

A Study of Luke's Gospel

Week Seventeen

Luke 10:21-11:13

Day One

21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. 22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." 23 Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

v. 21 – Jesus regularly referred to little children in His ministry.

He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:2-4).

Take some time today to reflect on what a little child is like and how you must change to become more like on. When I think of how a child is, I think of words like fun, trusting, inquisitive and energetic. What do you think of? Don't just reflect; write your thoughts down and then see whether you are like a little child or not?

v. 22 – You will know Jesus not through your wisdom and learning, but through your childlike attributes of trust and simplicity. God cannot be figured out but is known through revelation and illumination. It is impossible to be proud in your knowledge of God, for whatever you know God gave you; you didn't earn it.

v. 23 – Don't ever take for granted what you have in the Lord. We are blessed to read the Word, worship publicly and grow in our faith and knowledge of God. Why not thank God right now for His blessings.

v. 24 – All the prophets were looking forward to Jesus as were the righteous kings like David and Solomon. The writer of Hebrews said of Moses:

He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward (Hebrews 11:26-27).

Then the writer explained that the disciples were so blessed:

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect (Hebrews 11:39-40).

I think we should thank God once again for we are seeing things that the prophets of old wanted to see but could not. Thank you, Jesus, for Your grace towards us.

Day Two

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

v. 25 – What is an expert in the law? In Israel, it was a man who spent his life wrangling over the trivialities of the law. This man came forward as if he wanted instruction, but he really wanted to trap Jesus in some interpretation of the law of Moses. The question he asked was a favorite of the Jewish “lawyers.” Their answer was simple: Follow the written and oral law perfectly.

v. 26 – Jesus often answered a question with a question. Here he put the “ball back in the man’s court,” and asked him what his interpretation was. Don’t be in a hurry to answer every question that is asked of you.

v. 27 – The man quoted Deuteronomy 6:5. I don’t always remember that “love your neighbor” was an Old Testament and not a New Testament command. Why were the Jewish leaders so unloving then in Jesus’ day? The answer is that they were legalists who were convinced that man could achieve righteousness through his own efforts. This attitude was to plague the early church for many decades and much of Paul’s writing was to combat this Jewish legalistic mind that many Jewish believers had.

v. 28 – Jesus was ready to end the debate, but this lawyer had another motive. He wanted to justify himself and prove his intellectual prowess where the law was concerned. Instead of seeing that he did not love his neighbor and that he needed a better or higher righteousness than he then had, the man wanted to define who his neighbor was.

Paul described the role of the law:

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law (Galatians 3:24-25).

The law was to prove to people that they could not keep the commandments in their own power but needed God's help to do God's will. Instead the Jews tried to use the law as a means and an end to serving God. That is why they opposed Jesus. This man wanted to prove that he loved *some* of his neighbors and that this was adequate for salvation. In this way, he could justify why he didn't love all his neighbors as the Word commanded him to do. In many ways, legalism doesn't look for ways to serve God but for ways to circumvent God's service for human convenience.

Day Three

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

v. 30-35 – Jesus was a master story-teller and teacher. In fact, He was called “The Teacher” more than anything else in His earthly ministry. Even now He has sent the Holy Spirit to continue the work of teaching:

"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:25-27).

Parables were a crucial tool in Jesus' teaching ministry. My general rule for interpreting parables is simple: Parables are stories with that were used to make a point or teach a lesson. Unless Jesus interpreted the details of the parable (like He did in the parable of the sower), we should never focus or teach on the details but rather the overall lesson of the parable. For instance, the Samaritan poured oil and wine on the man's wounds in verse 34. The oil and wine isn't symbolic of anything; they are just part of the story.

It is my sense that everyone should be involved in teaching someone something. The writer of Hebrews wrote:

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! (Hebrews 5:12).

Teaching helps you clarify what you believe and why. It is also a wonderful expression of servant leadership, for teaching is a way to influence students rather than control or manipulate them. How can you become involved in teaching?

vs. 36&37 – Jesus did not deliver the lesson, but rather drew it out of the man who asked Him the question. This is why people walked for days, then sat for days, then walked again for days to go home just for the chance to hear Him teach. I want to be a teacher whom people choose to listen to and not one that they feel obligated to listen to. I want to do this not only through public speaking but also through writing, www.purposequest.com, and media such as radio and television. I also want to continue learning so that I have fresh things to say. How will you embrace your mandate to teach?

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Day Four

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

v. 38 – This is the well-known story of Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus whom Jesus later raised from the dead. It seems that Martha was the elder sister, or at least it was “her home” and she was “in charge.”

v. 39 – Jesus must have begun to teach while He was in the house, for Mary sat at his feet, taking in everything He said. That isn't a bad place to be—at the feet of Jesus, listening to His word. Perhaps you would do well to follow Mary's example today and sit at his feet to learn and be encouraged.

v. 40 – Since Martha had extended the invitation, she was responsible for hospitality. She felt a sense of duty to provide food not only for Jesus, but also for His traveling companions. It bothered her that Mary had abandoned her, and Martha was offended that Jesus was allowing that to happen! So Martha gave Jesus a piece of her mind! She accused Him of not caring and of endorsing Mary's seeming irresponsibility. So Martha then ordered Jesus to order Mary to come help her in the preparations!

I think there is a deeper issue here than just Martha being busy and Mary choosing to sit at Jesus' feet. In Jesus' day, women were not part of the spiritual community. They were

second-class members of the covenant community. I think Mary chose to be a disciple of Jesus and that angered Martha because Mary (and Jesus indirectly) were expressing the freedom of women to be Jesus' disciples. I have watched some women come into their ministry and their greatest opposition can come from women who think that they shouldn't be in ministry. I think Martha was trying to force Mary to do what was "proper" for women to do—run a household and handle food preparations. Do you think this is a plausible explanation of this story?

v. 41 – Jesus said that Martha was “worried and upset.” Oh my, how often I have been in the same condition. I am writing this in Zambia and just yesterday I was “worried and upset.” I’m doing some ministry consulting here, and a large group of people was supposed to come to have their personality profiles done. But the group was too big and the profiles I had were defective. So I worried and thought about how I could possibly handle this group. To make a long story short, the group never came! I realize that I have spent much of my adult life “worried and upset” over many things that never even happen! So I can identify with Martha. Can you? Are you “worried and upset” about anything today? Then why not choose Mary’s path and just sit at Jesus’ feet?

v. 42 – Jesus said that Mary chose the better thing and that was to focus on God and not on the circumstances. She had chosen to reject the traditional view of women and instead became a disciple of Jesus, not just His servant. Jesus saw this as the better thing and refused Martha’s petition to order Mary back into her “place” in the home. Every woman who reads this story should stand up and applaud not only Mary, who was among the first to reject the cultural norm to follow God, but also applaud Jesus who allowed it to happen and then endorsed it. Every man reading this story should ask whether or not he has given the women in his life freedom to sit at Jesus’ feet.

Day Five

11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

v. 1 – I have made reference to Jesus’ role as a teacher previously. While the Word portrays John the Baptist as a fiery revival preacher, here we see that John also spent time teaching his disciples. Teaching is an important part of leadership. In fact, it is one way to prepare God’s people to do His will:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Today there is much talk about every one of the “five-fold ministries” mentioned above (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher) except for the teacher. Why is that? Perhaps teaching is the least glamorous of the five; maybe since teaching is listed last, we assume that it ranks fifth in importance. But Jesus was called the Teacher. In this verse, someone requested that He teach on a specific topic: prayer.

Why did they ask Him to teach on prayer? They asked Him because they saw Him praying. I try not to teach things that I don't do or that God hasn't made a part of my life. I don't want to separate my actions from my teaching or else I may be teaching theories that don't work in real life. I want to teach what has become a part of me, so that in some sense I am teaching the Word made flesh in my own life. I asked you before and I'll ask you again: Who are you teaching? What are you teaching?

v. 2 – Here Jesus taught them the Lord's prayer but it is a different version than the one described in Matthew 6. Why is that? Jesus was an itinerate preacher and teacher. He moved around and probably repeated the same messages in different places. It is logical to assume that He would have varied the message according to His mood and audience. So this “version” could have been a variation of the prayer in Matthew 6. There is no evidence that the Word is in error here for the framework of this prayer is the same as the one Jesus taught in Matthew.

v. 3 – Our prayers should not start with our petitions but with a reminder of how great and holy God is. Our prayers should start not with our will, but a request that His will be done. Prayer is not a time when you present your wish list to God. It is a time when we talk and listen, when we focus on the goodness and mercy of God. Prayer is an expression of our dependence upon God for our daily physical needs and our spiritual needs. We cannot provide what we need; only God can do that.

v. 4 – The translation here is a bit weak, for the prayer is literally, “deliver us from the evil or wicked one.” Evil is not some abstract entity; it is a being called Satan and all his wicked angels. Don't ever lose sight of the fact that we have an enemy because we are children of God. We are no match spiritually or intellectually for our opponent. We must rely on God to protect and deliver us from this evil. Jesus said:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18 KJV).

When Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail, He didn't say that they wouldn't try to prevail. We must not be arrogant in our resistance to evil, but put on the full armor of God and then trust in His grace for help.

Day Six

5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "Then

the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

v. 5 – Jesus seized another opportunity to teach and He again used His favorite means of teaching: a parable. When you teach, do you have a teaching style? Mine is the seminar format, with fill-in-the-blank notes and PowerPoint slides to complement the teaching. I mix in music and try to take as many questions as possible. I try to involve all the student's senses, although I haven't figured out how to use the sense of smell yet. What is your teaching style? Do you have one? Do you teach? Why or why not?

vs. 6-8 – Jesus' teaching was always so simple, with images drawn from the life of common people. When I teach, I try to follow the acronym KISS, which stands for Keep It Simple, Stupid! It is the job of the teacher not to show off his or her knowledge, but to help students learn. I often ask students for feedback so they can tell me what they heard and learned. This helps me know whether I am being effective. That is also why I try to answer as many questions as possible, so I can "fill in the gaps" of what I didn't make clear for the student.

v. 9 – The lesson of this parable was that one should ask and keep on asking with boldness. Bold prayers don't offend God. He answers every prayer, even if it is to say, "No!" I think Jesus said less about the content of prayer in answer to the request, "Teach us how to pray" and said more about the style or method of persistent, fervent prayer.

v. 10 – Are you an "everyone?" That's important, because Jesus said that everyone who asks receives. So if you are an "everyone" and you ask and keep asking, you will receive. Do you believe this? Are you applying this to your prayer life? Are you knocking on any doors? If so, the door will eventually be opened to you. Jesus has more to say about prayer later in this gospel, so we will revisit this issue in later studies.

Day Seven

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

vs. 11-13 – Jesus was telling His disciples to expect to have their prayers answered, not because they pray good prayers, but because our heavenly Father wants to answer them. If this is true, why are we so skeptical that God is answering our prayers? When I pray, I expect God to speak or reveal His will. I anticipate that I will get a surprise phone call or have a chance meeting that relates to the matter for which I have prayed.

Do you have confidence that God will answer your prayers? Or do you doubt? I have counseled hundreds of people who are afraid that what they are hearing is from the evil one, or who are suspicious of what happens after they have prayed. A good example of this is found in Acts when Peter was imprisoned:

When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel" (Acts 12:12-15).

Peter was in jail and the saints were together praying, presumably for his protection and release. An angel released Peter and he came to the prayer meeting. When the servant girl announced that Peter was knocking at the door, the people said, "You're crazy! It must be his ghost or angel." Then they kept right on praying! This is such a humorous scene!

Why pray if you don't believe that God will answer? What's the use of prayer? Is it just a religious exercise? Why would anyone think that an evil spirit is speaking to them when they have prayed to their heavenly Father in the name of Jesus?

Do you just pray, or do you pray expecting an answer? I hope it is the latter. If not, then maybe it's time to put more trust in God's ability to answer and less faith in your ability to pray. Remember, God is the focus, not you, in all that you do for Him, including prayer.