

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**The Coming of the Kingdom****Forgiveness, Faith, and Fulfillment: Lessons from Luke 17**

Luke 17 is a compelling call to Christian duties - forgiving, believing, serving, and living in readiness for God's Kingdom. These teachings inspire us to live by faith, offer forgiveness generously, carry out our Christian duties with humility, cultivate gratitude, and maintain a keen awareness of the Kingdom's presence and coming. This chapter calls us to a faith that impacts every aspect of our lives and informs our interaction with others.

Verses 1-4: Causing Others to Sin and Duty to Forgive

Jesus warns His disciples about the danger of causing others to sin and stresses the need for repentance. He instructs them to forgive anyone who sins against them and repents, no matter how many times.

Verses 5-6: The Power of Faith

The apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith. In response, Jesus highlights the potency of even a mustard seed-sized faith that can move mulberry trees.

Verses 7-10: The Dutiful Servant

Jesus teaches about servitude using a parable about a master and his servant, underscoring that fulfilling our duties is simply doing what's expected of us.

Verses 11-19: The Ten Lepers

While traveling, Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one, a Samaritan, returns to thank Him, illustrating the significance of gratitude.

Verses 20-37: The Coming of the Kingdom

In response to the Pharisees' questions about when God's Kingdom would come, Jesus explains it's not something observable but is within or among them. He cautions His disciples about longing for the 'days of the Son of Man' and uses the examples of Noah and Lot to warn them about the suddenness of His coming.

In Luke 17, Jesus delivers powerful teachings about the pitfalls of leading others to sin, the duty to forgive, and the significance of faith. He also discusses the humble posture of a dutiful servant and shares the account of ten lepers' healing. Finally, He elaborates on the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Themes

Forgiveness and Repentance
 Faith and Servitude
 The Coming Kingdom of God

Topics

Causing Others to Sin
 The Duty to Forgive
 The Power of Faith
 The Dutiful Servant
 The Ten Lepers
 The Coming of the Kingdom

People

Jesus
 His Disciples
 Ten Lepers
 Pharisees

Locations

The Place where Jesus was Teaching
 The Border between Samaria and Galilee



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Luke 17

Sin, Faith, Duty

17 Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. 2 It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister^[a] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

6 He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

7 “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes

17:1–6 Jesus is still addressing the final judgment in these verses, though the focus now is on caring for fellow believers and forgiving repentant believers (vv. 1–2,3–4). The “millstone” refers to the heavy upper stone used for grinding grain and highlights the severity of the judgment. It would be better to die by such violent means than to act as a stumbling block and face eternal judgment. The description of Jesus’ disciples as “little ones” highlights their vulnerability (v. 2; cf. 10:21; 12:32). Caring relationships among the family of God is described in terms of warning of the seriousness of sin and of continuing to forgive in response to repentance for sin. Despite the apparent difficulty in these requirements, it is the presence of even mustard-seed-sized faith that is important, not the amount of faith. The saying in Luke 17:6 is a hyperbolic way to refer to seemingly impossible activities that could be done if one trusts in God. In this context, the “impossible” activity carried out by faith is that of forgiving a repentant believer.

17:7–10 If the demands in verses 1–6 are viewed as an expected part of serving God, verses 7–10 clarify that we serve him in response to his grace; obeying these

in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? 8 Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything, you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy

11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy**[b]** met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

14 When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.” **[c]**

22 Then he said to his disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. 23 People will tell you, ‘There he is!’ or ‘Here he is!’ Do not go running off after them. 24 For the Son of Man in his day**[d]** will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one

demands does not obligate the master to reward the slave.

17:11–19 The nature of genuine faith is identified in an unlikely person: the thankful Samaritan. The reference to traveling (v. 11) reminds readers that what happens next must be understood in light of the events that will take place in Jerusalem. As he did in verses 1–10, Jesus again heals from a distance. Praising God is paralleled with praising Jesus (vv. 15–16). Verse 16 is the only reference to giving thanks to Jesus in the New Testament; elsewhere thanksgiving is addressed to God. The response of the Samaritan is an expression of his faith in Jesus. The distinction between the Samaritan (who gives glory to God) and the other nine indicates that the Samaritan has received more than simply cleansing from leprosy. He has received salvation in terms of being restored to God! Faith in Jesus is shown to be the means by which one’s relationship with God is restored (v. 19; cf. 7:50).

17:20–21 Whereas these two verses speak about the arrival of God’s saving kingdom through Jesus’ first coming, verses 22–37 anticipate the coming of the kingdom in power at Jesus’ second coming. The Pharisees fail to see the presence of the kingdom in the presence of Jesus. So Jesus tells the Pharisees not to speculate on how and where the kingdom may be discovered but to recognize the presence of God’s saving rule among them in Jesus, the saving King.

17:22–37 Jesus turns from addressing the Pharisees about the presence of the kingdom to encouraging the disciples concerning the kingdom that will come

end to the other. 25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

26 “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them.

Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32 Remember Lot’s wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. 35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.” [36] [e]

37 “Where, Lord?” they asked.

He replied, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

Footnotes

- a. Luke 17:3 The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman.
- b. Luke 17:12 The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.
- c. Luke 17:21 Or *is within you*
- d. Luke 17:24 Some manuscripts do not have *in his day*.
- e. Luke 17:36 Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matt. 24:40.

with his return. Though the time will come when Jesus’ disciples will long for his rule in fullness when he returns, Jesus tells them that there will be no need to go out looking for him (vv. 22–23). His return will be visible and obvious. Suffering must precede glory, however, as his death is necessary for the kingdom to arrive (vv. 24–25). Jesus draws comparisons with the days of Noah and of Lot before developing the implications of these comparisons to his return. The people in those days were complacent as they went about the ordinary tasks of life unprepared for God’s judgment (vv. 27–28). Jesus warns his disciples to not look back with attachment to the things of this world (cf. 9:23–25). The concluding application describes the suddenness of the judgment. Jesus’ reference to vultures’ points again to the visibility, certainty, and finality of judgment for those who are not prepared at his return.

Bible Study Questions

1. What insights does Jesus' teaching on leading others to sin provide on our responsibilities towards others?
2. How does Jesus' command to forgive 'seven times' challenge our approach to forgiveness?
3. How does the parable of the mustard seed inspire your understanding and cultivation of faith?
4. How does Jesus' teaching about the dutiful servant shape your understanding of service?
5. How does the account of the ten lepers enhance your understanding of gratitude?
6. What do you learn from Jesus' responses to the Pharisees' questions about the coming Kingdom?
7. How does Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom's coming challenge your perspective on life and readiness for Christ's return?
8. What practical steps can you take to increase your faith as the disciples asked Jesus?
9. How can you apply Jesus' teaching on forgiveness in your daily life?
10. How does Jesus' teaching on servitude impact your understanding of Christian duties and rewards?
11. How can you cultivate a grateful heart like the Samaritan leper in your walk with God?
12. In what ways does Jesus' teaching on the coming Kingdom affect your sense of urgency in sharing the Gospel?
13. How does this chapter challenge societal norms and expectations about faith, forgiveness, service, and the end times?
14. How does Jesus' warning about the suddenness of His coming influence your spiritual preparation?
15. How does Jesus' reference to the days of Noah and Lot inform your understanding of His return?
16. How can you ensure you don't overlook God's Kingdom within or among you as the Pharisees did?

- 17.** How can Jesus' teaching on repentance in this chapter guide you in restoring broken relationships?
- 18.** How does this chapter help in developing a servant's heart and humble attitude in your Christian service?
- 19.** How does the story of the ten lepers inform your approach to responding to God's blessings in your life?
- 20.** How can these teachings guide us in living as faithful and ready followers of Christ in the present-day world?