

Luke 7

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How Jesus interacts with people in the Gospels!

When we think of the Gospels, we tend to think of it as stories about how Jesus suffered and then lived again on the 3rd day. Obviously true, but we tend to forget that more than the miracles, much of those Gospels are Jesus teaching us how He expects us to live. Realize Jesus "the teacher" has a lot more text than Jesus the miracle worker. That's because besides dying for our sins, He wants to teach us how He expects us to act as a witness for Him! My simple point is we're called to pay attention to His teachings as they teach us how Jesus desires we live! What if we think we can't live as God desires? It's why we study our Bibles to remind us how He desires we live! A good student or an athlete practices what they want to accomplish! Spending daily time with our teacher (Bible study) and praying for guidance is not only living as He desires but is also the best way to go through life. That thought crossed my mind that Jesus didn't say for example, here's the 10 Commandments, practice the law and that's that! It is advice how God wants us to live as believers! Realize the Gospels contain about 50 parables (made up stories) by Jesus to teach us lessons about living as He desires!

In this chapter we'll see a lot of hatred of Jesus. What do they fear? The Jewish religious leaders see a man saying that their works are not good enough to please God! Jesus condemns their interpretation of God's laws and the fact they put hard burdens on people that were never His intention. Jesus gives lots of examples of kindness and caring about people, that should be priority over doing what we think God desires. As Jesus did miracles, He explained to the crowd the importance of putting the needs of others as a priority over trying to keep God's laws and their interpretation of the laws that they wrote. A lot of this chapter deals with Jesus explaining how God desires we live. Jesus proves He's God through what He says in His sermons and illustrated by reactions to His divine power to do miracles.

This chapter also discusses Jesus dealing with the 12 apostles. Jesus spent all night in prayer then got a list of the future disciples. Personally, I'd probably skip the all-night prayer and ask God, "Give me the list and I'll take it from there!" Why the all-night prayer? Jesus enjoys His intimacy with the Father. It was (in my opinion) to share with Jesus all the hardships each disciple must face. Eleven of the 12 got killed for refusing to deny Jesus rose from the dead. Only the disciple John (not the Baptist) suffered a lot for his faith but was never martyred! If you don't think Satan is real, why all the persecution? With that said, I suspect Jesus wanted to pray for each of them to be fruitful for what each would be called to do and understand their missions. So why Judas? I suspect God wanted to show miracles aren't enough (consider that Judas did see Jesus raise people from the dead)! If our heart is not open to living as God desires, we'll suffer despite any miracles we might see! Jesus cared about each disciple, including one who betrayed Him, doesn't that imply He cares about us despite our sins and shortcomings?

The first story is about Jesus and His disciples having a meal by taking wheat in a grainfield. A rule in the Old Testament is in effect for farmers: 10% of the crop must be left for the poor to eat. Apparently, a bunch of devoutly religious types saw them eating and accused them of sinning! Their interpretation of not working on the Sabbath included no meal preparations. So why did these religious leaders check on Jesus "in the middle of nowhere"? It shows they were looking for things to accuse Him of including not being properly Jewish. Jesus taught a great principal that it's more important to show kindness than obeying the letter of the law. He gave an example of a high priest letting David, before he was king eat bread only the priests were allowed to eat. God wants us to be kind, over observance of the ceremonial laws! That will also be emphasized later in the next paragraph!

The second illustration was on another Sabbath. (Think Saturday). Jesus was attending a synagogue at that moment and there was a man in the crowd with a withered hand. (I figure he had something that's preventing him from using that hand normally!) At that service, the religious leaders watched to see if Jesus would do a miracle there on the spot! It seems strange to watch Jesus do a miracle and then He's accused of "working on the Sabbath"! I realize Judaism is different today, but being so obsessed with a lack of ability to care for others to not violate the Sabbath seems strange. Think of doctors working on saving lives on a holiday or soldiers protecting our country. Jesus again teaches the importance to have compassion over and above trying to obey interpretations of "the rules"!

Now we come to Jesus naming the 12! (For newer Christians, Paul came later and was not on that list!) So why does God want us to know these people? A few names most of us know well: Peter, James (not the author of the Book of James) John, Thomas, and "Judas the Traitor". My question is why does God want us to know these names? For starters, this is the foundation of the church in the sense they spread the word about Him! In a teaching sense, Jesus is saying I spent a few years with these men and they'll pass it forward. Yes, Judas was a traitor and Jesus called Paul after Jesus rose from the dead. The point is the way to live as Jesus desires is to focus on what He teaches. What God desires of us, after we are saved is to live as He desires! As I said earlier, Judas is among the 12 to show that even though we can see great miracles (he saw Jesus raise from the dead), it's not enough. Only faith that Jesus is God, can lead us to live as He desires.

The next few verses give the setting to a sermon by Jesus. Some argue it is the same sermon Matthew describes in Matthew 5-7 as many of the themes are similar. Others argue it was different. To me, it's a non-issue. I would suspect Jesus would repeat his themes over and over again! As I discuss what He taught, again keep in mind Jesus did NOT say here is the 10 Commandments, deal with them! Instead, it is more practical about how Jesus expects us to live and He gives illustrations! Before He starts that, the text says He did a lot of healing. Why is that there? I suspect a lot of people came to see Jesus for the purpose of helping with whatever ailed them. Jesus is saying in effect, "I'm God and yes, I can heal when it's My desire". Over and above that, let me now explain how God wants us to live!

Jesus discusses things like being poor, hungry and sad. The issue is NOT about going hungry or failing to provide for ourselves! The issue is about our spiritual condition. In essence, it is to deny we are able to prove our worth to God and realize we're only saved by His grace! Besides the idea of realizing that we must live God centered lives and our salvation is strictly by what He did, the other idea is to put the needs of others before our own! It's hard to hate someone we are helping! I'm not saying give away all we own, but caring about others and willing to help will ALWAYS lead to God helping us! Remember God wants us to be a witness to others. If others hurt us and we turn around and do nice things back to them, trust me it's noticed. The last obvious thing to state is pray for the Spirit to guide us. We are only a good witness for Jesus when we have His power working in our lives. Of course, we are not perfect, but I'm positive God wants to guide us and use us for His glory!

So how do you know if one is living as God desires? In Verse 43 Jesus uses an illustration of trees that bear fruit. It's easy to tell good fruit from bad fruit (by its taste). The same with how we live our lives. Again, I realize we're not perfect, but when we prioritize God, others, myself, it's amazing how good a witness we can be for Him!

The final illustration is about building a good foundation on a house. Obviously if a house doesn't have a foundation, it can suffer "being blown down three little pig style!" Jesus is NOT saying if we live like He desires it guarantees a long life. He is saying if we live as He desires, we will have great rewards in

the next life! Jesus is our foundation which is why we're called to study His word, then live the life we are called to live by Him, since He's in charge of our lives!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.