

The Weekly Word

July 19-25, 2021

Hello Reading the Bible readers. We continue our adventure with Luke this week reading 6:27 – 7:17. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, July 19: Luke 6:27-36 NIV2011

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 you.*

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.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

This section of Luke's gospel contains much of what is called the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. Jesus provides an extended teaching section that touches several topics.

One of the overarching themes of this section is love. Jesus calls us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us. He then fleshes out that point by saying that we should bless those who curse us, pray for those who mistreat us. If someone slaps us on one cheek, we offer them the other. We give to anyone who asks and if someone takes something from us, do not demand it back. Jesus closes this portion of His teaching with the words, *"Do to others as you would have them do to you"*.

Jesus then chides His listeners. If we love only those who love us back what credit do we get for that? Even sinners love those who love them. He then gives a series of three examples. If we do good to those who are good to us, what credit is there in that? Sinners do that. If we lend to those who we expect will repay us, what credit is there since sinners do that too. Jesus then ratchets up His command saying, *"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"*. Jesus closes this section bidding us to be merciful just as our Father is merciful.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

There is so much in this passage for the Church of every age. I don't know quite where to begin. As I ponder this passage, love becomes its driving theme. Jesus emphasizes love by calling us to love our enemies. We show love to our enemies by blessing them, putting up with their insults and giving to anyone in need even if they are an enemy. The concluding verses of each paragraph carry much of the weight of each paragraph, *"do to others as you would have them do to you. And be merciful, just as your Father is merciful"*.

The church in every age needs to redouble its efforts to love others, particularly our enemies.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

The concept of love is pounding me, in particular, loving those who do not love us back or who hate us and do evil to us. This is so difficult.

Quite honestly it seems to be getting more difficult because so many examples from the church are people who don't seem to love enemies. There is so much shouting from people in God's church against others who disagree with us that it is hard to find examples of those worthy of emulation.

Lord, this is not excuse, I still am responsible for my own life. But hearing so many voices even from the church shouting down and shouting back at those who do not love us makes it more difficult for me to take a stand for love.

Lord God, help me to be a person who loves, in the vein that you love with compassionate love for those, who are like me and those who are different, for those who are on my side and those who are against me. Lord, may I be known as a lover of other people no matter their faith, belief structure, political affinities, or any other divisive characteristic in our world.

Lord, may I love and be merciful just as You love and are merciful.

Tuesday, July 20: Luke 6:37-42 NIV2011

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: "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.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Jesus continues teaching the people. In today's passage each of the three paragraphs contain its own point.

Paragraph #1, provides the lesson that we reap what we sow or as Jesus put it in the final sentence, “the measure you use will be measured to you”. In this paragraph He speaks about not judging so you will be judged, not condemning so you will be condemned and forgiving so that you will be forgiven. When you develop a lifestyle of giving, it will be given to you. Jesus’ point is how you live will circle back to you.

Paragraph #2 is a caution to those Jesus refers to as *blind guides*. The blind cannot lead the blind; one will lead the other into trouble. A student is not above his or her Master. But Jesus reminds us that one who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Paragraph #3 is about helping your brother or sister. Jesus uses His familiar language of a speck or a plank in a person's eye. Jesus warns that we cannot take the speck out of a friend's eye if we have a plank in our own eye. In order to be helpful to our friend with the spec, we must first take the plank out of our own eye so that we can see clearly enough to take the speck out of our friend's eye.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Each of these paragraphs has something to say to Christ followers in every age. The first paragraph is a reminder to us that the way we live is the way we will be treated. What we sow we will also reap. The measure we use will be measured back to us. So, if we're going to be the kind of people who are giving then when we are in need, people will give to us. If we learn not to judge and not to condemn others, then people won't judge and condemn us. This is a good word again about reaping what we sow, and how we live will return to us.

The second paragraph is a call to us to become fully trained in Jesus. Only when we are fully trained can we possibly lead others into fullness in Jesus. The warning in this paragraph is that if we are not fully trained then we are like a blind guide; a blind guide will lead himself and others into problems. Therefore, give yourself to the training of the Lord so that you might be used by Him to help others grow in the Lord.

The third paragraph call us to examine ourselves before we judge others. I remember a sermon where the pastor mentioned that we often can spot sins in other people because they are the same sins that plague us. (He said that far better than I just said it.) When I heard that word it resonated deeply with me. That is much like what Jesus is saying here. If we truly want to help a sister or brother remove a problem from their life, we have to first examine our own life and remove problems from it so that we are free to truly help our sister and brother in Christ. The imagery of a speck and a plank is so powerful. Particularly because the spec is a little dot in our brother's or sister's eye but what's in our own eye is a giant plank. And if we don't remove the plank we can't possibly see clearly to help our brother and sister remove a spec.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

The word I am hearing in my spirit is about training. I must first seek to be fully trained. I have to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him in order to be able to offer any solace or help to others in the Lord.

In line with this the third paragraph cut quickly to my heart. I have to be so very careful to examine my own life and to deal with faults in my own life before I attempt to help other people in their lives. I am in a season right now where I am being asked to help other churches

with situations going on in them due to my Presbytery responsibilities. God is cautioning me to remain humble and teachable whenever I enter any of these situations. If I remain humble and teachable God can use me to help these other churches. But if I grow arrogant and boastful about what I can do then I could possibly bring more harm than good to these other churches.

This is a very practical and timely word from the Lord to me.

Wednesday, July 21: Luke 6:43-45 NIV2011

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.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

This passage is about bearing good fruit. If a person's heart is good, then their life will produce good fruit. Jesus uses three examples to build his point. He talks about good trees bearing good fruit and bad trees bearing bad fruit. Jesus says you cannot pick figs from thornbushes or grapes from briars (this is an example of the good fruit, bad fruit illustration He just mentioned). From this Jesus makes the point that when a person's heart is filled with goodness their life will produce good.

He closes with an additional statement saying that the mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

The teaching for the church is that when a heart is filled with goodness a person will speak good to others and a heart filled with evil will speak evil to others. This brief section is all about producing good fruit, to do so believers must first fill their hearts with good things and goodness which comes from the Lord.

This is a call to Christ-followers to be people filled with the goodness of God.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

How do I fill my life with God's goodness? Through a regular rhythm of worship and Sabbath; living in the rhythm God established. Through regular times in God's Word and in prayer. Working to bring the Lord into my day by acknowledging Him when I wake and speaking with Him throughout the day.

The Lord is reminding me to make these an ongoing priority in my life.

Thursday, July 22: Luke 6:46-49 NIV2011

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."

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Jesus provides the point of this passage with his opening sentence. Why call Him Lord and not do what He says? From that point He gives a contrasting illustration of people who do what He says and do not do what He says. The people who hear His words and put them into practice are like someone who builds a house with a strong foundation dug all the way to the rock. The house built on the rock foundation will survive even when the torrents of life happen.

However, people who hear His word but don't practice His word are like people who live in a house with a shoddy or no foundation. When the torrents of life come the house will collapse.

The obvious point is we need not only to hear what Jesus says, we need to follow that up with the action of doing what Jesus says we should do.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Straightforward word to the church and the people of God... Make sure you do what Jesus says to do. Make sure you follow and live to the best of your abilities the teachings of Jesus.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

And God drives home the point for me, asking, "Am I living how Jesus would have me live? Am I doing the things Jesus would want me to do? Am I my putting into practice the teachings of Jesus"?

Friday, July 23: Luke 7:1-10 NIV2011

¹ When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. ² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.

⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

A highly revered centurion had a servant who was gravely ill. When Jesus finished teaching the people a servant from the centurion came to Jesus to ask Him to heal the dying servant. Because he was so highly revered by the Jews (he had helped build their synagogue) the Jewish elders asked Jesus to help the centurion's servant.

When Jesus was not far from the centurion's house the centurion sent out a friend to say to the Jesus, *"Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

Jesus was so impressed with the faith and understanding of authority by this centurion that He exclaimed to everyone around, *I tell you I have not found such great faith even in Israel.* When the men from the centurion returned to the house they found the servant healed.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

On a side note, I have long found this passage and the parallel in Matthew interesting because I hear echos from my days in the Catholic Church. During every Mass after the priest, elevating the communion host and the chalice, says, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to receive the supper of the Lamb." Then the people respond, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." Thus, in the Catholic Mass the people respond with the words of the centurion to Jesus...

Okay, back to the question at hand.

For the people of God the faith of this Gentile Centurion stands out as a paragon of faith. He doesn't require the presence of Jesus to heal his servant. Understanding authority and chains of command, the centurion knows that once Jesus speaks, healing will happen whether Jesus is physically present or not.

Also, the centurion is quite considerate of Jesus because culturally entering a Gentile's home would only inflame the ire of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. So not requiring Jesus to come into his house to attend physically to the ill servant was a kindness to Jesus so he didn't get in trouble with the Jews leaders. The centurion shows immense faith and great kindness to Jesus even as he requests the grace of having his servant healed.

Jesus obliges even as He lauds the centurion's faith.

The centurion's faith is particularly applicable for us today since we do not have Jesus physically with us, thus we must learn to trust Jesus from a distance.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

Faith... maybe better noted as the exercise of our faith, stands front and center in today's reading. Jesus is calling me to examine my faith. Do I trust Jesus simply to heal or answer a prayer or do I require some kind of sign in order to bolster my faith so I can believe?

Saturday, July 24: Luke 7:11-17 NIV2011

¹¹ Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” ¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

In this passage Jesus brings back to life the son of a widow. He and His entourage were entering the town of Nain when they saw a funeral procession leaving town. A widow was walking beside a bier carrying her dead son. At this scene Jesus’ heart broke for the woman and He said to her, *Don’t cry*. Then he walked up to the bier and touched it (notice He did not even touch the dead body, just the bier on which the body was laid.) Then Jesus spoke to the dead man, “*Young man, I say to you, get up!*” The boy sat up and began to talk.

The crowd, not surprisingly, was in awe and praised God for a great prophet had appeared among them. Then they said, “*God has come to help his people.*”

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Certainly, the miracle was an amazing moment for the people who witnessed Jesus bringing this young man back to life. Luke quoting the people provides the point of his passage. “*God has come to help his people.*”

The people understood this as a gift from God. God was answering their prayers. God was coming to their aid. This is a message that resonates with God's people of every age. How astounding is it, God has come to help His people? God has not left us alone. God has not forgotten us but in Jesus, God has come to help us, to lead us back home to Himself.

This is a message that preaches in every age

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

The tenor of this passage is tremendously comforting to me; God has come to help... God has come to aid us... God is there for us. There are so many different facets of God, and no single passage can capture the totality of the Lord and who He is. The Lord is the great Judge. The Lord is Creator. The Lord is our Justifier. And the Lord is our Helper.

This passage underscores for me, yet again, that God has come to help, that God is for us, for me.

This thought humbles me. This thought encourages me. I don't deserve this great love, yet God lavishes it upon me. Today my heart is full and my heart is blessed because the Lord, my God, has come to help. Amen.

Sunday, July 25, 2021 - Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

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