

CONCERNING THE WAY

January 31, 2012

LESSON 127: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



Chapter 6

We are working our way through the book of Luke, and we must keep reminding ourselves that this is the story of the King! The Old Testament has many prophecies of the coming Messiah, the King, but when He came as the prophecies said He would; His own people did not recognize Him. Jesus is the King; He is God Himself, so when you see what Jesus is doing and saying, remember that it is God doing these things. That's why we must constantly study the Bible for ourselves, so that we don't forget, and it is so easy for us to forget.

Luke 6:1-2 One time Jesus was walking through some grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. (2) Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on Sabbath days?"

- The issue here is not that the disciples were snacking on heads of grain that they picked as they went along, that was allowed according to Deuteronomy 23:25:

Deuteronomy 23:25 "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain."

- So, this wasn't the problem. The issue was that it was against the Law to do any work on the Sabbath day (Saturdays). This is one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). The Pharisees considered what the disciples were doing as threshing and preparation of food, which was work.
- Now let's see if we can visualize this. What they're doing is just grabbing a head of grain as they were walking along, flicking it to get the grain out and eat it. And the original Greek here is that these guys kept saying to Jesus, over and over, oh, look at that, oh, look at that, oh, look what he's doing, etc. They probably had box lunches for themselves while this was going on.
- So they're following Jesus around, saying you're breaking this law, you're busting this regulation, etc. Excuse me, what's wrong with this picture? Who are they accusing of breaking the regulations? The guy that originally gave it on Mt. Sinai. So you know that there's something wrong with the way these guys are reading their Bibles. If you're so screwed up that you can watch the One that gave you the law and tell Him that He's breaking it, He doesn't know what He's doing, but you really know, something is wrong about how they're interpreting the law, isn't there? Let's see how Jesus responds:

Luke 6:3-5 Jesus answered them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions became hungry? (4) How was it that he went into the house of God, took the Bread of the Presence and ate it, which was not lawful for anyone but the priests to eat, and then gave some of it to his companions?" (5) Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

- The bread refers to the "showbread," twelve loaves prepared weekly for the tabernacle and later, the temple (See Exodus 25:30; 35:13; 39:36; Leviticus 24:5-9). The loaves were placed on a table in the holy

place of the tabernacle, on the north side opposite the lampstand (Exodus 26:35). It was the duty of the priest each Sabbath to place fresh bread on the table; the loaves from the previous week were then given to the priests, who ate them in the holy place, because they were considered sacred (Lev. 24:9). These were the loaves that David requested from Ahimelech for himself and his men (1Samuel 21:1-6, also Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28). There was no other food available for David and his soldiers, so the priests allowed them to eat the showbread.

- What is Jesus getting at? He's not saying that the law is bad, but there's been a disconnect going on with the way these people look at the law. They are thinking of the law as a product of human people, like a mechanical thing, just like programming a computer. I'm going to stick this program in a computer and I don't have to make any decisions, I can go on auto pilot the rest of my Christian life. That's legalism. What have I done when I've done that? Where's my relationship with the Lord? I have made my life all about a to-do list. That's what my flesh; my old sin nature wants to do, so that my conscience isn't bothered. But my conscience is what makes me aware of my accountability to God.

Luke 6:6-11 Once, on another Sabbath, Jesus went into a synagogue and began teaching. A man whose right hand was paralyzed was there. (7) The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Jesus closely to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, in order to find a way of accusing him of doing something wrong. (8) But Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to the man with the paralyzed hand, "**Get up, and stand in the middle of the synagogue.**" So he got up and stood there. (9) Then Jesus asked them, "**I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?**" (10) He looked around at all of them and then said to the man, "**Hold out your hand.**" The man did so, and his hand was restored to health. (11) The others were furious and began to discuss with each other what they could do to Jesus.

- The background for this is the regulations that the religious authorities had created above and beyond the Law of Moses that only if life was endangered should one try to heal on the Sabbath (see the Mishnah, m. Shabbat 6.3; 12.1; 18.3; 19.2; m. Yoma 8.6).
- Verse 11 – it looks like this could be where the enemies of Jesus started plotting against Him.
- The point of these two events on two different Sabbath days was to point out that Jesus has authority over matters of the Law; He is Lord of the Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath, while extremely important as a day of remembrance and rest and worship, was not to be a legalistic burden, but a blessing and even as a special opportunity "to do good." God gave it to people for their benefit, not as a restriction.

Luke 6:12-16 Now it was in those days that Jesus went to a mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. (13) When daylight came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also called apostles: (14) Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, (15) Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (who was called the Zealot), (16) Judas (the son of James), and Judas Iscariot (who became a traitor).

- Jesus had a number of disciples (followers) and from those He picked 12 who were to be close to Him. These were specifically called apostles (apostolous) as opposed to the term disciples (mathētas). Apostles were those sent out as messengers with special authority Christ delegated to them.
- In the various lists of the twelve, Simon (that is, Peter) is always mentioned first (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:16-19; Acts 1:13) and the first four are always the same, though not in the same order after Peter.
- Bartholomew (meaning "son of Tolmai" in Aramaic) could be another name for Nathanael (mentioned in

John 1:45).

- The title Zealot means that this Simon was a political nationalist before coming to follow Jesus. He may not have been technically a member of the particular Jewish nationalistic party known as "Zealots", but just someone who was zealous for Jewish independence from Rome. You could think of him as "Simon the patriot".

Luke 6:17-19 Then Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, along with many of his disciples and a large gathering of people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. (18) They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Even those who were being tormented by unclean spirits were being healed. (19) The entire crowd was trying to touch him, because power was coming out from him and healing all of them.

- The sermon recorded next in verses 17-49 is a shorter version of the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7. Both sermons are addressed to disciples, begin with beatitudes, end with the same parables, and have generally the same content. However, in Luke the "Jewish parts" of the sermon (the interpretation of the Law) are not included. This fits with Luke's purpose, which was to write a gospel for everyone, not just to the Jews. It could have been the same sermon or just a different version from a different time and place. Matthew says that Jesus was "on a mountainside" (Matt. 5:1), whereas Luke said Jesus was on a level place (Luke 6:17). But, Jesus could have been on a level place, and still been teaching on a mountainside (look again at verses 12 and 17).
- Jesus' intent with the Sermon on the Mount was to clarify the intent of the original Law of Moses, which He had given at Mt. Sinai. The problem was that it was being misinterpreted. Israel had been taken over by Pharisees, Pharisaism. And what the Pharisees did, we can also do, in fact we see it done all the time. What they had done was bureaucratize this great sacred law of the Old Testament. They organized it into a set of do's and don'ts and even added to it to a ridiculous degree. The law was addressed to the heart by the King of Kings. They had made it into regulations. Let's look at an example of this. This is from a book called the Mishna, a compilation of what the Pharisees taught in Jesus day.
 - Listen to how stupid this is, "An egg may not be put beside a kettle on the Sabbath so that it shall get cooked. Nor may it be wrapped with hot wrappings." See, you weren't supposed to do any work on the Sabbath, and cooking an egg was considered work. But some people got sneaky and invented ways to get around that. You put it just near the kettle or use a hot wrapping and wrap the egg so you're not doing any work. So they had to include a law against the hot egg gimmick. "Nor may it be buried in hot sand or the dust of the road so it gets roasted." So here's two more ways that people were cooking their eggs on the Sabbath day without doing any work. Every time someone would figure out a new way to cook an egg on the Sabbath day, they'd have to pass another law. This whole section is devoted on how to cook eggs. And we could go on and on. Sometime when you want a good laugh, you ought to go to the library and pull out the Mishna, or find a copy on the internet. It's great background reading for the New Testament; it shows just how ridiculous religious life had become in Israel by the time of Jesus' day.
- One of the things that Jesus was trying to do in the Beatitudes was to take the text of the Old Testament and explain it, because by the time of Jesus these Pharisees thought they knew the text, but they didn't really know the text. They had this arrogant attitude that they knew more than anybody else, that they were so good and everybody else was way down below. Legalism always does that. Martin Luther had

a great quote in his commentary on the book of Romans about legalism and grace. He said that “the godly people that are the real godly people are more interested in their shortcomings than their neighbor’s shortcomings.” That’s the mark of grace.

- Jesus began His sermon with a series of blessings and woes on His listeners. The items are placed in two sets of four—four blessings and four woes which parallel each other.

Luke 6:20 Then Jesus looked at his disciples and said, "How blessed are you who are destitute, because the kingdom of God is yours!"

- The world thinks being blessed is having a lot of material possessions and financial security. In the Old Testament the authors recognized that the truly blessed (or happy) individual is one who trusts God, who hopes for and waits for Him, who fears and loves Him (Deuteronomy 33:29; Psalm 2:12; 32:1-2; 34:8; 40:4; 84:12; 112:1).
- Matthew referred to “the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3), but Luke simply wrote “poor.” Jesus’ audiences were physically poor. Luke already mentioned twice that those who followed Jesus left everything (Luke 5:11, 28). There is also the aspect of being poor spiritually, which all of us are. That is the attitude that we must come to Jesus with. We have nothing to commend ourselves to God, we are destitute.
- Jesus, as the King, had the authority to tell them that they would have the Kingdom of God. They were much better off being poor, following Jesus, and having a part of the kingdom of God than being rich and not having a part of the kingdom. That is why they were blessed.

Luke 6:21 How blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be satisfied! How blessed are you who are crying now, because you will laugh!

- These next two blessings have future fulfillments. The hungry will be satisfied, and the ones who cry will laugh. The disciples who would hunger and cry because they followed Jesus would eventually be vindicated for their faith in Him.

Luke 6:22-23 How blessed are you whenever people hate you, avoid you, insult you, and slander you because of the Son of Man! (23) Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because your reward in heaven is great! That's the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

- This was to become a common state of events for the disciples because of following Jesus. They would be hated, excluded, insulted, and rejected. Yet they would be happy (“blessed”) because of their reward in heaven and because they were following in the footsteps of the true prophets (as opposed to the false ones in verse 26).

Luke 6:24-26 "But how terrible it will be for you who are rich, because you have had your comfort! (25) How terrible it will be for you who are full now, because you will be hungry! How terrible it will be for you who are laughing now, because you will mourn and cry! (26) How terrible it will be for you when everyone says nice things about you, because that's the way their ancestors used to treat the false prophets!"

- Here are the woes in contrast to the blessings. This is not a condemnation of having wealth, but the key is where your heart is. Jesus promises condemnation to those who are uncaring of others, looking only to their own comforts. What those people have received in this life is all they will get.
- I want to include here a passage from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew that I think is very

important:

Matthew 5:17-20 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I didn't come to destroy them, but to fulfill them, (18) because I tell you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished. (19) So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (20) because I tell you, unless your righteousness greatly exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!"

- Jesus was not presenting a rival system to the Law of Moses and the words of the Prophets, but a true fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets—in contrast with the Pharisees' traditions. "The Law and the Prophets" refer to the entire Old Testament.
- Jesus' fulfillment would include the smallest Hebrew letter, the "jot" (Hebrew - yôd), and even to the smallest stroke of a Hebrew letter, the "tittle." In English a jot would correspond to the dot above the letter "i" (and look like an apostrophe), and a tittle would be like the difference between a "P" and an "R". The small angled line that completes the "R" is like a tittle. These things are important because letters make up words and even a slight change in a letter might change the meaning of a word.
- Jesus would fulfill the Law by obeying it perfectly and would fulfill the prophets' predictions of the Messiah and His kingdom. But He said something earthshaking to the people there. The righteousness they would all aspire to, that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law was not good enough to be able to enter in to the kingdom Jesus was offering. The righteousness He demanded was not just external; it was a true inner righteousness based on faith in God's Word (Romans 3:21-22). That righteousness can only come when we trust Christ for salvation and He places His righteousness on us.
- It's interesting that the Lord Jesus Christ almost went out of his way to offend the scribes and Pharisees. The angriest exchanges did not come between Jesus and the politicians; it did not occur between Jesus and the prostitutes and murderers, what we would call the gross sinners. The angriest exchanges in the Gospels came between Jesus and the legalists, the religious authorities.

Luke does not include the following admonitions in the sermon that Matthew describes, but here they are, with very little comment. Most of them have to do with pointing out to the Jews living then, and to us today, that our actions aren't all that's important. It's our thoughts and motivations.

Matthew 5:21-37 "You have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago, 'You must not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will be subject to punishment.' (22) But I say to you, anyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be subject to punishment. And whoever says to his brother 'Raka!' will be subject to the Council. And whoever says 'You fool!' will be subject to hell fire.

(23) "So if you are presenting your gift at the altar and remember there that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there before the altar and first go and be reconciled to your brother. Then come and offer your gift. (25) Come to terms quickly with your opponent while you are on the way to court, or your opponent may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. (26) I tell you with certainty, you will not get out of there until you pay back the last dollar!"

(27) "You have heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' (28) But I say to you, anyone who stares at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (29) So if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your body parts than to have your whole body thrown into hell. (30) And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you. It is better for you to lose one of your body parts than to have your whole body go into hell."

(31) "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.' (32) But I say to you, any man who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

(33) "Again, you have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago, 'You must not swear an oath falsely,' but 'You must fulfill your oaths to the Lord.' (34) But I tell you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, because it is God's throne, (35) nor by the earth, because it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the Great King. (36) Nor should you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. (37) Instead, let your message be 'Yes' for 'Yes' and 'No' for 'No.' Anything more than that comes from the evil one."

- So what was Jesus trying to accomplish with these moral sayings? Was He saying that you can only get to heaven if you are this good? Why do you think Luke left them out?
- It seems that Jesus (who had not been to the cross yet) was trying to make a point – trying to drive these Jewish people to repentance, to realize that they were sinners who needed something besides trying and failing to keep the Law, something beyond human effort.
- All of us are convicted by these sayings, it should make us all realize that we have no chance if this is what is required, and we're all going to hell! It should make us turn to Christ, ask forgiveness, and ask for His righteousness to cover us.
- Here's a good illustration. What mattered in the Pharisees view, was whether a murderer got caught (verse 21, the original Greek really means "court", not punishment). So what was the motive not to kill somebody? Not that it was wrong, but because you'd go to jail! In divorce, what was the issue? You can divorce but you have to have the right paper work. Don't sweat it as long as the paper work is in order. Do you see what has happened here? Total disconnect between the spirit of the law in the first place. That's the point.
- Jesus' words in verses 29-30 have often been misunderstood. Obviously Jesus was not teaching physical mutilation, because a blind man could have as much of a problem with lust as a sighted person, and a man with only one hand still could have a problem. Jesus was saying we have to have the inward problem removed. Since a lustful heart would ultimately lead to adultery, one's heart must be changed. Only by that change of heart can one escape hell.

Luke 6:27-29 "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. (28) Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who insult you. (29) If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other one as well, and if someone takes your coat, don't keep back your shirt, either."

- Jesus is not talking about not defending yourself if you are physically attacked, nor is He teaching that we as a nation should not defend ourselves. Jesus was not a pacifist. He's using hyperbole, or exaggeration to teach that we are to remain kind and generous toward those who dislike us or mistreat us. This was the opposite of the way the Jews were living (eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, etc.)
- This command to offer the other cheek as well is often misunderstood. It means that there is risk involved in reaching out to people with God's hope. But if we're rejected in our efforts, we must continue reaching out.

Luke 6:30-31 **Keep on giving to everyone who asks you for something, and if anyone takes what is yours, do not insist on getting it back. (31) Whatever you want people to do for you, do the same for them.**

- Do not ask for your possessions back... that's an example of showing forgiveness. Verse 31 is generally known to everyone as the Golden Rule.

Luke 6:32-34 **"If you love those who love you, what thanks do you deserve? Why, even sinners love those who love them. (33) If you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks do you deserve? Even sinners do that. (34) If you lend to those from whom you expect to get something back, what thanks do you deserve? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back what they lend.**

- In other words, as children of the King, we're to go above and beyond what the world considers to be love. We have a higher standard to live up to.

Luke 6:35-36 **Rather, love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind even to ungrateful and evil people. (36) Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."**

- Merciful is a characteristic of God often spoken of in the OT: Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 4:31; 2 Samuel 24:14 are just a few.

Here are some more highlights from the longer version of this sermon in Matthew 6:

(1) "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people in order to be noticed by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. (2) So whenever you give to the poor, don't blow a trumpet before you like the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they will be praised by people. I tell you with certainty, they have their full reward! (3) But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (4) so that your giving may be done in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

(5) "And whenever you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. I tell you with certainty, they have their full reward! (6) But whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees from the hidden place will reward you."

(7) "When you are praying, don't say meaningless things like the gentiles do, because they think they will be heard by being so wordy. (8) Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

(9) "Therefore, this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. (10) May your kingdom come. May your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (11) Give us today our daily bread, (12) and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. (13) And never bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

(14) Because if you forgive people their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (15) But if you do not forgive people their offenses, your Father will not forgive your offenses." (16) "Whenever you fast, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites, because they put on sad faces to show others they are fasting. I tell you with certainty, they have their full reward! (17) But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, (18) so that your fasting will not be noticed by others but by your Father who is in the hidden place. And your Father who watches from the hidden place will reward you."

(19) "Stop storing up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moths and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. (20) But keep on storing up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal, (21) because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

(22) "The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. (23) But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore, if the light within you has turned into darkness, how great is that darkness!"

(24) "No one can serve two masters, because either he will hate one and love the other, or be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches!" (25) "That's why I'm telling you to stop worrying about your life — what you will eat or what you will drink — or about your body — what you will wear. Life is more than food, isn't it, and the body more than clothing?

(26) Look at the birds in the sky. They don't plant or harvest or gather food into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. You are more valuable than they are, aren't you? (27) Can any of you add a single hour to the length of your life by worrying? (28) And why do you worry about clothes? Consider the lilies in the field and how they grow. They don't work or spin yarn, (29) but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them.

(30) Now if that is the way God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and thrown into an oven tomorrow, won't he clothe you much better — you who have little faith? (31) "So don't ever worry by saying, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' (32) because it is the gentiles who are eager for all those things. Surely your heavenly Father knows that you need all of them!

(33) But first be concerned about God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all of these things will be provided for you as well. (34) So never worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Now back to Luke 6:

Luke 6:37-38 "Stop judging, and you will never be judged. Stop condemning, and you will never be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (38) Give, and it will be given to you. A large quantity, pressed together, shaken down, and running over will be put into your lap, because you will be evaluated by the same standard with which you evaluate others."

- As the Gospel makes clear, Jesus had in mind judging someone to the point that you cut yourself off from them so that you stopped reaching out to them. Jesus himself did make judgments about where people stand (Luke 11:37-54), but not in such a way that he stopped offering them God's grace.
- The background to the image pressed down, shaken together, running over is pouring out grain by measure in the marketplace. They often poured the grain into a container, shook it to level out the grain and then poured in some more. Those who are generous have generosity running over for them.

Luke 6:39-40 He also told them a parable: "One blind person can't lead another blind person, can he? Both will fall into a ditch, won't they? (40) A disciple is not better than his teacher. But everyone who is fully-trained will be like his teacher.

- Here Jesus' point was to be careful who you follow and where they are taking you.
- The idea, as the next phrase shows, is that teachers build followers who go the same direction they do.

Luke 6:41-42 "Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? (42) How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you don't see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you'll see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

- A speck would be a small piece of wood, chaff, or straw. The beam would be a big piece of wood, the main beam of a building. This would have gotten a laugh from the audience - Jesus was using an absurd picture to make a point in a graphic way.

Luke 6:43-45 "A good tree doesn't produce rotten fruit, and a rotten tree doesn't produce good fruit, (44) because every tree is known by its own fruit. People don't gather figs from thorny plants or pick grapes from a thorn bush. (45) A good person produces good from the good treasure of his heart, and an evil person produces evil from an evil treasure, because the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart."

- Mention of the heart shows that Jesus is not interested in what is done as much as why. Motives are more important than actions for him.
- What comes out of your mouth is especially used as the example of this principle. James in his epistle seems to have understood this teaching (James 1:26; 3:1-12).

Matthew's account of Jesus' sermon adds more to this idea of producing fruit:

Matthew 7:18-23 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a rotten tree cannot produce good fruit. (19) Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into a fire. (20) So by their fruit you will know them." (21) "Not everyone who keeps saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will get into the kingdom of heaven, but only the person who keeps doing the will of my Father in heaven. (22) Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name, drove out demons in your name, and performed many miracles in your name, didn't we?' (23) Then I will tell them plainly, 'I

never knew you. Get away from me, you evildoers!"

- This does not mean that salvation in the Kingdom is gained by good works, but that a true disciple will produce good works naturally, and that many have done good works but have not sincerely trusted in Christ. Those good works will do nothing for them on Judgment day if that's what they're trusting in.

Luke 6:46-47 "Why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord,' but don't do what I tell you? (47) I will show you what everyone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them.

- Jesus is not looking for piety or an outward show of righteousness. He wants true disciples who have allowed Him to change their hearts.

Luke 6:48-49 They are like a person building a house, who dug a deep hole to lay the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the floodwaters pushed against that house but couldn't shake it, because it had been founded on the rock. (49) But the person who hears what I say but doesn't act on it is like someone who built a house on the ground without any foundation. When the floodwaters pushed against it, that house quickly collapsed, and the resulting destruction of that house was extensive."

- If you don't have true faith in Christ, if it's only superficial, then when trouble comes, that weak foundation will be washed away and destroyed.

So, let's discuss. Is the Sermon on the Mount a set of rules for believers to live by today? Some call the Sermon on the Mount the purest form of the gospel. Do you agree? Read Jeremiah 31:33 and Luke 22:19-20. How does the New Covenant relate to this chapter?

A final note on this chapter:

The Sermon on the Mount is interpreted by Christians in different ways. Some believe it should be our rule of life, and some believe it was only for the Jews in the age of Law before Christ's death on the cross that paid for sin. What is it – Law or Grace? Well, Law and grace are always combined and when a group of Christians emphasize one over the other, you destroy both of them. You have people who identify with the law and they will preach the law, the law, the law, and it can degenerate into just human performance, with no grace. But we can't obey the Word of God without grace.

So emphasis on the law trivializes it because the only way you can be satisfied is to dress it up so that it can be obeyed in the energy of the flesh. Who did that in the days of Jesus? They trivialized the law, didn't make it count in the heart, it was just externals. That was the Pharisees. And what did Jesus do in the Sermon on the Mount? He deepened the law back to where it was, about the intent of the heart. Why did He do that? Because that's what makes me realize that I can't keep the law, I need a heart transformation to do that.

There are other people who emphasize grace, grace, grace, and never talk about law. Then what happens to grace? Grace becomes identified as sort of an eternal Get Out of Hell Free card, which God is laid-back and lets everyone gets off scot-free, and then His holiness is compromised. So there's always a battle, all of our lives we have a battle to keep these two in balance.

We must take these admonitions of Jesus seriously – they are still God's standard. But they should produce in us a realization of how much we fall short and how much we need Christ.