

Luke 6:12-26

Verses 12-19:

--(12-13) ***Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:***

--Luke again tells us something unique about Jesus' prayer life. Before He chose His apostles, He went into a mountain alone to pray. The Greek word for ***continued all night*** is a unique one, used only here in the NT, and it gives us the idea of being up all night in any employment. Luke is describing Jesus' persevering energy in prayer.

--Certainly, this is an example for us all before making big decisions. We should spend time with God and give Him space to speak to our hearts.

--Specifically, in context, it relates to the selection of spiritual leadership. Jesus was establishing the foundation of His church on earth. These men would be incredibly important! *How different would church leadership across the world be if this example of our Lord were truly followed?! & Please pray for us as your pastors!*

--The disciples' strength was small and their task was large! What was their provision? How were they equipped? ***He called His disciples to Himself.*** . . they were called to be with Him! The ultimate qualification of spiritual leadership is Christlikeness (blamelessness). There is only one way to be conformed into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ—by being with Him.

****Acts 4:13: Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And realized that they had been with Jesus.****

--Jesus chooses these twelve men and names them ***apostles***. This is the first and only measure of church leadership organization Jesus takes (He later commands the two sacraments of communion and baptism, but those two practices are different than establishing an organizational structure).

--Jesus' plan to send the gospel to the entire world was by collecting a small number of disciples to Himself and living with them so as to reproduce His life through them. That plan has never changed. It is given to all of Christ's followers in the Great Commission, and it was what the apostles went out and did all over the world. *Think of Paul establishing churches, spending time with them, and pointing to His own life as the pattern.*

--The same process has kept the church alive for two thousand years.

****2 Timothy 2:2: And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.****

--Has God given you a few people to influence for His name? Don't take that influence for granted! Don't despise the day of small things.

--In laying the foundation of the church, it is essential to notice that Jesus chose twelve *men* and no women. That was not an accident. Women followed Him, supported Him, and joined in His ministry on various levels, but none were chosen as the spiritual leadership of the church from the very beginning.

--The importance of Jesus' exclusion cannot be understated. Jesus loves women, but He has never called a single woman to follow in the line of apostolic church authority.

--I feel like this point is necessary to make because many Protestant churches have caved to cultural pressure (Funny enough, it is what proponents of women-elders claim Jesus did in not selecting a woman apostle!) and commonly have women-elders/pastors. We have imagined ourselves to be more merciful than Jesus Christ, and in the process, undermined the only foundation of church leadership He ever established! *The Catholic and Orthodox churches still have this right!*

--To the twelve, Jesus will delegate His spiritual authority, message, ministry, and witness. Most importantly, His doctrine and commandments (**Acts 2:42: *they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine***; **Eph. 2:20: *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets***; **3:5: *as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets***), which become the foundation of the church.

Acts 1:1-2: *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen,*

--The word *apostle* just means a messenger, sent, or commissioned one. As these men clearly were (**Jn. 17: 8+14+20; Acts 1:15-26**). They are unique from anyone else in history who may have had an apostolic gift because they alone were chosen by Jesus Christ, walked with Him, and were eyewitnesses to His ministry. They alone are the ***twelve apostles of the Lamb***. (There are only twelve foundation stones in the New Jerusalem as their reward), as opposed to any subsequent apostles such as Timothy, Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, etc.

--(14-16) *Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.*

--Notably, we don't see any of these men with meaningful cultural influence, such as a Pharisee, priest, or ruler. None of these disciples "raised" Jesus' reputation or gave His ministry validity. These were normal men who were willing to leave all to follow Jesus, even at a time of rising cultural intensity and persecution.

--The twelve are listed at least three other times: **Mt. 10:2; Mk. 3:16; Acts 1:13.**

--If you are interested in searching out more historical information on each of these men, I would recommend the book *Quest for the Historical Apostles* by W. Brian Shelton.

--Simon Peter is always mentioned first, and Judas Iscariot is always mentioned last.

--At least two groups of brothers are a wonderful testimony of the type of family life God would love to see.

--James, the brother of John, becomes the first martyr (**Acts 12:2**) while John ends up the last living member of the twelve.

--James, the son of Alphaeus, is mentioned in **Mk. 15:40** as, James the less—which infers younger or smaller.

--Judas, the son of James, who we know so little about, asks Jesus one of the best questions in all the Bible!

John 14:22: Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

--Finally, Judas Iscariot is always listed last and always branded as a traitor. Why did Jesus Christ choose Judas Iscariot to be one of His apostles?

--Because for the next two thousand years, Jesus knew tares and traitors would emerge in every expression of His church in every corner of the world, and He wants us to know we don’t have to be scandalized.

--Jesus knew the inevitable tragedies of church history: Ministers would fail. Money would be stolen. Traitorous false believers would betray true believers to their deaths. The Person and doctrine of Christ would be rejected. Unrepentant men would commit suicide before repentance. There will always be those among us who never truly believe (**Jn. 6:64**).

--What should we see in this? Not Judas, but Jesus! We don’t follow men, or even the church; we follow Jesus Christ.

--Jesus Christ knows about every Judas.

--Jesus Christ protects His disciples from Judas. **Loving Judas never hurt them in the end!**

--Jesus Christ overcomes Satan’s work through Judas.

**Matthew Henry: “Judas Iscariot is always named last, and with that black brand upon his name—who also betrayed Him; which intimates that from the first, Christ knew what a wretch he was, that he had a devil, and would prove a traitor; yet Christ took him among the apostles, that it might not be a surprise and discouragement to His church, if, at any time, the vilest scandals should break out in the best societies.*

*“Such spots there have been in our feasts of charity; tares among the wheat, wolves among the sheep; but there is a day of discovery and separation coming, when hypocrites shall be unmasked and discarded. Neither the apostleship, nor the rest of the apostles, were ever the worse for Judas’ being one of the twelve, while his wickedness was concealed and did not break out.”**

--What if Jesus hadn’t chosen Judas Iscariot?! How would we react to the work of Satan through the Judases of history? Praise God, Jesus chose Judas!

--(17-19) *And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.*

--People from all over come to hear and be healed by Jesus. Their faith is not disappointed. When we draw near to Him, He draws near to us.

--In a moment of divine energy, Luke can only describe as healing power pouring out from Jesus Christ, we are told *He healed them all*.

--Jesus Christ can heal any physical disease and any spiritual torment.

Verses 20-26:

--(20a) *Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:*

--Commentators differ on whether they believe this is the same sermon from **Mt. 5-7** or a different occasion. I tend to think it is similar material that Jesus repeated at different times.

(We have many examples of Jesus' repeated truths: **Mt. 9:32-34 + 12:22-24 + 16:21; 17:22-23 + 20:17-19; 18:1-4 + 23:6-12**).

--Here, in Luke, Jesus *came down* the mountain to *a level place*. In Matthew, we are told, Jesus *went up* and was *on a mountain*.

--Clearly, some of the content also differs.

--Either way, these beautiful truths are some of the new wine Jesus poured out for His disciples, and all those who had ears to hear.

--(20b-23) *Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

--The key to understanding these blessings and woes is to recognize the contrast between the good prophets in **23** with the false prophets in **26**. The two groups are divided based on their relation to the Son of Man, as seen in **22**.

--Jesus is teaching that His present disciples will experience a certain type of life and blessing both now and in eternity—just like the prophets of old did for their fidelity to Jehovah. Also, the rejectors of the Son of Man will experience a certain type of life here and in eternity—just like the false prophets of old did for their pagan gods.

--With that context in mind, we can understand Christ's blessings and woes more clearly. Many argue whether the poverty, hunger, or weeping mentioned here is physical or spiritual. I tend to think this is one of those occasions where the truth encompasses both.

--Though, clearly, the spiritual principle is always the deeper reality that causes the follower of Christ to endure the physical poverty, hunger, and sorrow. For example, poverty of spirit drove early believers (and believers all over the world today) to Christ, even though embracing the kingdom of God would necessitate or cause them material poverty.

--**(20)** The Greek word for *poor* describes humiliation more than material poverty. It is the consciousness of spirit-poverty. Both Peter (materially poorer) and Matthew (materially richer) experienced a poverty of spirit which drove them to Jesus Christ.

--Certainly, many believers then and many today experience material poverty. But a prideful heart, like the Pharisees had, was never found at the feet of the Son of Man. *The sad reality of the Rich Young Ruler*

--There is a present and future blessing for the heart that cries like the psalmist:

Psalm 40:17: *But I am poor and needy; yet the LORD thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.*

--**(21)** Hunger is indicative of privation or need. Those disciples knew they needed something more than physical bread. They needed the Bread of Life!

--Certainly, the physical was a part of it. Think of Elijah by the brook Cherith, or with the widow of Zarephath. Think of those early believers driven from their homes and living in caves with nothing. Their spiritual hunger drove them to endure the physical deprivation.

--Followers of the Son of Man may *hunger now*, but we will *be filled*.

Matthew 5:6: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

--When we desire Him, He will always answer richly. May God never allow us to live without a hunger and thirst for Him!

--Weeping, whether because of personal or public causes, is inevitably a response to sin. The follower of the Son of Man will weep at their own sin and the sin surrounding them.

Luke 7:37-38: *And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with fragrant oil.*

--Did this woman, who was a great sinner, not leave forgiven, blessed, and rejoicing? In Christ, we can battle our sin and find victory over it through His perfection!

--What of the prophets weeping for their people like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jesus?

Psalm 119:136: *Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law.*

--Sin wounds the heart of God, and it should wound the heart of the godly. But there will be a day when all tears are wiped away, and a new creation that sin has never touched or spoiled will endure forever.

--**(22)** Anyone who sides with the Son of Man will be hated, excluded, reviled, and rejected by those who do not want to follow the Son of Man. Jesus warned His followers about this.

John 15:18-20: *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*

--People should only hate, exclude, revile, and reject us because they are responding to Christ in us. Don't take it personally. Also, don't be surprised. The Christian can feel lonely and rejected at times in the world, even shed tears, but at least we know why.

--(23) We also know our rejection is worth it. Jesus is not exaggerating here. Our reward *in that day* will be **great** enough to make us **leap for joy!**

--Do you think the disciples ever imagined their names being carved into the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem?! When Jesus uses the word **great**, He means it. *Ignore people who try to get more spiritual than Jesus and say they don't want to live for heavenly rewards! Believe Jesus when He commands us to: *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven!**

--(24-26): ***But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.***

--Think of the various rejectors of God who were rich, full, and happy—the world before the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon with Belshazzar, Jerusalem in Jesus' day, etc.

--It is hard when no one is speaking well of us. We all want some measure of thanks or appreciation. Even so, who are we getting our recognition from? Do we love the praise of those whose end we fear?

--Any good servant of Christ will have men speak evil of them. The servants of the world will be loved and lauded by the world. What will their ultimate end be?

Luke 16:23-25: *And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” But Abraham said, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.”*

--In this life, those following the Son of Man face all the hell they will ever have. In this life, those rejecting the Son of Man get all the heaven they will ever have.