

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



### **The Lord of the Sabbath** **Choosing Love over Law:** **A Journey through Luke 6**

Luke 6 offers a transformative perspective on spiritual and social values. As followers of Christ, we are challenged to embrace the radical nature of love, to exercise mercy and refrain from judgement, to examine our hearts and produce good fruit, and to build our lives on the solid foundation of Jesus' words. These teachings not only redefine our relationships with God and others but also shape our understanding of what it means to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

#### **Jesus and the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-5)**

While walking through grainfields on a Sabbath, Jesus' disciples pluck and eat some grain, sparking a controversy with the Pharisees. Jesus asserts that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.



#### **The Selection of the Twelve Apostles (Luke 6:12-16)**

After spending the night in prayer, Jesus selects twelve of His disciples to be apostles.

**The Beatitudes and Woes (Luke 6:17-26)**

Jesus delivers a sermon (commonly known as the "Sermon on the Plain") to His disciples and the multitudes, presenting blessings (beatitudes) and woes.

**Love for Enemies (Luke 6:27-36)**

Jesus teaches about the radical nature of love, instructing His followers to love their enemies and to be merciful as their Father is merciful.

**Judging Others (Luke 6:37-42)**

Jesus warns against judging others, teaching about the importance of self-examination and correction before correcting others.

**A Tree and Its Fruit (Luke 6:43-45)**

Jesus teaches about the intrinsic connection between the heart and actions, comparing people to trees that are known by their fruit.

**The Wise and Foolish Builders (Luke 6:46-49)**

Jesus concludes His sermon by emphasizing the importance of not just hearing His words but also acting on them, likening those who do so to a man who builds a house on a solid foundation.

Luke 6 presents a thought-provoking clash of values and principles as Jesus redefines the understanding of **the Sabbath, the essence of love, and the nature of judgement**. It is a chapter filled with teachings that provoke introspection and challenge conventional religious norms, including the famous "Sermon on the Plain."

**Themes**

The Lord of the Sabbath  
 Sermon on the Plain  
 Love for Enemies  
 Judging Others  
 A Solid Foundation

**Topics**

Jesus and the Sabbath  
 The Selection of the Twelve Apostles  
 The Beatitudes and Woes  
 Love for Enemies  
 Judging Others  
 A Tree and Its Fruit  
 The Wise and Foolish Builders

**People**

Jesus  
 The Twelve Apostles  
 Pharisees  
 The Multitudes  
 The disciples

**Locations**

Grainfields  
 Mountain to Pray  
 A level place

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**Luke 6**

**Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath**

**1** One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels.

**2** Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

**3** Jesus answered them,

**“Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?”**

**4 He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”**

**5** Then Jesus said to them,

**“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”**

**6** On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled.

**7** The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

**8** But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand,

**“Get up and stand in front of everyone.”**

**6:1–11** Following the previous focus on the newness that Jesus brings and the preference that some have for the old, the subsequent two Sabbath controversies highlight the conflict that arises when Jesus demonstrates his authority to determine what is good. First, Jesus determines what is legitimate to do on the Sabbath (vv. 1–5). Jesus responds to the Pharisees’ question about picking, rubbing, and eating some wheat by referring to what David did in 1 Samuel 21:6—implying a “greater-than-David” argument. This is confirmed when Jesus declares himself, as the Son of Man, to be “Lord” of the

**So, he got up and stood there.**

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to them,

**“I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”**

<sup>10</sup> He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, **“Stretch out your hand.”**

He did so, and his hand was completely restored.

<sup>11</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

### The Twelve Apostles

<sup>12</sup> One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

<sup>13</sup> When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

<sup>14</sup> **Simon** (whom he named Peter), his brother **Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,** <sup>15</sup> **Matthew, Thomas, James, son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot,** <sup>16</sup> **Judas son of James,** and **Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

### Blessings and Woes

<sup>17</sup> He went down with them and stood on a level place.

A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,

<sup>18</sup> who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured,

<sup>19</sup> and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

<sup>20</sup> Looking at his disciples, he said:

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

<sup>21</sup> **Blessed are you who hunger now,  
for you will be satisfied.**

**Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.**

<sup>22</sup> **Blessed are you when people hate you,  
when they exclude you and insult you  
and reject your name as evil,  
because of the Son of Man.**

<sup>23</sup> **“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is  
your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors  
treated the prophets.**

Sabbath. Jesus authoritatively states God’s purposes for the Sabbath. Second, Jesus demonstrates his authority as Lord and does what is good on the Sabbath (Lk 6:6–11). A man with a shriveled right hand due to disease is at the synagogue on the Sabbath. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law, perhaps assuming that Jesus heals on the Sabbath, pay careful attention so they can find something as a basis to accuse him. Jesus again knows the thoughts of his accusers and responds with a question of his own concerning what is lawful on the Sabbath. Ironically, in restoring the man, Jesus is the one doing good; they are the ones plotting evil.

**6:12–16** Jesus prays at another significant moment in Luke’s Gospel; here Jesus prays through the night before choosing and designating 12 disciples as apostles (cf. 5:16). These authorized representatives of Jesus will play a significant role in the outworking of the Father’s saving plan (Ac 1:21–26).

**6:17–19** The sermon in verses 20–49 completes a logical progression: Jesus’ authority, the calling of disciples to follow him, and Jesus’ address to his disciples. Jesus’ address outlines what it means to follow him as Lord—that is, listen to and obey his words. After the setting (vv. 17–19), the sermon may be divided into three broad sections: First, Jesus gives reassurance of God’s favor to his disciples as those who have identified with him in the face of hatred and exclusion. Correspondingly, Jesus announces the judgment of those who are satisfied only with this life and the approval of other people (vv. 20–26). Second, Jesus elaborates on the way of love that his disciples are to show in the face of hostility, a love that seeks the good of others and reflects the character of God (vv. 27–36). Third, Jesus concludes by saying that a genuine response to his teaching comes from the heart and demonstrates a recognition of his lordship with obedience to his words (vv. 37–49).

**6:20–23** Jesus focuses on his disciples, though aspects of the sermon also apply to the crowds. He begins by pronouncing blessing and woe (vv. 20–26). The poor (Jesus’ disciples) are recipients of divine favor because the kingdom of God is theirs. The kingdom of God in this context is a comprehensive designation for the blessings of the end-time saving rule of God. Those who are hungry “now” are blessed because of the eschatological hope that belonging to the kingdom brings. Similarly, in contrast to weeping “now,” God will turn sorrow into joy. The final statement of blessedness receives extended explanation as an emphatic conclusion of the promises to Jesus’ disciples. The disciples of Jesus are blessed when they are hated, excluded, insulted, and slandered as evil because of Jesus. The reason given for this hatred (because of Jesus) clarifies that the poor, hungry, sorrowful, and hated are the disciples of Jesus. The reason for joy in the midst of this opposition is again the

**24** “But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have already received your comfort.

**25** Woe to you who are well fed now,  
for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will mourn and weep.

**26** Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,  
for that is how their ancestors treated the false  
prophets.

### Love for Enemies

**27** “But to you who are listening I say:

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

**28** bless those who curse you,

pray for those who mistreat you.

**29** If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the  
other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold  
your shirt from them.

**30** Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes  
what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

**31** Do to others as you would have them do to.

**32** “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to  
you? Even sinners love those who love them.

**33** And if you do good to those who are good to you, what  
credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

**34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect  
repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend  
to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

**35** But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to  
them without expecting to get anything back. Then your  
reward will be great, and you will be children of the  
MOST HIGH, because he is kind to the ungrateful and  
wicked.

**36** Be merciful, just as your FATHER is merciful.

### Judging Others

**37** “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not  
condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and  
you will be forgiven.

**38** Give, and it will be given to you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running  
over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure  
you use, it will be measured to you.”

**39** He also told them this parable:

hope of reward (v. 23). Supporting assurance is given  
with the reminder that the same things were done to the  
prophets

**6:24–26** Four statements of “woe” stand in contrast to the  
four pronouncements of divine favor. The term “woe” in  
the context of these contrasts expresses the certainty and  
severity of divine judgment. The “rich” here are  
contrasted with the “poor” (v. 20). And in contrast to the  
assurances given to Jesus’ disciples, there are no such  
promises here; for the rich, their current comfort is all  
they have. Those who laugh are those who are self-  
satisfied, perhaps even boastful over the suffering of  
believers. In contrast to those who, like the prophets, are  
insulted and slandered for Jesus’ sake now, those who are  
spoken well of by everyone now are under condemnation  
because that is the same way the *false* prophets were  
treated. In contrast to the approval of God, which the  
disciples of Jesus are assured of in the face of hatred from  
others, those who desire only approval from people will  
face judgment from God.

**6:27–36** In these verses Jesus defines how his disciples  
should respond to their enemies. Though treated with  
hate, they are commanded to love their enemies. The  
three statements in verses 27b–28 may be understood as  
further describing “love” and “enemies” (those who love  
do good, bless, and pray; the enemies hate, curse, and  
mistreat). Hateful opposition to the disciples because of  
Jesus is now illustrated, along with the appropriate loving  
response, in terms of specific physical actions. Jesus’  
followers continue in loving ministry even in the face of  
persecution. In light of the variety of responses to  
opposition elsewhere in Luke–Acts, these illustrations are  
meant to convey an overarching desire for the good of  
opponents that does not preclude, for example, insisting  
on legal procedures, warning of God’s judgment, and  
continuing to witness. Jesus provides three negative  
examples of the kind of love that he is not talking about  
but that are characteristic of sinners. In this context,  
“sinners” are those who are oriented toward self and who  
do not reflect the character of God. In contrast, Jesus  
exhorts his disciples to love and do good to their enemies  
and to lend without expecting anything in return. As with  
verses 20–23, the promise here is of great reward to  
come. In the immediate context, this is another way of  
referring to God’s favorable response. Those who love  
like this are evidently “children of the Highest” (v. 35)  
because this kind of love reflects God’s character.

**6:37–38** The four exhortations in these verses are in  
response to God’s graciousness to his people and pick up  
on the earlier reference to rewards from God. The  
command not to judge is paralleled with the command  
not to condemn and therefore refers not to the use of  
discernment but to a final cutting off from the possibility  
of God’s favor. In contrast to these prohibitions, Jesus’  
disciples are to forgive as they experience God’s

**“Can the blind lead the blind?  
Will they not both fall into a pit?”**

**40 The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.**

**41 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”**

**42 How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.**

### **A Tree and Its Fruit**

**43 “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.**

**44 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.**

**45 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.  
For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.**

### **The Wise and Foolish Builders**

**46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”**

**47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice,  
I will show you what they are like.**

**48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.  
When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.**

**49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”**

[forgiveness]. Withholding forgiveness and refusing to be generous in mercy reveal our lack of awareness of God’s great forgiveness and mercy to us.

**6:39–49** This final section of Jesus’ sermon (vv. 20–49) focuses on the need to respond to Jesus’ teaching. The image in verse 39 may be intended as a warning to disciples against their own blindness and self-reliance. The proverbial saying of verse 40 is a further encouragement for the disciples to follow and faithfully reflect their teacher. Jesus continues the warning against self-delusion and continues the exhortation to genuinely, rather than superficially, follow him (vv. 41–42). He describes someone who pretends to be concerned about sin in the lives of others though their own sin remains ignored. This hypocrisy produces bad fruit. A disciple of Jesus, by God’s grace, obeys from a transformed heart. With the final question in verse 46 and the subsequent illustration in verses 47–49, Jesus clarifies that the previous analogies have been about a genuine, rather than a superficial, response to his authority and teaching. A genuine response to Jesus as Lord is required to avert eschatological judgment. One who hears and does not do Jesus’ words is like a house without a foundation that will be destroyed in a storm. This word picture emphatically concludes the warning of judgment.



**Bible Study Questions**

1. How does Jesus' handling of the Sabbath controversies challenge conventional religious thinking of His time?
2. What significance can we scrape up from Jesus spending the night in prayer before choosing the Twelve Apostles?
3. How do the Beatitudes and Woes in the "Sermon on the Plain" challenge societal norms and values?
4. In what ways does Jesus' teaching on loving enemies challenge us in our current society?
5. What lessons do we learn from Jesus' teaching about judging others and its application in our everyday life?
6. How does Jesus' analogy of the tree and its fruit apply to our personal lives?
7. How do we understand and apply the teachings of the "Wise and Foolish Builders" parable in our lives?
8. What does it mean for Jesus to be the "Lord of the Sabbath," and how does this understanding influence our view of Jesus and the Sabbath?
9. How do Jesus' teachings in this chapter inform our understanding of discipleship?
10. How does Jesus' teaching about love and mercy redefine the concept of "an eye for an eye"?
11. How does Jesus' warning against judging others affect our interactions with people who have different beliefs or practices?
12. How can we produce good fruit in our lives, as Jesus encourages us to?
13. What is the role of prayer in decision-making, as exemplified by Jesus before choosing the Twelve Apostles?
14. How do we reconcile worldly success with the Beatitudes and Woes?
15. How does the concept of loving our enemies apply to the global context, especially concerning war and peace?
16. How can we apply the teaching on not judging others in our digital age, particularly in relation to social media?

17. How does the "Wise and Foolish Builders" parable inspire us to act on Jesus' teachings?
18. How can we cultivate a heart that produces good fruit, according to Jesus' teaching?
19. In light of the "Sermon on the Plain," how should Christian communities address issues of wealth and poverty, happiness and sorrow, reputation and dishonor?
20. What practical steps can we take to ensure that we are not only hearing Jesus' words but also acting on them, thus building our lives on a solid foundation?