up his eyes on   
his disciples, and said,” which clearly indicates that the sermon was specifically for his personal followers—the Twelve and the disciples. It was not directed to the crowds, though they were welcome to listen. The direct second person plural, “Blessed are you,” addresses his disciples. Thus, we have here a profile of what a disciple is to be—poor, hungry, sorrowful, rejected.

This is radical preaching. Luke’s beatitudes are four spiritual H-bombs, concentrated theological epigrams that detonate with increasing effect, blowing away shallow talk   
of discipleship and thereby calling for true commitment.[[4]](#endnote-4)

**The Blessing of Poverty**

1. Verse 20 promises, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom   
   of God.” Verse 24 warns, “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.”
2. Read Matthew 19:16-30. What lessons do you learn from this?
3. What lessons do you learn from the following verses?

* Psalm 49:16-17
* Proverbs 30:8-9
* Isaiah 61:1
* James 2:5
* 1 Timothy 6:10

In his book, *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn writes:

John D. Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died, someone asked his accountant, “How much money did John leave?” The reply was classic: “He left…*all* of it!”

*You can’t take it with you!*

If that point is clear in your mind, you’re ready to hear the secret of the Treasure Principle.

**The Treasure Principle**

Jesus takes that profound truth, “You can’t take it with you,” and adds a stunning qualification. By telling us to store up treasures for ourselves in Heaven, He gives us a remarkable corollary, which I call the Treasure Principle:

**You can’t take it with you—but you can send it on ahead.**

Anything we try to hang on to here will be lost. But anything we put into God’s hands will be ours for eternity. If that doesn’t take your breath away, you don’t understand it.

If we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in Heaven that will never stop paying dividends. Whatever treasures we store up on Earth will be left behind when we leave. Whatever treasures we store up in Heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.[[5]](#endnote-5)

1. Many believers in America have been blessed with wealth. Thus, they are constantly assaulted with the temptation to rely on riches rather than on God.   
   Is it possible to have wealth and not rely upon it? Is it possible to have wealth   
   and feel the need for God? Is it possible to have wealth and remain humble?

**The Blessing of Hunger**

1. Verse 21 promises, “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied” Verse 25 warns, “Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry!”
2. What do you learn from the following verses?

* Psalm 42:1-2
* Matthew 5:6
* John 4:13-14
* John 6:35

1. Read Philippians 3:7-11 along with the following.

The key is to keep on hungering, as Kierkegaard taught with this story:

Soren Kierkegaard, a philosopher, and theologian of the nineteenth century, often observed the domestic geese in his native Denmark. He saw something in them a parable for the life of the church, which he recorded in his journals, a parable that is just as important for us today.

He tells the story of a flock of domestic geese that live contentedly in a farmyard. When they were hungry, they would eat from a plentiful supply of food; when they were cold, they would shelter themselves in the warm homes provided. They had few cares and could do whatever they wanted and to while away the time they would chatter amongst themselves, discussing the quality of the food, the warmth of their homes, or any manner of things that were important to them. It was an idyllic life.

Now, once a week they would collect together in the corner of the yard and sit down under the shade of a tall oak tree. This was the highlight of their week. At this time an elderly gander would tell them stories, stories that he had been told by his father when he was young, stories that had been passed on to his father from his grandfather, stories that went back many generations before that. He would tell them about their forebears: the wild geese.

For not all geese lived in the comfort of the farm. A long time ago they too had been wild. They had wings that could soar into the heavens. They were not constrained by the small horizon of the farm, but their horizon was the open sky. Their food was what nature provided. Their shelter was what they could find. But if the weather grew cold, or the food became scarce, they would fly on to another place where the weather was warmer and the food more plentiful.

The old gander would tell them these stories so that the geese would remember who they were: That God had made them to be free and to fly.

Now, after the geese heard the stories, they would flap their wings and run about the farmyard in excitement. They were inspired by them. Yet, after they had flapped their wings and run about for a while, they would say to each other how great the stories were, how wonderful it is to know their heritage as wild geese, that they were made free and able to fly, but they would then waddle back to their usual place.

Perhaps, the only time they made a really determined effort to fly was at Christmas time when the farmer came and gathered many of them up, but, by then, they were too fat and tender to ever get off the ground.[[6]](#endnote-6)

1. What lessons do you learn from the Philippians passage and the above parable?

**The Blessing of Sorrow**

1. Verse 21b promises, “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”   
   Verse 25b warns, “Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.”
2. What do you learn from the following?

* Proverbs 17:22
* Isaiah 53:3
* Luke 13:34
* Luke 19:41-42

1. Read the following and state what you learn: Isaiah 25:6-8 and Revelation 21:4.

**The Blessing of Rejection**

1. Verse 22 promises, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.” Verse 26 warns, “But woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.”
2. What do you learn from the following verses?

* Isaiah 53:3
* John 15:18-20
* 2 Timothy 3:12

1. What do you learn from the following passage of Scripture concerning   
   the fate/destiny of persecuted believers?

* Isaiah 25:8
* Hebrews 11:13-16; 32-40

Final thoughts: What were the two most important truths you learned from this lesson and how will they change the way you live your life going forward?

1. . Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 211-212. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Hughes, 212-213. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Hughes, 216-217. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Hughes, 219-220. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principal*, (New York: Multnomah, 2017), 11.- [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.maxelon.co.uk/2015/01/domestic-geese/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)