

Live the Word of God (Luke 6:27-49)

We are studying the gospel of Luke. Today, we will study the latter half of chapter 6. The theme is "Live the Word of God".

From v.20 to the end of the chapter is what Jesus had spoken to his disciples. The outline is:

v.20-26 the blessed and the woeful

Then Jesus continues to teach them through parables how to live as a person blessed by God.

v.27-36 Action by love

v.37-42 Examine yourself

v.43-49 What is overflowing in our heart

In summary, here it talks about the lifestyle of those who has repented, who has been born again and has become Jesus' disciples. In other words, it talks about what it means to "Live the Word of God".

Let's look at them, one by one.

1. Action by Love

27-28

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Jesus doesn't say good Christians do not have enemies. But here Jesus is teaching us how we should relate to our enemies.

Of course, we don't try to make enemies, but there are some people who don't like Christians, and there are some who want to deny the Bible, and there are also some who want to find fault with whatever church does.

In some occasions, even when we do things out of kindness, some people take it wrongly and misunderstand us. Of course, sometimes because of our own carelessness or misunderstanding, we may make someone our enemy.

What we can learn from these verses is when our relationships got complicated or grew worse, we can pray for the person for blessings.

29-31

²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Isn't it extreme? What we need to know first is that Christians are not doormats. We don't have to allow others to do whatever they want to do with us. We don't have to do whatever others ask us to do. The point is in verse 27. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." Love the person and do good to the person. That is the point.

I'd like to introduce one prayer poem.

"I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
 I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
 I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
 I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
 I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
 I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
 I asked for power that I might have the praise of men.
 I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
 I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
 I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
 I got nothing that I asked for but got everything I had hoped for.
 Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
 I am, among all people, most richly blessed."¹

God loved him so God didn't give him what he asked. If God gave him what he asked, he did not get what he actually had hoped.

Allowing someone to do whatever he wants to do with us is not loving the person. Doing whatever the person asks us to do is not doing good to the person.

Passively speaking, we are not going to help others do evil. If we give to someone, knowing that he would do evil with what he has received from us, we are helping the person to do evil. If our giving to someone would make the person remain in bad habit, we are encouraging his bad habit. We are not going to do that. Why? Because by doing that, we are not doing good to the person, nor loving the person.

¹ A Christian Confederate Soldier's Prayer, <http://historyaddict.com/CSPrayer.html>

Positively speaking, if someone does evil to us, we will do what is right. We can pray for the person and relate to the person so that he would change his ways and do what is right. In other words, if someone does evil to us, and we also respond to the person by doing evil to him, we are also evildoers.

From v.27 to v.38, there are many “dos” and “don’ts”. The point is not to do these rigidly or legalistically. The point is our heart, how we relate to our enemies, those who prevent us, who reject us, who hate us.

If we think we follow those commandments, so that we would not be judged by God and would receive His blessings, we are not acting on love. Or if we do these things in order to distract our enemy’s mind or just for temporary self-satisfaction, we are not acting on love. If we don’t act out of true love, it is meaningless.

32-36

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

To love, do good to others, and give to others. They are the nature of the followers of Jesus. But, do we see these characteristics only in Jesus’ disciples? No! According to these verses, even sinners love, do good to others, and give to others. Then, what’s the difference between them?

Colossians 3:1-4

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

In simple words, God’s children don’t cling to earthly things. Because as God’s children, we know that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing, and

will be received into God's eternal glory. That's the difference between Jesus' disciples and crowds who come to Jesus for material gain. That's the difference between a person who trust in God's promise according to His Word and a person whose heart is set on visible, earthly things.

God says, "I am on your side. It is mine to avenge; I will repay." (Rom12:19) His Word promises "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7) Jesus' disciples rest on God's power and live the Word of God, because they know God is their Father and they are His children.

Let's think for a moment. What kind of people do you feel are your enemies in everyday lives? Someone who against you, someone who disturbs what you are doing, someone who denies what you do, or someone who rejects you. We will probably feel those kind of people are our enemies. In this sense, we have many enemies, don't we? Then who is your worst enemy? Is that your boss, your neighbour, the devil, or is it your husband?

To be honest, I think my worst enemy is myself. I am the one who disturb what I do. I am the one who complains against what I do. I am the one who regard myself as a person cannot do things well, who consider that I will fail, think of I am no good. I am the one who treat myself rudely and badly.

Let's read v.27-v.28 one more time.

27-28

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

36 ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

The Bible tells us to love our enemies and to be merciful, that is, we must also love ourselves who hate, deny and reject us. What can we do? Instead of cursing ourselves who reject us, we should bless ourselves. Instead of treat ourselves who hinder us cruelly, we should pray for ourselves to be strengthened. We should be merciful for ourselves. In other words, we must consider ourselves as God's children, and treat us as God's children. Without doing that, if we just try to do good to others, our heart will become desolate, withered, and finally completely dry.

2. Examine Yourself

v.37 through 42 talks about how important it is to examine ourselves.

37-38

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Here, it says God will measure us in proportion to how we measure others. Don't misunderstand it. It doesn't say God will do good to us in proportion to how much good we do to others.

The point is we ourselves need to be forgiven for our sins and judgement. We ourselves need to receive forgiveness from God. The point is to always keep this fact in mind.

Rom 2:1

¹ You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

When we judge others, it shows that we ourselves are trapped by sin nature. Its fruit shows the nature of the tree. If a person does not forgive, it shows the person himself is trapped by sin nature. Because there is the evil stored up in his heart, he brought evil things from there.

39

³⁹ He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?"

When we judge someone, we find fault with the person and blame him. We judge, because we think we know all about the person and the situation, but actually we only know some part. How can we judge correctly when we only know some part, and not all? We shouldn't forget that we are also forgiven though we had many things to be judged before God. We must remember we are also accepted by God by His grace. We must relate to others, never forgetting these facts.

40

⁴⁰ A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

A teacher will train his students. But no matter how hard he try, he can only train him to be up to his level, not above him.

We may say, "You should have done this, then you wouldn't have failed like this." But we ourselves have also failed before God, we also have sin to be judged before God. We are also weak and cannot to anything without receiving from God. No matter how hard we try, we can only lead others up to our own level. We can only give what we ourselves have.

41-42

⁴¹ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

We should first deal with our own sins, not other people's sins. We ourselves need to be forgiven for our sins and judgement. We ourselves need to receive forgiveness from God.

Rom.12:3

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

We must measure others with the measure God uses to measure us. First, we must look at how much God loves us, forgiven us and how He accepts us. And we must look at how much God has already given to us. Then, with the same measure God has used to relate to us, we should relate to others.

If we forget this, we will end up judging one another, or pushing each of our ways. To live the Word of God does not mean to judge others using the Word of God. It also does not mean to justify everything we do is right.

2 Corinthians13:5

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?

When we read the Word of God, we should apply it to ourselves, not to others. What we need to keep in mind is “how God loved me, forgave me and accepted me, and how much He has already given me.” If we have stored up abundance of these understanding in our heart, we can give to others God’s forgiveness out of storehouse in our heart. That is how we can live with the Word of God, and how the Christ community works.

3. What is overflowing in our heart

43-45

⁴³ "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

Jesus used two parables. One is the relation between a tree and its fruit. A tree is recognized by its own fruit. If it bears mango fruit, it is a mango tree. It is not a banana tree. It’s easy, isn’t it?

The other is the relation between the storehouse and what is in the storehouse. We bring good things out of the good stored up in our heart. But we bring evil things out of the evil stored up in our heart.

By this, Jesus teaches us about the relation between our heart and our words. Out of the overflow of our heart, our mouth speaks.

Then, if someone calls Jesus “Lord, Lord,” does it show that he is following Jesus as his Lord?

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⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

There were people who call Jesus, “Lord, Lord,” but didn’t do what he said, although they heard his word. That is, calling Jesus “Lord, lord,” doesn’t show that the person is following Jesus as his Lord. (Matthew 7:21-23, Titus1:16)

47-49

⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

It is important to put the word into practice, not just listen to it.

But, if we misunderstand this, it may pull us away from faith and grace, and lead us into legalism and performance trap.

"To come to Jesus and hear his words and put them into practice" is not trying to put them into practice legalistically by our own strength. Our words and actions come from our heart. What is important is what our heart is filled with. What is inside will come out. Without changing inside, we cannot just change our outward words and behaviours.

In the previous parable, a tree stand for "ourselves", unless the nature of the tree changes, the tree will keep bearing the same fruit. A mango tree will bear mango fruit continually and even if you put bananas on it, it will not become a banana tree.

Jesus is not telling us to try to "bear good fruit" by our own effort, but he is telling us to become "a good tree". He is telling us to be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, and remain in Him, and keep being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory.

Jesus is not telling us to try to suppress our feelings by our self-discipline and pretend doing well and say the right words, but Jesus is telling us to fill our heart with good things, store up the good in our heart. He is telling us to store up His Word in our heart, and to make the Word rooted in our heart deeply. He is telling us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to remain in Him deeply.

Jesus is not telling us try not to say, "Lord, Lord", but he is telling us to dig deep down in our heart and build a solid foundation, making Jesus Lord over all areas of our lives.

There was a parable about two houses. The difference between the two houses is the foundations. Without solid foundation, no matter how well you reconstruct or renovate the external part, it is no use. You can put beautiful wall paper, good

carpet, and gorgeous furniture, but if the foundation is weak, when the storm strikes the house, it will collapse.

If we just keep up appearances, it may look fine when nothing happens, but if something happens, it will be overturned. The foundation is hidden from view, and it takes time and effort to build good foundation. In order to deepen our relationship with Jesus, we need to spend time with Jesus, we need time alone with him.

When our relationship with Jesus is deepened, our relationship with others will also be strengthened. This is how group of disciples will grow together. In the Christ community, disciples will experience the riches of God's kingdom. And through the community, Christ will touch people, and the world will come to know the reality of the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:20-49 is the word Jesus had spoken to his disciples. That is his heart for the disciple. Jesus wants us to have deeper relationship with Him. He wants to fill our heart with joy, gratitude, praise and love. He wants to support us as the solid foundation of our life. And he can support us no matter how hard storms strike us.