

Sermon 21: Pits, Logs, And Fruit Trees

Luke 6:39-45

(Tim McGhee)

As an introduction into Luke 6, beginning with verse 20, we find Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount. The overarching theme of this sermon is, what does a follower of Christ look like. What are the character traits of a true disciple of Christ?

Last week Pastor Phil lead us through verses 27-38 where Jesus calls His followers to an *Impossible Love*. A supernatural love that manifests itself in our actively loving our enemies and laying aside our prejudices. We learned that this love originates with God and results in a deeper fuller expression of God's love in our lives.

As we continue our study of this chapter, for the next two Sunday nights we will be focusing on Christ's continued instructions to His followers concerning who we are and how we should behave. Here, Jesus uses parables to teach four important truths. We will look at three of our Lord's parables tonight and one next week.

In Luke 6:39-49 Jesus describes a true disciple in contrast to the false followers of God of His day, the Pharisees. Our Lord will use negative statements and illustrations to get His point across.

We see this in the three parables set before us in Luke 6:39-45.

I. Luke 6:39-45

A. Be Careful Who You Follow and What You Teach (6:39-40)

B. The danger of blind guides (6:39)

The literal danger here is obvious, however Jesus is using this as an example of a greater spiritual danger. He is warning of the danger of following blind guides (the Pharisees).

Blindness speaks of spiritual ignorance.

Speaking of the lost, Paul describes them as those to whom the gospel is veiled as those who are perishing...

2 Corinthians 4:4: "in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Lost people are blind, so we should not expect them to know the truth. Therefore, we are to treat them accordingly.

We should be patient with them because they do not know the way. No one would fuss at a blind man for stumbling over a curb on the street.

We should not allow them to lead us because they do not have spiritual insight.

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

Blindness speaks of spiritual bondage. Paul, in his testimony before Agrippa, stated that God had sent him to the Gentiles.

Acts 26: 18: “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

The spiritual blindness of the lost enslaves them, they are in bondage to Satan. This means the spiritually blind will behave out of their fallen nature.

Galatians 5:19–21: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

We should not be surprised when lost people act this way. Only Jesus can give spiritual sight. Jesus came to give spiritual light to the blind.

Luke 4:18: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed...”

Jesus is the only healer and liberator of the lost! Paul prayed for spiritual vision for himself and the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:18–19: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.”

Only as God opens and enlightens our blinded eyes can we know “the hope of His calling... the riches of the glory... the greatness of His power... and the strength of His might.”

II. The influence of a teacher (v. 40)

In the first century, the pupil was totally dependent on the teacher for instruction. There were no libraries or even books. The only scrolls were owned by the Jewish leaders and they were housed in the Temple and, in a few cases, in synagogues. What the pupil knew was totally dependent on his teacher.

In many ways, this is still true today, though we have greater access to information, much of the information we receive is filtered through teachers in the form of sermons, blogs, and books. The quality and veracity of the information is largely dependent on the source.

Be careful to whom you listen. Jesus is warning His listeners that because the student will not get beyond the teacher, if you follow these blind teachers you will wind up in the pit.

Matthew 23:15: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

The worst teacher is the one who thinks they can see but is blind and does not realize it.

Many today are self-deceived, believing that truth cannot be absolute, and that all “truth” is equal. They are led astray and are leading others astray. Blind teachers leading the blind.

Be careful what you teach. Be on guard against the blindness of the Pharisees, the blindness of unbelief. In Matthew Jesus warns His disciples about the contaminating nature of false teaching.

Matthew 16:11–12: “...beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

We need to be very careful that what we teach is based on the unchanging truth of Scripture. Less we fall into the same “pit” as the Pharisees. Heed the warning of James, the half-brother of Jesus:

James 3:1: “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”

A. Be quick to examine Yourself and Gracious to others (vv. 41-42)

B. The constant need for self-examination (vv. 41-42a)

The danger of self-righteousness.

Speck – Kaphos, a small piece of wood, chaff, or straw.

Log – Dokos, a load bearing beam, floor truss.

The log represents the sin of self-righteousness. If I seek to exalt myself by disparaging other people. I can experience self-righteousness without personal repentance.

We all have a tendency toward self-righteousness, it is our very nature to think of ourselves as being morally and spiritually superior to others. This is a call to humility! Not hypocrisy! We must kill our own tendency to hypocrisy! The hypocrisy here is in a fake concern for others. The hypocrisy is more unpleasant because it is disguised as an act of kindness.

C. The delight of personal confession

1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Cleansing follows confession.

D. The obligation of brotherly correction (v. 42b)

“...then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.” This is the most fundamental form of church discipline.

Matthew 18:15: “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.” Always seek to redeem and restore. Removing a speck from the eye ultimately is intended to help the person, not harm them.

Galatians 6:1: “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”

“Learn to be as critical of yourself as you often are of others and as generous to others as you are always with yourself.”
—Pastor Alistair Begg

II. Practice God-Honoring Discernment (vv. 43-45)

A. The value of the fruit

Character trumps competence. Fruit reveals the character of the teacher. A person can be very good at a certain task, like preaching, but if they are void of godly character, they are of no good to the kingdom and should be avoided. Ask, “Do their lives reflect the fruit of the Spirit?”

Galatians 5:22–23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” We are not looking for perfection but consistent practice. Content trumps charisma. Fruit exposes the content of the teaching. Not everybody who shows up with a Bible can be trusted!

1 John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Content must be measured by Scripture alone.

Galatians 1:8: But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Therefore, you must learn the Bible so that you can use the Bible to judge teachers well.

“Sound doctrine and holy living are the marks of a true teacher.” —Alistair Begg

B. How to exercise discernment

Humbly – We must recognize our own sinfulness and lack of knowledge to rightly discern the validity of someone’s teaching.

Psalms 51:3: “For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.”

When I consider my own sin, I am less likely to think I am superior to someone else and to judge them with humility.

Prayerfully – We must prayerfully examine our motives and seek wisdom from God to truly evaluate another person. We would do well to pray like David...

Psalms 139:23–24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

As we prayerfully seek God, He will enable us to accurately evaluate others.

Biblically – We must employ the Scriptures as the final judge of the validity of a person’s teaching and ministry.

2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;...”

Scripture alone is able to judge us or anyone else. Scripture, teaches, reprovcs, corrects and trains!

Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

It is the powerful word of God that shines the light of truth on man and reveals the genuineness of our faith.

Mercifully – We are to extend to others the same mercy we would like to receive. Avoid being hateful or mean-spirited.

Luke 6:36: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Conclusion

Are you a disciple of Christ?

Disciples of Christ know and believe the gospel.

God created us in His image and yet we have all rebelled against Him breaking His law and sinning against His kindness. We deserve eternal judgment.

God became a man in the person of Christ, was born of a virgin, lived a life without sin, died on the cross in our place, bearing the full and complete wrath of God for our sin. He rose on the third day, ascended to heaven where He serves as our mediator and will one day return to earth as king.

The Bible teaches that our reasonable response to God’s grace is to repent of our sins and place our trust (faith) in Christ alone.

Disciples of Christ love radically.

Disciples of Christ are careful who they follow and what they teach.

Disciples of Christ are quick to examine themselves and gracious when they examine others.

Disciples of Christ practice God-honoring discernment.