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Luke 6:1 - 6:19



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In Luke chapter 6, Steve Gregg explores the topic of Sabbath and how it was viewed in Jesus' time. He discusses instances where Jesus and his disciples were accused of breaking Sabbath traditions and argues that Jesus was actually fulfilling the purpose of Sabbath by bringing rest and healing to people. Gregg also provides insight into the selection of Jesus' twelve disciples and how their names and relationships varied among the gospel accounts. Additionally, he explains the significance of Jesus' sermon and the eight statements he made, which contain both blessings and warnings.

Transcript

Okay, we come to Luke chapter 6. Now, it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that he went through the grain fields and his disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath? But Jesus answering them said, Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry? He and those who were with him, how he went into the house of God and took and ate the showbread and also gave to some of those who were with him, which was not lawful for any but the priests to eat. And he said to them, The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Now, this little story begins by saying on the second Sabbath after the first. Well, what is the first? Well, Luke has only related the events of one Sabbath controversy and that was the demoniac being delivered. And so this is another Sabbath.

He's trying to make sure he's not, we know he's not talking about the same Sabbath as before. It wasn't the second Sabbath chronologically. There are Sabbaths every week and no doubt many weeks had passed between.

He just means this is a second instance of a Sabbath. Now in the Alexandrian text, it doesn't even say what we just read. The second Sabbath after the first.

The Alexandrian text is on a Sabbath and that's all it says. It happened on a Sabbath that he went in through the grain field. So it may not even be necessary to deal with the subject of the second Sabbath because that's not in all the manuscripts.

In any case, it's a Sabbath and it's a different Sabbath than one of the ones previously mentioned. Or than the one previously mentioned. Now the disciples are going through a grain field and apparently it was time to eat.

They were hungry and so they did what was really quite natural and lawful to do in one respect. They picked the grain from the grain field. They had heads of wheat.

They rubbed them in their hands which was a typical way of separating the grains that were edible from the chaff which you wouldn't want to eat. The chaff was really feathery and lightweight so the wind would blow the chaff away and leave the grains in the hands. They could eat that.

I wouldn't like to eat raw wheat berries. It would be really hard on the teeth I would think. But it can be done and that's what they sometimes did.

In fact, this was not unlawful for them to do generally speaking because the law actually permitted this. In Deuteronomy 23 and verse 25, the law specifically makes provision. If somebody is walking through someone else's grain field and they're hungry, they can pick grain and rub it in their hands and eat it.

It actually allows for that. What it says in Deuteronomy is they can't go in there with a bushel basket and harvest a bunch of their neighbor's grain and take it home with them, but they can eat bits of grain. They can also do the same thing with grapes as they're walking through vineyards.

The idea here being is these aren't really yours, but since you're hungry and you're passing through, it's not going to hurt the guy who owns the grain field for you to take a few heads and that's permitted. You just can't go in and harvest it and take it home because it's not yours. It's someone else's.

So technically this was not stealing. If you're walking by somebody else's house and there's an apple tree and there's apples on it and you grab an apple and eat it, we might think of that as not quite kosher because that's taking somebody else's food without permission. The law of Moses allowed that kind of thing to take place.

So that's not what the complaint was. When the Pharisees complained about the disciples doing this, it's not that they were eating somebody else's grain and that's stealing, but the problem is they were doing it on the Sabbath day and the Sabbath day was a day when you're not supposed to do work, any ordinary work. Now is feeding yourself work? Not necessarily feeding yourself, but preparing food would be work and particularly this act of preparation, which could technically be called harvesting and winnowing.

Now in an agrarian society, harvesting and winnowing were some of the main forms of work in certain seasons that most laborers did. Technically the disciples were picking

grain and winnowing it, separating the wheat from the chaff. This is a very small scale harvest and winnowing, but it is harvesting and it is winnowing.

And therefore the Pharisees said, these guys are doing work on the Sabbath day, they shouldn't do that, that's not lawful for them to do. Now Jesus defended his disciples and we have to ask ourselves, what was the nature of his defense of their actions? We commonly find people who believe that we're supposed to observe the Sabbath day, that we're supposed to still rest on the seventh day of the week and they even say that Jesus kept the Sabbath day and his disciples. If he did, we don't read of it.

We do read of him going in the synagogue on the Sabbath, but that's not keeping the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath means not working. Going to the synagogue is not one of the things commanded on the Sabbath day.

But Jesus preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath because that's where people were. The other days he preached wherever he found them, you know, in the hillsides or whatever. But keeping the Sabbath means not working and Jesus deliberately didn't keep it in that sense because he did the same work on the Sabbath he did any other day.

And he defended his disciples on this occasion for breaking the Sabbath. Now those who do believe that Christianity requires us to keep the Sabbath, no, no, Jesus didn't agree that they were breaking the Sabbath. What they were doing was something the Pharisees interpreted as breach of the Sabbath.

And there was, of course, there were differences of opinion among the rabbis as to what constitutes a breach of Sabbath. Different kinds of work, well, different kinds of activities were discussed as to whether they constitute work or not. Wearing a wooden leg, for example, on the Sabbath was considered to be bearing a burden by some rabbis and they thought it was wrong.

Wearing a false tooth, on the other hand, was okay. It wasn't bearing a burden. If you picked up a rock and threw it in the air and caught it in the same hand, that was violation of the Sabbath.

If you threw it in the air and caught it with the other hand, it wasn't a violation of the Sabbath. They had all these rules about what is and what is not work. So clearly there were traditions about this.

But Jesus did not defend his disciples on the grounds that they were only violating traditions. And he could have framed his defense that way if he saw it that way. After all, he did that when the disciples on another occasion, in Mark 7 and in Matthew 15, the disciples were not washing their hands in the traditional way.

And they were criticized by the Pharisees for that. And Jesus came back and said, those are just traditions. You can't blame them for that.

They're just breaking your traditions and you break the law of God to keep your traditions. Now, the point is, that's the kind of defense I would expect Jesus to give here. If the complaint was, they're breaking our traditions.

And if Jesus thought was, well, no, they are breaking traditions, but they're not breaking God's law. He could have said that if that's what he thought. Instead, he acted as if they were in fact breaking the Sabbath.

They were in fact doing something unlawful, but he was going to excuse them anyway. And he does so by bringing up David. He said, have you not even read? Now, that statement must have been kind of a sting to the Pharisees who are the experts in the Old Testament scripture.

Didn't you even read this? Haven't you ever read these parts? I thought you knew your Bible. Have you not even read this? What David did when he was hungry and those who were with him, how he went into the house of God, took and ate the shelled bread. Now, this was bread, 12 loaves set out every week to just kind of display for seven days.

And then the priests would eat them. This bread was only for the priest. David, when he was fleeing from Saul for his life, had no food with him nor weapons.

And he went by the tabernacle and saw the priest there and said, I need some food. And the priest said, I don't have any regular bread here. And David said, well, give me the shelled bread.

Now, that was technically illegal for him to eat the shelled bread. He wasn't a priest. But the priest said, well, if you haven't done anything to make you unclean, I'll go ahead and let you eat it.

So David did what was technically unlawful. And Jesus said it was unlawful. It says, which was not lawful for any but the priests to eat.

Okay, what Jesus is saying is David did something that is unlawful. Jesus' disciples, in verse 2, were accused of doing what is not lawful. There's a direct parallel between what the disciples are said to do and what Jesus said David did.

Both of them did something unlawful. If the disciples had not done something unlawful, in Jesus' mind, he shouldn't have given this example of David, who did, in fact, do something unlawful and is seen as a parallel. But unlawful in what sense? It violated a ceremonial law.

The law of shelled bread is ceremonial. It's not moral. There are laws in the Old Testament that are moral, that David broke, that he was not given a pass for.

For example, he committed adultery and murder. Well, he didn't get a pass on that. He

did get forgiven, but he was blamed for it.

He was never blamed for eating the shelled bread because murder and adultery are moral laws and no one is allowed to break those. Ceremonial laws are supposed to be kept also, but there are some things that might override them. In Matthew's version, Jesus actually quotes in this place, his answer to him, he quotes from Hosea 6.6. In Hosea 6.6, and in Matthew chapter 9 where this is found, or 12, excuse me, Matthew 12 where this is found, Jesus says, but go and learn what that means.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice. Now, I will have mercy and not sacrifice is from Hosea 6.6. It's a quote. When Jesus said, go and learn what that means, again, he's kind of belittling them because they used to say, when people would ask them theological questions, they'd say, go and learn what that means.

Like, you uneducated fool, why don't you go learn something? Here's what the Bible says. Why haven't you learned what it says? Go and learn what it means. Well, Jesus turns on the experts and says, why don't you go and learn what this means? I will have mercy and not sacrifice.

Actually, on this occasion, he said, if you had done it, because Jesus actually quoted that verse to them earlier on another occasion when he was eating with the tax collectors and criticized for it. In Matthew 9, he said, go and learn what that means. He quotes Hosea 6.6. In chapter 12 of Matthew where this story is told, it says, if you had learned what this means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

Now, notice, David was guiltless and the disciples were guiltless, but both had done something unlawful. But what principle made them guiltless in doing this unlawful thing? The principle in Hosea 6.6. God said, I will have mercy rather than sacrifice. Now, sacrifice is ceremonial law.

Showing mercy is a moral requirement. God is saying, Jesus is saying, and quoting the Old Testament, which also says, some laws trump others. Some duties exist in a higher place in the hierarchy of obligations.

Yeah, we should keep the ceremonial laws when that's possible, but sometimes there's things more important. In another place, in John 7, in verse 23, Jesus pointed out another situation where two laws might come into conflict and one has to trump the other. In John 7, 23, Jesus said, if a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with me because I made a man completely whole on the Sabbath? Now, he said, the Jews will circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

Why? Because the circumcision law says a child must be circumcised on the 8th day of his life. Well, obviously, for some children, the 8th day of their life falls on a Saturday.

What do you do then? Circumcision is work.

It's a surgical procedure. And the priest who does it is working. So, what's he going to do? We've got the 8th day falls on a Sabbath.

Do you keep the circumcision law or the Sabbath law? Well, the Jews all agreed they keep the circumcision law. The Sabbath could even be trumped by circumcision. Obviously, the Jews recognize some laws have to take a back seat to other laws because once in a while, the keeping of a law will be in violation of another.

And by the way, it's interesting because circumcision is no longer required and yet it trumped Sabbath. So, to argue that Sabbath is still required is kind of interesting when it could even be trumped by circumcision and circumcision is even passed as a non-issue for us. But the point here is, while you will never find moral laws in conflict with each other, I don't think.

You'll never have one moral obligation in conflict with another moral obligation. There may be a moral obligation or even a ceremonial one that is in conflict with another ceremonial one. Eating the show bread, who eats it and who doesn't, is a ceremonial issue.

Jesus is suggesting keeping the Sabbath is also a ceremonial issue. Jesus equates Sabbath not with a moral law but a ceremonial law, one that can be trumped by moral considerations. Like if someone's hungry, you feed them.

You don't complain that somebody's eating even when he needs food, even if doing so violates a ceremonial law. David ate when he needed food, he broke a ceremonial law to do it and you don't blame him, that's what Jesus is saying. But in saying so, it's very clear that Jesus' implications are Sabbath is ceremonial, just like eating show bread is.

If you're not a priest, that's a ceremonial violation, but it's okay in certain cases. Paul treated Sabbath-keeping as ceremonial also in Colossians 2, verses 16 and 17. He said, let no one therefore judge you concerning food or drink, that's ceremonial restrictions of the law, or festivals or new moons or Sabbath days.

He said, these are a shadow for the time present, but the body is of Christ. Now, he equated Sabbath with other ceremonial things like food and drink and festivals and new moons. Now, he didn't say, let no one judge you of whether you commit adultery or not, because adultery is a moral thing, and Paul himself would judge people for that.

In fact, he said that about the man who's living adulterously with his father's wife. He says, I already have judged him about this. And so, Paul would never say, ignore people's judgment about your moral behavior.

No, people should be judging your moral behavior, and so should you. But ceremonial

behavior, Paul says, it's not an issue, don't let people judge you about that, it's not an issue. So, Sabbaths, to Paul, belong to the same category as other ceremonial issues of food and drink and festivals and new moons.

Likewise, Jesus compares it with eating showbread if you're not a priest. It's a violation, same as violating the Sabbath. In Matthew, he gives another example in this connection, because in Matthew chapter 12, he additionally gives the example of priests who work on the Sabbath.

He says, and have you not read that the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath day and are blameless. Now, how do they profane it? The word profane, we think of as something like evil and coarse and pornographic or something, but the word profane in the English language is simply the opposite of sacred. Something is sacred, meaning set apart for God, or it's profane, which means ordinary, normal.

It doesn't mean evil. Profane doesn't mean evil. It means regular, ordinary, as opposed to sacred.

Now, the Sabbath is to be kept sacred, but the priests in the temple treat it as a normal day. They do the same work on the Sabbath as they profane the Sabbath. That is, they relegate the Sabbath to the same level as an ordinary day by working just as much and even more on the Sabbath.

So Jesus said, and yet they're blameless. Now, in that place, Jesus anticipates that they're going to come back and say, but the temple, that's important. Breaking the Sabbath on the temple may be necessary because the temple services how we worship God.

But then Jesus follows by saying, and one greater than the temple is here. If you're going to excuse the priests because they're doing the work of the temple on the Sabbath, well, I'm greater than the temple, and when my disciples are doing my work, that excuses them breaking the Sabbath too. He also said it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

He said that in Matthew 12, 10, which is parallel to here, although that particular statement is not recorded in Luke. Okay, he did say in verse 5, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. Now, this is recorded also in Mark's version, Mark 2, 27, but Mark has another saying preceding it.

Mark has Jesus saying the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. Luke leaves out the business about the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath, but what does that mean? Once again, people who are Sabbatarians today, they say, well, look, the Sabbath wasn't just for the Jews, it was for mankind.

Jesus said it was made for man. And they think that Jesus is trying to universalize the

Sabbath here. Actually, Jesus is going the opposite direction of the Sabbath in this conference.

He's not saying, hey, everyone needs to keep the Sabbath. What sense would it be for him to make that statement in the context of this discussion, where he's defending his disciples for breaking the Sabbath? In saying the Sabbath was made for man, he doesn't mean all men besides Israel. If that was the point he was making, like, for example, Seventh-day Adventists always say he's making that point here.

You'd assume he's trying to correct a wrong notion of the Pharisees who felt that it was only for Israel, but Jesus wanted them to know it's for Gentiles, too. See, that's the point the Seventh-day Adventists want to take from it. But for Jesus to be making that point would mean that he's trying to correct them for thinking it was only for Israel, and he wants to make it clear, no, it's for everybody.

Well, that hardly reflects what their views were or what the issue was under discussion. In saying the Sabbath was made for man, it means the men to whom it was given, namely the Jews. It was never given to anyone but Israel.

It's in the Ten Commandments, which was a law given only to Israel as part of the covenant God made with them at Mount Sinai. That was made for human benefit. That was made to give them rest, which they needed badly in a hard-working society.

He made it for their benefit, not to bring them into bondage. When you won't let people eat when they're hungry because it's the Sabbath day, you're making people be in bondage to the Sabbath as if the Sabbath is the Lord and the people are made to serve the Sabbath. No, the Sabbath is made for the other purpose, to be a boon to people.

It's made for their benefit. And we said, therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath day. He's man, he's the Son of Man, and the Sabbath was made for man's benefit.

Therefore, he as the Son of Man has the right to use the Sabbath in a way that benefits man, but more so in the case since he is the unique Son of Man, and he is the Lord, he says he is the Lord also of the Sabbath day. And I think the word also has got to be taken into consideration in figuring out what Jesus is saying here. What does it mean also? In addition to what? In addition to the other days.

Jesus is the Lord of every day, also the Sabbath day. The disciples, therefore, have only one obligation any day of the week, on the regular days and also on the Sabbath day. And what is that? To follow their Lord.

He's the Lord. If you have a Lord, you're a servant. A servant's obligation is the same every day, to do what his master wants.

On Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and also on the Sabbath day, he's the Lord. So the only obligation the disciples have is not to observe the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath law, but to observe Christ's law, to do what Christ says. He's the Lord, and that's defining obligation seven days a week.

He did say, as we pointed out, it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Well, what are you supposed to do the other days? Bad. Obviously, Christians are supposed to do good all the time.

So if it's lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath, then it's lawful to do on the Sabbath what's lawful to do any other time. Good. So Jesus is simply saying, you guys have one holy day.

My disciples have seven holy days. They have a Lord who they obey all seven days. Also the Sabbath day, he's the Lord.

And they do good, and they're required to do good all the time. Therefore, since it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath, they do the same thing on the Sabbath as any other day. In other words, Jesus is saying the Sabbath requirement is not binding on his disciples.

Now this bothers people because it makes it sound like Jesus was breaking the law, and it's part of our theology that Jesus was sinless, and if he broke the Sabbath, some people say, he was sinning. Well, that's begging the question. He's just saying here that breaking the Sabbath isn't sinning in this new order, in this new wine order.

He's not going to be bound in the old wineskins of the Sabbath tradition, or even the Sabbath law, because there's a new law, and a new lawgiver, Jesus. A new order has come. And therefore, he's saying, David was blameless when he ate the showbread.

My disciples are blameless when they eat on the Sabbath, and when they do this, although they're breaking the Sabbath technically. And that's why he said in Matthew 12, if you had learned what this means, I will have mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. He says, my disciples are not guilty.

But how does I will have mercy, not sacrifice relate? Sabbath is like sacrifice. Letting people eat when they're hungry is mercy. God wants these Pharisees to allow these people to pick the grain, eat it, meet their needs, that's showing mercy.

Rather than impose upon them a ceremonial requirement, like sacrifice is a ceremonial requirement, and Sabbath keeping is a ceremonial requirement. The point here is that God prefers people to love, even when it requires that the ceremonial laws have to be set aside for the moment. And Jesus wanted his disciples to be loving all the time, and he was willing to set aside the Sabbath requirements, as long as they were doing what their Lord wants them to do, eating on this occasion apparently fell into that category.

Verse 6, now it happened on another Sabbath also. Notice how many of these stories happen on Sabbaths. That's because one of the main features of Jesus' ministry was to confront the Jews about Sabbath.

Almost all the controversies, not every last one, but almost all the controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees are about the Sabbath. And it's because he did things on the Sabbath deliberately that could have been done a different day. All the people Jesus healed on the Sabbath could have lived to the next day.

He did it on the Sabbath on purpose, in order to illustrate that the Sabbath is part of an old order that has passed, and that he's deliberately flying in the face of those who want to make it binding, even bondage engendering upon mankind. So it happened on another Sabbath also that he entered the synagogue and taught, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him closely, whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against him.

Again, working on the Sabbath is forbidden. One of the traditions of the rabbis was that for a doctor to heal somebody on the Sabbath was a violation, unless it was a life-threatening situation and that the person would not live to the next day if left unhealed. So they did at least make that much provision among the rabbis, that if someone was going to die that day, a doctor could work on him and save their life.

If they wouldn't die that day and you could work on him the next day instead, then you shouldn't heal him on the Sabbath. You should let him get through the Sabbath and then do your work as a doctor. So here's a man with a withered hand.

He's been that way a long time. He's not going to die from that condition, not today. And so they know Jesus is just the type who's likely to do something controversial, like heal this man on the Sabbath, which was not permitted in their ways of looking at things.

And they watched him closely to see if he'd heal. It's interesting, just the presence of a disabled man made all the critics of Jesus look that way and say, I'll bet Jesus is going to do something about this. I mean, Jesus is pretty predictable that if there's some suffering, he's probably going to do something about it.

And the Sabbath isn't going to stop him. So they're watching him to see whether he'd heal on the Sabbath. But he knew their thoughts and said to the man who had the withered hand, arise and stand here.

And he arose and stood there. And Jesus said to them, as the man was standing there, and it was clear he was going to do something to make them mad. He turned to his critics and said, I will ask you one thing.

Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it? And they didn't answer. It says in Mark's gospel, it says they were silent. They didn't answer him.

It also says in Mark's gospel, but it doesn't say here in Mark 3, 5, it says, and he looked upon them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts. Here it just says he looked around at them all and said to the man, stretch out your hand. And he did so.

And his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. Now, Matthew is more specific.

It says they plotted how they might destroy him. And Mark says they plotted even with the Herodians. Mark 3, 6 says they plotted with the Herodians.

Now, the Herodians were Jews who worked with Herod's household. Herod was a not very appreciated oppressive king. And therefore, the Herodians usually were supporters of an unpopular Roman appointee and therefore unpopular with people like the Pharisees who were Jewish nationalists.

And yet the Pharisees and Herodians, who were politically quite different from each other, plotted together to kill Jesus, it says in Mark 3, 6. Now, notice Jesus didn't do anything. He just said, stretch out your hand. He didn't spit on the guy.

He didn't touch the guy. He didn't do anything. No contact.

Now, no one ever said it's wrong to talk on the Sabbath because actually the rabbis talked in the synagogues. In fact, that's what Jesus was doing there at the time probably. And so for him to talk and say, stretch out your hand.

I mean, how can you nail him for having done work? He just said words and then the man stretched his hand up. Very hard to say that Jesus broke the Sabbath, although he wouldn't have minded doing so, I think, because he did that kind of thing from time to time. But he did it in a way that they really couldn't very well define what he did as working.

Verse 12. Now, it came to pass in those days that he went out to the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples to him, and from them he chose 12, whom he also named apostles.

And it gives their names. Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew, his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James, the son of Altheus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas, the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also became a traitor. Okay, now we do read in other gospels lists of these apostles' names, and I believe in chapter 3 of Mark we even read of him selecting them.

Matthew chapter 10 gives their names, starting with verse 1, but I don't think it's at the time they were selected. It just gives what their names were. But on this occasion, Luke alone tells us that Jesus chose the 12 after spending a night in prayer and apparently not sleeping.

Jesus prayed a great deal, and one of the gospels tells us that it was his custom to get up a long time before day and to spend time in prayer. But this time he prayed all night, which was a special occasion, no doubt because he was aware that he would be choosing the men who would be his successors. Jesus, who started the most important movement in history, only led it for a very short time, personally, with his physical presence.

He died within a couple or three years after he became a public figure, and he left the entire fate of the movement in the hands of a handful of guys who had no experience leading a religious movement at all. Fishermen, tax collectors, zealots, who knows what the others were, peasants all, I'm sure. And these guys were not rabbis, they were not prophets, they were not men who led spiritual movements, and yet they were going to be left within a very short time, alone, but not really alone because the Holy Spirit would come upon them and so Jesus was still with them, but they were going to be left visibly as the leaders of the church when Jesus was gone, and you've got to get the right men for that.

I've known people who served God faithfully for five, ten years and then kind of flaked out. And Jesus was only going to have a year or two to watch these guys to see how they are, and then just leave the fate of the entire world in their hands. The whole kingdom of God would be led by them.

Their responsibility would be to reach the rest of the world with the gospel. So, I mean, this is a pretty important choice. You've got to get the right men.

It takes the right stuff. And looking at some of these men, outwardly, you wouldn't necessarily think, well, this guy's obviously the right man for the job. Some of these people we don't know very much about, but some of the ones we do know something about, doesn't make it seem like they were the most promising of candidates.

James and John, who said, should we call fire out of heaven and consume these people? And Jesus said, you don't know what men are spirit, you're up. Or Peter, with his impulsiveness all the time, and him, you know, becoming such a leader. You wouldn't know from natural observation that these would be the safest guys to train for a couple of years and leave in charge of a world empire, the kingdom of God.

But that's no doubt why Jesus prayed. I wonder sometimes if he sweat great drops of blood that night praying because of the issues that were at stake in choosing and delegating such authority to these men. But after he prayed all night, it says, when it was day, he called his disciples to him.

And we might be accustomed to thinking of the disciples as the 12, but it says, and from them he chose 12. So there's a larger number of disciples. The exact number we don't know.

There are passages in the New Testament that speak of the apostles as the disciples. So that there's occasions when the term the disciples is referring specifically to the apostles, but disciple is technically a broader term. A disciple is simply a student, a follower.

And there are many people following Jesus. We know of, for example, in Acts chapter 1, when they decide to replace Judas, Peter said, it has to be someone who's been with us from the time that John was baptizing until the time Jesus was taken up. And they found two candidates that we'd never heard of before.

Obviously, during this whole time of the gospels, these two candidates were there among the disciples. And one of them was later chosen to, Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. But how many others were there all that time? We don't know.

One time in Luke chapter 10, Jesus sent out 70 who were all disciples. So he had a large number of disciples, but he chose 12 to be apostles. And the word apostles means one who is sent.

Mark tells us more of his purpose for choosing the 12. Then we really read about here. It says in Mark chapter 3, 3, 13 through 15, he says, and he went up on the mountain and he called to him those he himself wanted.

And they came to him and he appointed 12 that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. Then it gives their names. Now to be with him, everyone couldn't just be with Jesus.

Even all his disciples couldn't. There's times he wanted to escape the crowds, cross the sea in a boat, get away from everybody except the 12. He'd take the 12 with him.

Jesus wasn't equally accessible to everybody. It just isn't possible. When you got thousands of people pressing on you, you can't be friends equally with them all.

You have to cultivate a few important friendships. Even among the 12, he had the three, Peter, James, and John that were closer. And even one of them, John, Peter referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Jesus had best friends as well as friends. And he had people who were just acquaintances who weren't necessarily friends but weren't enemies either. But among those multitudes that followed him, he wanted to have a special relationship with 12 so they could be with him.

At times he didn't want to be with anyone else. They'd be with him. They'd receive special training.

Then he could send them out. And notice, to give them power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons. This sounds like an almost uniquely apostolic function.

He chose them to give them the power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. Paul himself, in appealing to the legitimacy of his apostleship in 2 Corinthians 12, 12. 2 Corinthians 12, 12, Paul said, Surely the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, and all signs and wonders and mighty deeds, meaning in his ministry, the signs, the wonders, the miracles he did, those were signs of him being an apostle.

Certainly that indicates that the early church assumed that people who did those things were probably apostles because he could appeal that as the proof of his apostleship. You saw me do these things. Now, on the other hand, there were some people who were not apostles who did those kinds of things.

Stephen and Philip, for one thing, in the book of Acts. And the 70 in Luke 10. These were given apparently some kind of special dispensation for that one outreach to have these powers.

But the apostles were the ones who would regularly exhibit these miraculous powers. Some others did, but for the most part, this was to be an apostolic function. Okay, so we have the list of the apostles here that Jesus picked.

We have a list of them in Matthew 10, and a list in Mark 3, and we have a list of them in Acts chapter 1. These lists are not exactly the same, although they were clearly the same men in all the lists, which means some of the men had different names. We know this already about some of them. Simon and Peter were the same man.

Levi and Matthew were different names for the same man. There are some others that we must deduce to have had multiple names. For example, in this list we have Bartholomew.

He is almost certainly Nathaniel in John. In John chapter 1, Philip's friend Nathaniel came to Jesus. And later, when the seven went out and fished after the resurrection, Nathaniel was among them too.

He apparently was one of the twelve. But the word Nathaniel does not appear in any of the apostle lists in the Synoptic Gospels. Only John's Gospel uses the word Nathaniel.

But the other Gospels refer to this Bartholomew, and they always connect him with Philip. While the order of names differs in the different lists, Philip and Bartholomew are always put together. And Nathaniel was a friend of Philip.

Philip brought him to Jesus. What's more, the name Bartholomew is simply a Hebrew word that means the son of Tholomew. Bar means son of.

So, just like we have John Johnson, Johnson means the son of John. And, you know, sometimes people are called by their last name. And we have Peterson.

We have Johnson. We have Jackson. We have, you know, Jefferson, and other names built upon the names of somebody's father.

And so, among the Hebrews, the word Bartholomew means son of Tholomew, or some would say son of Ptolemy. And he was probably Nathaniel, the son of Ptolemy. Same person, two names.

We have Matthew mentioned in verse 15, though the same man was called Levi in the story of his call in the previous chapter. We have a man there in verse 16, Judas, the son of James. By comparing the different lists and the different gospels, this man is apparently the same man who is called Thaddeus in both Matthew and Mark in their lists.

And in some manuscripts, Mark says Thaddeus, who is also called Lebbeus. Some manuscripts leave out the Lebbeus line. Now, if Thaddeus was also called Lebbeus, and also Judas, not Iscariot, as he's called in John's gospel, or here he's called Judas, son of James, then this man had three names.

Judas, which is just Judah, the Greek form of Judah. The New Testament's written in Greek, so it gives the Greek forms of people's names. But Judas would have been called Judah.

I mean, in Aramaic. James would have been called Jacob. Simon would have been called Simeon, and so forth.

We have here the Greek forms of the names, but they had Hebrew names. What's interesting is how some of these names are so common. There's two Jameses among the 12.

There's two Judases, and there's two Simons. Out of 12, six, fully half of them, have names that are not unique among them. There's two of each of those guys.

More than that, there's several sets of brothers. James and John are brothers. Peter and Andrew are brothers.

There might have been some other brothers. The Judas, son of James, the word son of, the son is really in italics. Some think it could be just Judas of James, which could mean his brother, another James, the son of Alphaeus, who's mentioned earlier.

The sons of Zebedee, James and John, were actually cousins of Jesus, first cousins. Because Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the sister of their mother, Salome. I won't go into the passages that prove that right now.

You have to compare passages in Mark and in John and elsewhere, but you do find, from

especially the lists of the women who were at the tomb or at the cross, these lists, when you compare them, you find that Salome is the sister of Mary, and Salome was the mother of Zebedee's children, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were first cousins of Jesus. Anyway, there's a number of cases where two brothers come in together, or two cousins of Jesus in one case, and so forth.

But we have these 12 selected, and not without prayer, not without God's direction upon Jesus and the choice. And it says in verse 17, 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. So you've always got this mixture, people who have sicknesses and people who are demon-possessed.

They seem to be existing in large numbers wherever there's a crowd. Everywhere Jesus went, he had to deal with both categories. We're very familiar with sickness, demon possession is much less frequently recognized among us, but that doesn't mean it's less present.

We just live in a society that still recognizes sickness as a phenomenon, but they don't recognize demon possession. They simply categorize it as another kind of sickness, usually mental illness, when it's found among us. Jesus healed them all and cast out demons.

Notice even casting out unclean spirits was called healing here. And the whole multitude sought to touch him, for the power went out from him and healed them all. So touching Jesus was not something that just the woman with the issue of blood did.

We do read about her doing so. In Luke 8, 44 through 46, the woman with the issue of blood said, if I can just touch his garment, I know I'll be made well. But in addition to that, other people touched him and power went out from him, just as in her case.

In fact, in Matthew 14, like this passage itself, it seems to suggest that touching Jesus and being healed, or even touching his garment, was fairly commonplace. We read especially of that one woman with the issue of blood touching his garment, but Matthew 14, 36 gives more of a generic statement. It says, well, we have to be verse 35 and 36.

It says, when the men of that place recognized him, they sent out to all the surrounding region, brought to him all who were sick, and begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well. So in addition to Jesus proactively reaching out and touching and healing people, people who simply pressed in and touched him or even his garment were healed, apparently many of them.

And the most notable case we know was that woman with the issue of blood, but this

was happening here too. People just were seeking to touch him. And when they did, power went out from him.

Now, it's kind of an interesting thing, power went out from him. That's also stated in the story of the woman with the issue of blood. He said, who touched me? And Peter said, everyone's touching you, what do you mean? And Jesus said, oh no, I felt power go out of me.

Someone touched me differently. Somebody touched me apparently with faith and drew from me the power to heal. Interesting that Jesus could feel that, like something going out of him.

Don't know what to think about that, except that it was the power of God operating through him. He felt apparently when it moved through him. And I don't have anything insightful to say about that, but that's just kind of curious, really.

Okay, now it says in verse 17, he came down from the mountain where he had appointed the apostles and stood on a level place. And from that place, he actually gave a sermon apparently. In addition to healing all these people, he gave a sermon, which is recorded in verses 20 through 49.

Because he was standing on a level place, or the King James Version says a plain, this is sometimes called the sermon on the plain. Now, it has remarkable similarities to what we call the Sermon on the Mount, which in Matthew is Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Now, we call the Sermon in Matthew the Sermon on the Mount because in Matthew 5 it says Jesus went up to a mountain and he sat down and called his disciples to him and he taught them. So, he taught them that sermon on a mountain.

This is saying he came down from a mountain and sat in a plain or a level place and gave this sermon. Because of the difference in the description of locations, it is usually assumed this is not the same sermon, but a different sermon given on a different occasion. It has many resemblances to the Sermon on the Mount.

It begins similarly, ends similarly, and has similar stuff in the middle. It's not identical to the Sermon on the Mount. After all, the Sermon on the Mount is three whole chapters in Matthew.

Here it's half of one chapter in Luke. And yet, its basic content certainly looks like a condensation of the Sermon on the Mount. So, if this is a different location, we have to assume that Jesus gave the same or similar sermons two different times.

Once on a mountain and once on a plain. However, both sermons are said to have been delivered to his disciples. And it doesn't seem real likely that he would have given the same sermon so closely like each other to the same audience.

Though he might. After all, repetition helps things sink in and stick with people. And maybe he did.

It wasn't verbatim the same, not as recorded anyway. But there is the theory that it is the same sermon. That is, since the apostles, or the people who wrote the Gospels, they often summarized or paraphrased some things that they quoted Jesus saying, the differences between these two sermons that exist, which are minor, may simply be the effect of one paraphrasing and one giving a more literal, or two different paraphrases of the same statement.

In other words, they wouldn't have to be verbatim the same in order to be the same record of the same sermon. But, one of the issues, of course, is the location. In Matthew, it's on a mountain.

Here, it's on a plain. However, the word plain is more correctly translated as here in the New King James, a level place. Some say Jesus went up on the mountain, as Matthew says, but he did it the night before and prayed.

And then he came down to a level place on the mountainside, sat down with his disciples after he'd selected them, and gave this sermon. Still on a mountain, but at a level place where he and his disciples could all sit on a flat area on the mountainside. This is not impossible.

The wording certainly allows it. And then Matthew saying that he went up on a mountain and gave the sermon would be compressing it. He went up really the day before, but while he was still up there, before he came all the way back down, he sat on the mountainside and gave the talk.

So, there's no real damning evidence that this couldn't be the same sermon. However, Matthew's is much longer, which means that either Luke has abbreviated the sermon, which is not inconceivable, or what seems more probable is that Matthew has extended it. Now, when I say that, what I mean is, although we're not studying Matthew right now, in our studies of Matthew, I've brought out that Matthew tends to gather the things Jesus said on certain topics and place them all together in topical arrangements.

Matthew arranges most of the teachings of Jesus into five discourses. And these discourses, every one of them gives evidence of being, of containing information that Jesus gave on different occasions. I can't go into the reason for saying that now, but when I went through Matthew, it seems obvious.

As you look at each of these five discourses, each of them seems to have material that's taken from different times and different times and put together because of their topical similarity. Therefore, it's possible that the sermon Jesus gave is pretty much like the one that Luke gave, presents here, but that Matthew, in presenting the same sermon, brings

in additional material that Jesus said on other occasions on similar subjects and therefore conflates it into a much larger presentation. That would be in keeping with Matthew's general tendency.

But we don't know if he did it in this case. So, having said all that, we're going to take a break before we look at the sermon. But since the sermon itself will certainly occupy a whole session, I wanted to make these introductory comments while we had a few minutes at the end of our consideration of the earlier part of the chapter.

But when we come back to verse 20, and we have the beginning of this sermon, just know there's two views on this. One is that this is the same sermon as the Sermon on the Mount, but that it's either abbreviated by Luke or conflated by Matthew. Or, it's a different sermon on similar topics given presumably to the same people, but on a different occasion.

That Jesus did repeat himself from time to time seems to be well established from the records. And he might have repeated all this material. But the, I will say this, just the general outline of this sermon is very similar to Matthew's.

It begins with Beatitudes. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount begins with eight Beatitudes. A Beatitude is a statement that begins Blessed.

Blessed are. Blessed is. That kind of a statement is a Beatitude.

There are eight of them at the beginning of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Here there are only four, but they are supplemented with four Woes. So we still have eight statements at the beginning, but they're not eight Beatitudes, but four Beatitudes and four Woes that are each the mirror image of one of the respective Beatitudes. So he'll say, Blessed are you poor, but woe to you rich.

Blessed are you who are hungry, but woe to you who are full and so forth. This is different than Matthew's, but it does begin with several Beatitudes, just like Matthew's does. And it also ends as Matthew's does with the warning about building on a rock or building on sand.

The illustration of a man who built his house on sand and it came down when the storms came and the man who built his house on the rock and it didn't come down when the storms came. Matthew's Sermon at the end of chapter 7 of Matthew ends with the same story that this ends with. So you've got the similarity in the opening and the closing.

And in between this sermon, between the opening and closing, has teaching about loving your enemies, which is also found in Matthew 5, about judging others, which is found in Matthew 7, and about trees being known by their fruit, which is also found in Matthew 7. So the material that is in Luke is also found in Matthew 5-7, but much less is included by Luke than what is included by Matthew. So we'll actually look at the sermon

itself in our next session.