

## Chapter Six (6:1-49)

### THE SON OF MAN EXPLAINING THE NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM

#### IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE:

1. What is unlawful about plucking a few ears of grain on the sabbath (6:1-2)?
2. Why would the Pharisees get so enraged at Jesus for healing a man on the sabbath (6:11)?
3. Is being poor a prerequisite to citizenship in God's kingdom (6:20)?
4. Are Christians literally to turn the other cheek every time they are assaulted on the one (6:29)?
5. If we are not to judge one another, how can churches take it upon themselves to "excommunicate" certain members (6:37)?
6. Are there certain people intrinsically "good" and others intrinsically "evil" (6:43-45)?
7. Does the mouth of man always speak what is in the heart, or is a man able to hide what is in his heart (6:45)?

#### SECTION 1

#### Mercy (6:1-11)

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

**6** On another sabbath, when he entered the synagogue and taught, a man was there whose right hand was withered. <sup>7</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. <sup>8</sup>But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here," And he rose and stood there. <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the sabbath

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to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" <sup>10</sup>And he looked around on them all, and said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was retored. <sup>11</sup>But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

**6:1-5 The Perfection of the Law:** Actually the controversy over Sabbath traditions and Jesus' approach to them came to a head just before this incident. Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to Passover, just prior to this. The student should read chapter 5 of John's Gospel for that confrontation. Apparently Luke is recording an incident in a grain field as Jesus was returning to Galilee with His disciples. Perhaps the Pharisees were travelling along—or they may have been local residents.

The Sabbath was the most unique aspect of Judaism. Practically all other religions (even pagan) had sacrifices, priests and temples, but only Judaism made one day out of each week so emphatically significant in religion. First century Judaism had literally hundreds and hundreds of minute traditions concerning Sabbath observance. The *law* concerning the Sabbath is really quite simple (Ex. 20:8-11); no work is permitted on that day. Exodus 34:21 specifies that no harvesting is allowed on the Sabbath. But the Israelite traveler going into his neighbor's standing grain was permitted to pluck grain by hand and eat as much as he wished (Deut. 23:24-25). Such action was not considered "harvesting." God would not contradict Himself. As Fowler points out (*Matthew, Vol. II*, College Press), the Pharisees presumed to be able to state God's will more clearly with their myriads of traditions than He was able to state it Himself. The Sabbath law was not complicated. God intended the Sabbath to be a day of rest and worship. The Pharisees had legislated practically every movement of the human body on the Sabbath day. This made void the word of God and defeated God's purpose for the Sabbath. No man could have rested or worshiped under such conditions.

The disciples did not violate the law of Moses: (a) Jesus did not rebuke the disciples—had they broken God's law He would have chastened them; (b) actually, the Mosaic law permits plucking grain (Deut. 23:24-25) without distinction as to the day; (c) Jesus pointed out that mercy for hungry human beings would not be a violation of the law, even if a specific law were contravened. Jesus referred to an illustrious case in their own history. God did not strike David dead when he entered the Tabernacle and took "show-bread" (the law specifically stated only priests were to eat this bread, Lev. 24:9) and fed his starving army (I Sam. 21:1-6). Human need takes precedence over any ritual—even over a specific law of God. How can that be? Because the very spirit and essence of the law of God for mankind is to supply the highest good for the

individual. God's highest good to man is mercy. Man's highest good to a fellow-man is mercy. Whatever is *truly* merciful is the fulfillment of the law (cf. Rom. 13:8-10; I Jn. 4:20-21). Jesus proved that with God, human need comes even before divinely sanctioned ceremonies! If this be true, how much more did hungry disciples come before the *human traditions* of the Pharisees? Christians must guard against their opinions or traditions coming before mercy and human need lest they be found standing with the Pharisees of old.

With masterful finesse and subtlety Jesus stakes out His claim to deity here. He declares the Son of Man controls the Sabbath instead of being controlled by it. And who has just given an authoritative statement on Sabbath priorities—He has! Matthew mentions that He gave them an even stronger clue about Himself when He reminded them that on the Sabbath the priests in the *temple* profane the Sabbath (by circumcising infants, etc.), and are guiltless; and *One greater* than the temple was in their midst! (Mt. 12:1-8). Mark adds this interesting statement of Jesus, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath," (Mk. 2:27). The sabbath does not precede human need.

**6:6-11 The Protection of Life:** God intended man to use the sabbath to sustain life, both physical and spiritual. He did *not* intend man to be destroyed by the sabbath. To worship God and glorify His name by ministering to the needs of others is life-sustaining. It sustains the physical life of others (and perhaps even their spiritual life), while enriching and edifying the spiritual life of the one ministering.

On another sabbath, in Galilee, Jesus went to a synagogue crowded with worshipers. As He began to teach, He noticed a man present who had a "withered" right hand. Dr. Luke notes it was the *right* hand. This would incapacitate the man from earning a living. If Jesus were to heal the man He would be "saving the man's life." The scribes and Pharisees glued their eyes on Jesus to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. The Greek word translated "watched" is *pareterounto*, a compound word—*para* means, *near* and *tereo* means, *keep watch* or *guard*.

The Pharisees were plotting to put Jesus on the spot in this crowded place by asking Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" Jesus anticipated their plot and, calling the man with the withered hand to the front of the auditorium, said, "I ask *you*, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to harm, to save life or to destroy it?" Matthew reports Jesus reminded the audience that the Pharisees and their traditions were more considerate of an animal than of a man since their tradition permitted them to rescue one of their sheep on the sabbath if it had fallen into a pit. It is at this moment, as Mark notes, Jesus looked around at these

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hypocrites with *anger* (Gr. *orges*). The one time we are told Jesus was *angry* it is in connection with hypocrisy—a sin of the spirit, not one of fleshly passion. Of course, Christ never approves of any sin, but it does appear that He is more disturbed over the unique obtuseness of the sins of pride and self-righteous hypocrisy than those of fleshly indulgence; probably because of the almost total lack of compassion in the self-righteous hypocrite.

Jesus then demonstrated the divine answer to His question by healing the man's withered hand. The Greek word translated *restored* is *apekatestathe*. It is a word commonly used in the everyday language of the stonemason to explain that when a workman accidentally broke a stone, he made good the breakage by substituting a new stone in place of the broken one. Matthew (12:13) says the man's withered hand was "restored, whole like the other." Jesus gave the man back his livelihood. But the Pharisees were filled with *fury*. And here the Greek word is *anoiās* which literally means, "out of their minds." Their rage was senseless, mindless, blind fury. They were so bereft of reason in their passionate hatred of Jesus at this moment they rushed out and teamed up with the Herodians (Mk. 3:6), some of their bitterest political enemies, how they might do away with Jesus. It is rather awesome and frightening how pride, self-righteousness and hypocrisy will, in order to justify itself, blind itself to compassion and goodness in mindless rage. Pride is a monster, whipped into a devouring passion by the devil himself (Gen. 3:4-5).

### SECTION 2

#### Ministering (6:12-19)

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

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, who

came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; <sup>18</sup>and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup>And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came forth from him and healed them all.

**6:12-16 Helpers called:** Jesus reached a critical point in His earthly ministry. His popularity was at its peak. Multitudes pressed upon Him wherever He went. The number of disciples (Gr. *mathetas*, "learners") had increased. He was not physically able to perform all the ministering that needed to be done. He was ready to commission a small group to become special helpers for His present ministry and train them for a world-encompassing ministry of their own when He would leave their physical presence to return to Heaven. Mark's parallel passage states that Jesus chose the twelve for three reasons: (a) "to be with him,"—He needed their companionship and they needed His training; (b) "to be sent out to preach"—His message needed wider verbalization than He alone could give it; (c) "and have authority to cast out demons"—evidence that they were spokesmen for God. Mark says Jesus "made" the twelve (Gr. *epoiesen*); Luke says He "chose" from all the disciples, twelve. The Greek word *eklexamenos* is translated "chose" and is the word from which we get the English word *eclectic*.

This was such a momentous decision, one which would affect all men for all time and eternity, Jesus went aside from the multitudes and prayed all night before His selection of the twelve men. The following morning He chose the men and gave them the title, "apostle" (Gr. *apostello*) which means "one sent forth." The Greek word is similar to the Latin word *missio* from which we get the English word, "missionary."

Evaluated by the world's standards, these men would never have been selected for such a crucial and demanding task. None of them possessed any unique "charisma" for leadership, not one of them had any "formal" training or family background to recommend them as potential influences on society or history. Four of them at least were common laborers in the fishing industry; one of them was a hated tax-collector; another was a right-wing political terrorist (Simon the Zealot). None were, as far as the record goes, of the "intelligentsia," or of the ruling classes. But then it was the *message* these men delivered, not the men themselves, which had such a history-changing impact upon the world. Of course, they were men of character (all but one, Judas Iscariot) or they would not have been faithful and courageous messengers. Still, when all is said and done, it is the gospel which saves, not the gospel messenger. Perhaps the following chart will help the student combine in one glance the different listings of the apostles made in the New Testament:

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### JESUS CHOSE TWELVE DISCIPLES, AND MADE THEM APOSTLES

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1. Simon Peter (Bar-Jonah)</li> <li>2. Andrew, Peter's brother</li> <li>3. James, John's brother</li> <li>4. John, (Bar-Zebedee)</li> <li>5. Philip</li> <li>6. Nathanael (Bar-Tholomew or Bar-Tolmai)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Thomas Didymus ("Twin")</li> <li>8. Matthew, Levi, (Bar-Alphaeus)</li> <li>9. James (Bar-Alphaeus—not above)</li> <li>10. Judas Thaddaeus, of James</li> <li>11. Simon, Cananean, Zealot</li> <li>12. Judas Iscariot (Bar-Simon)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Mt. 10:2-4	Mk. 3:13-19	Lk. 6:12-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew his brother	James of Zebedee	Andrew his bro.	John
James of Zebedee	John his bro.	James	James
John his bro.	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew, publican	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphaeus	James of Alph.	James of Alph.	James of Alph.
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon Zealot	Simon Zealot
Simon Cananean	Simon Can.	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

\* Follows Matthew's list

\*\* As they are specifically listed by the writers of the New Testament.

Jesus must have seen in each of these men some qualities which would have been especially useful in His kingdom. Eleven of them were helpful in fulfilling the nature of the Kingdom of God by ministering the gospel to the world. One of them was a betrayer, Judas Iscariot. Jesus knew Judas' heart before the deed was committed (Jn. 6:70). Then why was he chosen? We like the answer of Hobbs, "Certainly it was not for the express purpose of betrayal. God does not deal with men as puppets. All that we can say is that Jesus offered him his chance, and he did not take it. It will forever remain a mystery. But it serves as a warning to all."

**6:17-19 Healing certified:** What appears to be a discrepancy when one attempts to harmonize Matthew and Mark with Luke at this juncture is not a discrepancy at all. Close examination of the three accounts shows the following order: (a) Jesus aware of the great crowds following Him after healing the man with the withered hand, withdrew to the sea of Galilee (Mt. 12:15; Mk. 3:7); (b) a great multitude from all over the land of Palestine followed Him and His disciples to the sea, many in that area having been healed (Mt. 4:24-25; Mk. 3:7-12), and Jesus ordered them not to make His presence known; (c) Matthew quotes an O.T. prophecy (Isa. 42:1ff) to show that Jesus is fulfilling the Messianic character of the kingdom—ministry of spiritual healing; (d) Jesus withdraws from the multitudes by the sea and goes up on a mountain where he prays all night (Mt. 5:1; Mk. 3:13; Lk. 6:12-13); (e) Jesus chooses twelve disciples and names the apostles (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:14-19; Lk. 6:13-16); (f) Jesus comes down from the mountain to a “level place” and a great multitude from all over Palestine is once again thronging after Him to be healed and He healed them all (Lk. 6:17-20). And this is where we take up our comments on the Gospel of Luke again. Matthew skips around chronologically in his record because his purpose was to record the life of Jesus by subject matter, not by chronological order. This is done frequently by modern biographers without the issue of inaccuracy ever being raised. Why should it be raised against Matthew when his accuracy is verified by the three other biographers of Jesus?

There may have been a number of Gentiles in the crowds who came to “hear” and “be healed” since people were there from the “seacoast of Tyre and Sidon.” The interesting notation of Luke is that they came to “hear,” as well as be healed. We noted above that Matthew used Isaiah’s prophecy of the Lord’s “Servant” to characterize the Messiah’s ministry as one of spiritual healing. We have already dealt with the relationship of physical healing to the spiritual goal of Jesus’ ministry in our comments on Luke 4:32-44. It is interesting to note in Isaiah’s prophecy the emphasis on the Messiah’s ministry to “gentiles” since some of the people here are from Tyre and Sidon. Jesus’ earthly ministry was primarily to the Jewish people, calling them to their messianic destiny (Mt. 15:24) but whenever a Gentile came to Him in faith He was pleased, and honored their faith with grace and mercy. This multitude came to hear—Jesus lifted up His eyes and began to preach. And what a sermon it was! It has never been duplicated for simplicity and profundity. It is absolutely matchless! It marks clearly, concisely and conclusively that the nature of the Son of Man’s kingdom is a society of godliness and moral character lived out in the lives of individuals.

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### SECTION 3

#### Moral (6:20-26)

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man! <sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

24 “But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.

“Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 “Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

**6:20-23 Weal:** “Weal” means blessing. Jesus pronounced certain blessings on citizens of His messianic kingdom. But before we deal with the beatitudes of this sermon we must briefly look at reasons for assuming this is the *same* sermon recorded in Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7, called “The Sermon on the Mount.” The student will immediately recognize there are both similarities and differences in the two records. Note the following:

- a. They begin and end the same way following the same general order in the rest of the sermon.
- b. It is altogether feasible that they are chronologically in the same time slot (see comments above on 6:17-19).
- c. Matthew, writing for Jews, would naturally stress certain elements of the Mosaic law in relation to the nature of the messianic kingdom, but such matters would be of little interest to Luke’s gentile patron, Theophilus, so he omits this.
- d. It is possible that Matthew, gifted at recording data, and an eyewitness to the Sermon, made a verbatim account while Luke, depending on eyewitnesses years after the fact (see Introduction) got only a summarization.
- e. While Matthew says Jesus went up on a mountain and indicates the Sermon was delivered there, Luke says He came down to a level place and preached it. The “level place” of Luke could be some plateau or natural amphitheater part of the way down the mountain.



f. If it be urged that Matthew places the Sermon earlier in time, we reply it is evident that Matthew is not so much concerned with chronology as with topical arrangement. He has probably done so with this Sermon, placing it in an early part of his document as an example of Jesus' matchless preaching and as the keynote sermon of His messianic ministry. Luke has the chronological arrangement.

The four beatitudes summarize what a citizen of the kingdom of Christ *is*. They deal with character and being, because Christianity is fundamentally *being* before it is *doing*. What a man *is* must precede what he *does* in order to please God. That which motivates and controls a man determines whether what a man does is acceptable to God or not. Fasting, praying and giving alms to the poor are good in the eyes of God only if they are motivated from godly purpose.

a. Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Both Jew and Gentile considered wealth as a sign of God's approval. Jesus and the apostles taught differently. Poverty within itself is no virtue just as wealth is not necessarily a vice. But poverty may prove to be a blessing in that it may strip a man of self-reliance and make him totally dependent upon God. Matthew says, "poor in spirit," but Matthew and Luke are ultimately picturing the same kind of moral character.

b. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Those who are poor, of both this world's goods and of spirit, will be satisfied if they rely on God. Matthew puts it, "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." Those simply hungering for more material things will never be satisfied! Hunger or poverty without faith may lead to stealing (cf. Prov. 30:9). But any kind of hunger that creates a need for God will be satisfied, if not here, in heaven.

c. Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh. The same focus applies here too, since there is a sorrow that leads unto death (II Cor. 7:10). Those who are poor, hungry and in sorrow, if they believe and do not faint, shall have power to laugh (rejoice) even in the midst of oppressive circumstances because of their hope that in heaven circumstances will be different! Hope for a better life in perfect circumstances after this life is over is the unique heritage of the Christian. It has a motivating power for godliness in this life (I Jn. 3:1-3).

d. Blessed are you when men hate you . . . on account of the Son of man! The poor are usually oppressed simply because they are poor and powerless. But Jesus offers oppression for His sake as a blessing! There is not much blessedness in being oppressed for any other

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reason. The Greek word *aphorisosin* is translated "exclude" and is from two Greek words, *apo*, meaning "from" and *horizo*, meaning "to determine" (the latter word in English is *horizon*) thus the compound word means, "to mark off by boundaries." Poor followers of Christ may be cut off from social fellowship, civil rights and privileges others may enjoy. It is possible that affluent Christians might even be guilty of this toward poor Christians (cf. I Tim. 6:17-19; James 2:1-7). The poor are also slandered ("cast out your name as evil"). The Greek word *ekballo* ("cast out") was often used by Greek writers for hissing an actor off the stage. But where is the blessedness in being hated for the sake of Christ? Peter, the apostle, who suffered much for Christ's sake, tells us in his first epistle:

- (1) If any man suffer as a Christian, it proves he has ceased from sinning, so as to live, by the will of God, I Peter 4:1-11.
- (2) If any man suffer as a Christian he is blessed because he knows that God is not doing something strange, that if we share Christ's sufferings we will share His glory and that the spirit of glory and the power of God rests upon him because Christ was glorified by suffering for the will of the Father, I Peter 4:12-19.
- (3) If any man suffer as a Christian he is safe because it proves he has trusted his soul to a faithful Creator, who cares for him, I Peter 4:19—5:11.

Therefore, Jesus said, "if you are persecuted for My sake, *leap* for joy." Luke uses the Greek word *skirtesate* for "leap" and Matthew uses *agalliasathe* for "exceeding glad" and both of these words describe the joyous leaping of a Greek athlete upon winning a victory.

It should be quite clear that we are dealing with principles and practices of living to which only a converted person might surrender. To accede that these ways are profitable and joyous would involve a revolution of one's values! They take the accepted standards of the world and turn them upside down and inside out! Barclay observes, "The people whom Jesus called happy the world would call wretched; the people Jesus called wretched the world would call happy. Just imagine anyone saying, 'Happy are the poor, and, Woe to the rich!' To talk like that is to put an end to the world's values altogether."

**6:24-26 Woe:** There is another side; what of those who reject citizenship in the Messiah's kingdom and its godly morality? What is their future? What shall be their reward?

- a. Woe to you that are rich. The Greek word *apechete* is translated "received." It was used constantly in the first century as a technical expression in drawing up a receipt. Jesus means to say that those who devote all their energies and talents to earning this world's riches, may get them, but that is all the "consolation" (Gr. *paraklesin*, "comfort") they shall have. Their wealth will be all the help, comfort and encouragement they shall get. When a man of the world gets the riches of the world he has pursued, God marks his account, "paid in full." If that is all they have, their future prospect is woe because this world's riches are transferrable to the next world only if used for the glory of God and the help of others in this world (cf. Lk. 16:1-9).
- b. Woe to you that are full now. Woe to those who are satisfied with the fulness of this present world. This world will perish but they will not. If they have only the perishable to satisfy them, they will hunger in the next. If it is not truth, goodness, purity, peace, love and God that satisfies them here, they will hunger in the next world.
- c. Woe to you that laugh now. Applebury says, "The laughter of the wicked will become the cries of the lost." Although the New Testament does not prohibit Christian fun and laughter, neither does it condone frivolity and foolishness—much less the sick and foul humor of the centuries at which most of mankind has laughed. The wealthy and powerful who devote themselves to enjoyment of this world and give not the slightest consideration or compassion to the poor and oppressed are not fit for Christ's kingdom. They may laugh now, but when His kingdom is consummated and time is changed into eternity, they will have nothing but woe.
- d. Woe to you, when all men speak well of you. Of course, Christians are to strive for a good reputation among their contemporaries, (Rom. 12:17; I Tim. 3:2, etc.). What Jesus is talking about here is false flattery. *True* prophets of old were slandered because they told the truth while *false* prophets were flattered and praised by those who sought their favor. The Christian will get no flattery or testimonials from those who hate Christ and seek to ruin His church unless the Christian agrees to compromise his integrity and faithfulness.

The New Testament plainly states that the joy of heaven will more than compensate for the trouble of this earth. In fact, it says Christians will receive a glory beyond *all* comparison (II Cor. 4:16-18). The question is: who will believe that promise and so live in this earth as to prepare himself for the next?

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### SECTION 4

#### **Magnanimous (6:27-45)**

27 "But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup> Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> 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 selfish. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

39 He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup> A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. <sup>41</sup> 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? <sup>42</sup> Or 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.

43 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

**6:27-36 Toward the Hateful:** Magnanimous means, noble, liberal and self-sacrificing. And Jesus characterizes the citizens of His kingdom as magnanimous toward those who hate them. How may Christians be

expected to love those who persecute them and hate them and exploit them? Because God loves them! The Greek word for *love* here is *agape*. *Agape* is a love of the *will* and not necessarily of the emotions. We cannot have the same feelings toward those who hate us as toward our relatives and friends. That would be unnatural and really impossible. But we *can* decide that no matter how a man acts toward us we will always act toward him for his highest good. *Agape*-love is the kind of action that can be commanded (Jn. 15:12ff), because it is not dependent upon how we feel. It is something that we *must* do in spite of how we feel. A man's mind and will *can* overrule his feelings.

Jesus is calling for more than stoicism here. The Christian is more than merely passive toward his enemies and those who may exploit him. The citizen of Christ's kingdom "goes the second mile" (cf. Mt. 5:39-41). Jesus is illustrating the fundamental principle of non-retaliation for personal injury and insult. Christians are not by nature, vengeful, spiteful nor retaliatory. They leave ultimate justice up to the Lord (cf. Rom. 12:14-21). But "turning the other cheek" does not mean that we should be unconcerned about the defense of law and order and human rights. To turn the other cheek, or give up the coat does not mean that it does not matter at all about civil rights and civil justice. The devil is the author of anarchy; he has as his goal a society where evil rules. God has ordained human governments for the purpose of maintaining civil liberties and order. Human magistrates are God's ministers to execute His justice upon criminals (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). Human government is ordained to maintain an orderly execution of justice! Without law and order, man's first impulse when struck or robbed is to strike back or retaliate. A society where each man is a law unto himself, executing justice on a personal basis, would be anarchistic. The whole point of Jesus' instructions here is that the Christian is governed by a higher law than human government—he does not even need human government to keep him under control. The Christian goes beyond the law against retaliation. He not only does not retaliate—he shows love toward his enemies. Jesus never intended His statements here to be rigidly codified into some literal behavior. He did not offer His cheek to be struck a second time (Jn. 18:22-23); nor did Paul (Acts 23:3). It would hardly be the highest good to a criminal to allow him to strike a man until he killed him, or rob and extort without any restraint. Someone must call upon civil authorities to put a stop to such action—for the victim's sake, for society's sake and for the criminal's sake! But the Christian cannot take the law into his own hands—he must go the second mile if necessary.

"Give to everyone who begs of you . . ." is not a mandate to foster professional begging. Jesus is not encouraging Christians to help frauds,

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drunkards, the lazy, or professional beggars. The drunkard who begs money is not in need; neither is the man who is too lazy to work if he is able (cf. II Thess. 3:6-15). What Jesus is telling the Christian here is that he must not be self-centered, greedy and miserly. If *any* man is in *real* need, it is the nature of the Christian to help again, and again if he is able to do so. But the Christian must make evaluations and judgments because to give to a professional beggar who might otherwise earn a living would not be helpful. The Christian must "please his neighbor for his good, to edify him" (cf. Rom. 15:1-2). When we give we must not seek a return. Love gives for the sake of giving with no thought of return.

The primary motive for the Christian ethic is, of course, the love of God. We love, because He first loved us (I Jn. 4:7-19). But a secondary motive for the Christian to go "the second mile" is that he treats others as he would wish to be treated. The "Golden Rule," as Luke 6:31 is called, is uniquely positive. It is not like any other philosophy of ethics in all mankind. Barclay says it so well: "The Christian ethic is *positive*. It does not consist in *not doing* things but in *doing* them. Jesus gave us the Golden Rule which bids us do to others as we would have them do to us. That rule exists in many writers of many creeds in its *negative* form. Hillel, one of the great Jewish Rabbis, was asked by a man to teach him the whole law while he stood on one leg. He answered, 'What is hateful to thee, do not to another. That is the whole law and all else is explanation.' " The Stoics put it this way, "What you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not you do to any other." A citizen of the kingdom of God does not just not do bad things—he busies himself in doing good things.

The Christian is one who goes beyond the expected or the norm in doing good. There is a worldly standard of doing good. Those of the world do good to those who do good to them first; "even sinners love those who love them." If one does good to those who have done good to him, he is no different than the rest of the world. It is of interest that Luke used the Greek word *charis* which is translated "credit" in the RSV. It is as if Jesus said, "What special *grace* is in that kind of action?" It will do no good for the Christian to claim he is just as good as his neighbors; he must be better—he must go beyond his neighbor in doing good. The Macedonians gave "*beyond* their means, of their own free will" to the Judeans (II Cor. 8:3-4).

Jesus challenges His followers to go beyond the world's norm because He wants His followers to have the blessedness of being like God. The behavior of the "sinner" is too low for the Christian to aim—he should aim for the highest. God goes beyond the worldly norm; He actively loves and does good to those who hate Him. God sends His rain upon the just and the unjust alike (Mt. 5:44-45). God is kind to the ungrateful

and the selfish. If Christian children would imitate their Father (Eph. 5:1-2) this is how they will act.

In all this discussion about lending is Jesus forbidding the Christian to put his money in banks to earn interest or from borrowing money and paying interest? A fact often overlooked is that in ancient Israel commercial loans were practically unknown. Among the heathen it was a different thing. The Old Testament legislates against *usury* (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36ff; Deut. 23:19ff). Nehemiah (5:3-10) condemned wealthy Jews for charging interest to their less fortunate brothers. The Israelites could charge interest to foreigners (Deut. 23:19-21). Wilbur Fields says in *Exodus*, College Press, pg. 494, "In modern times money is usually loaned for commercial purposes, to increase a man's capital, increase his business, or enhance his comfort. It is proper that a reasonable interest or payment be collected for this service. Thus Exodus 22:25 does not mean we should demand that our banks stop charging interest. Jesus himself approved the taking of interest from a bank (Mt. 25:27; Lk. 19:23). But this is quite a different thing from making gain out of a neighbor's need or being callous to the needs of a brother in the Lord. If a brother is in *need* and a personal loan may be given, there should be no interest charged by the brother offering the help." As a matter of fact, the whole point of Jesus here seems not to be in the area of "lending" but in "giving." Christ is telling his followers to *give* help to one another, expecting no return at all.

**6:37-45 Toward the Heterodox:** "Judge not, and you will not be judged . . ." Has Jesus forbidden all judgment here? Of course not! As a matter of fact, Jesus commanded judgment at least twice (Lk. 12:57; Jn. 7:24). The very fact that God has created us with the ability to choose compels us to make judgments or evaluations. We could never protect ourselves against wrong if we did not judge; we could never help others if we did not evaluate their needs. The apostle Paul told the Corinthian church it would have to judge and excommunicate an immoral member (I Cor. 5:1ff). He also told the brethren they should make righteous judgments between one another when disputes arose and not take their disputes to heathen judges (I Cor. 6:1ff). Jesus warns in this very Sermon (Mt. 7:6; 7:15-20) that the citizen of His Kingdom will have to judge who the "dogs and swine" are in order not to cast one's pearls and bread before them; the citizen will have to judge "fruit" of false and true prophets.

What Jesus is forbidding here is the hyper-critical attitude. He is telling us to be magnanimous toward those whose behavior, though not really sinful, may be different than ours. There must be liberty and charity among citizens of Christ's kingdom in the realm of opinion. Where there are no specific commandments or clear principles stated in the New Testament, Christian brethren must allow one another the

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freedom to choose and act as their consciences permit them to do so. The New Testament has a great deal to say about this (Romans 14:1 — 15:33; I Corinthians, chapters 8, 9 and 10; Galatians 5:1-26).

Jesus is advising us that we should not have a judgmental attitude. The less judging (especially of people) we do, the better off we shall be. The time will come when we shall be forced to form opinions about people, but we must be very careful not to form prejudicial opinions. We must not prejudge without sufficient evidence; we must not condemn as a sin something that is not a sin; we must not allow our opinions to be formed out of motives of envy, jealousy or our own guilty consciences. We must be very careful not to judge the motives of others for we do not know their hearts—only their actions. We must be sure our opinions of others are formed according to divine standards (the Bible) and not some worldly standards.

Jesus offers a series of mini-parables as cautions against hyper-active and hasty judgments:

- a. “. . . give and it will be given to you . . . for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” If you give censorious judgment that is what you will get back; if you give good without measure out of a pure motive, you will receive without measure from both God and man. Whatever a man sows, he eventually reaps (Gal. 6:7-10).
- b. “Can a blind man lead a blind man?” No! they will both fall into the pit. We all have blind areas about our own faults—thus we are not clear-sighted enough to really lead others to the light about themselves. It is hypocritical for us to criticize the blindnesses in others without admitting our own blindnesses. We are *all* still followers—Jesus is the Master (Teacher). Were we ever able to be as honest and wise as He, we might be critical of others—but until then, we must let Him lead us all!
- c. “. . . first take the log out of your own eye . . .” Jesus clearly infers that if we successfully remove the huge impairments which keep us from judging our own spiritual faults, then we might be prepared to help our brother judge his faults. It is interesting that Jesus sees the “log” in our eye and the “speck” in our brother’s eye—we usually see it the other way! Again we are struck with the emphasis Jesus puts on man’s tendency to be self-centered. Self-centered people cannot judge fairly or rightly!
- d. “. . . no good tree bears bad fruit . . .” A hyper-critical attitude betrays a fundamentally evil heart. “. . . for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” That which comes from our mouths reveals what is in our hearts! If we mouth prejudicial judgment it betrays a heart harboring hate. We do not have to compromise truth to put to death slander, gossip, non-factual opinions. There are three other options:



- (1) keep silent about the person
- (2) offer an informal prayer for the person
- (3) utter some known good about the person

The nature of the Lord's kingdom is magnanimity. Because the Lord is that way, He wishes His subjects to be that way. He wishes it for them so they may have the blessedness of holiness and righteousness. If you will treat a man as he is, he will continue to be what he is. If you treat him as he ought to be and can be, then he will more readily become what he ought to be and can be! That is what this Sermon is about; that is how God treats us!

## SECTION 5

### Mainstay (6:46-49)

46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? <sup>47</sup>Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: <sup>48</sup>he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup>But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

**6:46-48 Rock:** Jesus concludes this great Sermon with a claim for authority which must have startled His audience. It still startles men today! For it is exceedingly presumptuous if there is no evidence upon which to base the claim. He is claiming that a man's life will stand or fall according to whether he hears and does His teachings or not. He is elevating Himself as Lord over mankind. The Sermon on the Mount has as its authority, the deity of Jesus. Because Jesus is Lord, His words are the mainstay of life. The man who hears and does what Jesus teaches will not be ruined by the storms of life. Poverty, sickness, war, persecution and failing human relationships will not destroy the person who trusts Jesus Christ because he knows there is a perfect world to come and these storms are from God to build character and a desire for that other world. The man who hears and keeps the words of this Sermon is building the character and longings that will make him happy and fit for that next world.

**6:49 Ruin:** One man has said, "Storms will come. Most any shanty will stand in the sunshine. But what about the storm?" To build one's

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life in opposition to the teachings of this Sermon is to build on "sand." To trust in this world only is to trust in that which is doomed to perish. To live out of harmony with this Sermon is to develop a character of greed, selfishness, superficiality, vengefulness, and criticism. That does not bring happiness in this life nor fit one to live in the presence of God forever in the next. Trust Jesus! He knows the way to Life! Become a citizen of His kingdom! The careful student should study the comments of Harold Fowler, *Matthew, Vol. I*, College Press, pages 184-442, on this unique Sermon on the Mount.

### STUDY STIMULATORS:

1. Jesus was challenged about His Sabbath actions before Luke 6—Where? Why?
2. Why were the Jews so emphatic about the Sabbath?
3. What does the O.T. law say about plucking grain? about working on the Sabbath?
4. What does Jewish tradition say about working on the Sabbath?
5. Why did Jesus bring up David's eating of the "showbread"?
6. What does Jesus teach in this about the nature of God's kingdom?
7. What relationship did Jesus claim toward the Sabbath for Himself?
8. What does the Sabbath have to do with saving life?
9. Name three reasons Jesus selected 12 special disciples to become apostles?
10. Why would these 12 disciples not fit modern prospectives for leadership?
11. Can you name the 12 apostles? 12 American sports celebrities? 12 TV stars?
12. Is the Sermon of Jesus in Luke 6:20-49 the same as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7?
13. What do you think about this Sermon—is it some kind of Christian law? Is it possible to live it? What is we fail?
14. Does Jesus really intend for us to jump with joy when we are persecuted for His sake? Why?
15. Does Jesus really intend for us to be pacifists and protest police work and war and when invaded by a foreign power to "turn the other cheek"?
16. What is the Christian's best attitude toward "judging"?
17. Does Jesus really offer the teachings of this Sermon as answers to life's problems?