

God is Love Series

Love is who God is...

Lesson Three

God is Love

Luke 6:12 – And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Luke 6:13 – And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:12) – The Rabbi-Messiah ascends a mountain in a remote location to spend a night in prayer in preparation for the public presentation of the men He will identify as His “*talmid*,” men selected as disciple students of a master teacher.

He hoped to be isolated from the public with the intent to teach the newly selected disciples their first lesson.

(Luke 6:13) – The new day that followed the evening of prayer would become a new beginning for the men with various backgrounds and statuses to receive the honor of selection as a Talmid.

Individually, they were called by name to become the twelve, who would also inherit the call as apostles (witnesses).

Jesus Ministers to a Great Multitude

Luke 6:17 – And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

Luke 6:18 – And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

Luke 6:19 – And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:17) – The Rabbi and His newly elect descended from the prayer site into the open plain at the bottom of the mountain. Multitudes from various parts of Judea, including Jerusalem, made the trek to the mountain region in search of the Messiah. Other miracle seekers came from the Northern coastal area of Trye to Sidon.

The word about the Messiah-Miracles performed in Capernaum and other areas in Judea became widespread, influencing people to search for Him with hopes of benefiting from His supernatural power.

(Luke 6:18) – The multitude included many people vexed with unclean spirits. The “unclean” was a ceremonial label attached to anyone who did not meet the standards of Torah or religious law. A person could be considered unclean if they touched a dead body or unclean animal. A woman in menstruation was considered unclean until the blood flow ceased. Ceremonial cleansing rituals were required to restore a person from unclean to clean.

A person with an unclean spirit was deemed spiritually unholy because of uncontrolled behavior or being subject to the influence of an ungodly spirit. There were no ceremonial rituals that would restore a person with an unclean spirit. The people vexed with unclean spirits sought to find the Messiah because no other solutions were available.

(Luke 6:19) – The entire multitude of people in need sought to touch Him. They knew that physical contact would release the supernatural virtue that resided inside Him. The multitude pursued Him as their best option to being rejected by formal religion. The High Priest and religious leaders offered no place or hope for the vexation of unclean spirits.

Without understanding His true identity, the people looked for the Messiah because he offered hope they would not find in the temple city. The results justify their hope as the scripture accounts for all the unclean being healed.

The Beatitudes

Luke 6:20 – And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:21 – Blessed *are* ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are* ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:20) – The attention of the Rabbi-Messiah is turned from the multitude to the Talmid elect. The first lesson He prepared for them begins with an explanation of the issues and challenges among the multitude surrounding them.

The passage found here and in Matthew's gospel is generally called the Beatitudes (The Blessings). The account in Luke clarifies the audience to whom the lesson is directed. As stated, the Rabbi-Messiah "lifted up His eyes on the disciples." The teaching audience for the noted "Sermon on the Mount" was not the multitude; it was a lesson intended for the disciples (Talmid).

The first blessing is upon the poor, promising them access to the Kingdom of God. The Rabbi identified poverty as a significant challenge among the many households. The disciples were not given the liberty to promise people a status change in material wealth, but they could promise that God would make them a priority to have access to His Kingdom.

The second and third blessings addressed the present status against a promised future status. Many households among the multitude suffered from physical hunger resulting from their poverty. Poverty and hunger contributed to a state of weeping/mourning over their loss of access to the material goods to survive.

The disciples did not have the power to change the status of people in the immediate moment, but they promised a future status that would make them full and bring them laughter.

Jesus Pronounces Woes

Luke 6:24 – But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Luke 6:25 – Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:24-25) – Luke also captured the woes or judgments presented in the Sermon on the Mount. The woes address the members of the multitude who are not poor but rich, those who are not hungry but full, and the households with a desirable status accompanied by joy and laughter.

The disciples learned that those with a material goal to become rich had earned their reward, leaving nothing for them to obtain in the world to come.

The rich who never experienced hunger were also incapable of mourning for the poor and hungry. The rich have the power to control their status in the present world, but their status of privilege will end in the world to come.

Jesus admonishes His disciples to love their enemies

Luke 6:27 – But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Luke 6:28 – Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:27) – The Rabbi used the Beatitudes to lean into the primary subject of the teaching sermon, a lesson on love. The Teacher shifted from His analysis of the multitude to direct attention to His expectation of the disciples. Directly, He says to those that can “hear” Him, meaning the Talmid, “Love your enemies.

The sermon moves directly from discussing status to reckoning with the commandment to love. The priority of love is not subject to personal status. The Talmid is expected to “Love” whether poor or rich, hungry or full. They will be required to “Love” people without regard for their status.

This was the first teaching sermon presented to the Talmid, setting the foundation to introduce the Kingdom message and ministry of the Messiah. The manner in which the Rabbi introduced the subject matter of “Love” emphasized its priority to everything He will eventually teach.

The love instruction complements the understanding that "God is Love." It is the first message that God wants to convey to those who will represent Him. The love message is at the core of the ministry objective of the Messiah. God loved the world so much that He sent His Son as the propitiation of our sin debt.

The Rabbi begins the Sermon on the Mount by surveying the multitude, making the Talmid aware of their audience. The core message in the sermon is undoubtedly the focus He brings on love.

The love instructions captured from IJohn 4:7 focused on the love God's children must have toward one another. It is apparent from the passage that it was a challenge even in the early Church.

The Rabbi's litmus test with His Talmid was more extreme, commanding them to love their enemies. An enemy generally does not find their name on the list of people we love. Enemies are the target of our anger, distrust, and often hatred. It is unexpected for us to love someone known to oppose and stand against us.

Luke 6:29 – And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

Luke 6:30 – Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:29) – The Rabbi offered illustrations demonstrating how to love an enemy. If a Talmid was physically attacked by the hand of the enemy, they should offer the other cheek instead of fighting back. Not responding with physical force signaled love's ability to absorb the aggressor's attack, offering the other cheek to demonstrate that their strength was greater than their enemy.

If their cloak or outer garment were taken from them by the hand of their enemy, they should also offer their coat or inner garment love, demonstrating the desire to service the enemy's need.

(Luke 6:29) – If an enemy asked a Talmid for help or took material goods away from them without permission, they were to release it without expecting to recover what was given or stolen. Love demonstrates its ability to release, forgive, and continue to move forward.

Jesus Compares Disciples to the multitude (sinners)

Luke 6:32 – For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

Luke 6:33 – And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

Luke 6:34 – And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

Luke 6:35 – But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to the evil*.

Lesson Notes:

(Luke 6:32-33) – The Rabbi clarifies the necessity for the extreme criteria. The precursor to the Sermon on the Mount begins with the selection of the Talmid. A Talmid is a type of student or pupil in a classroom. There is one important distinction. A classroom pupil is focused on learning everything the instructor presents. The ultimate goal for the student-pupil is to acquire the same volume of knowledge the teacher possesses. A Talmid has a goal beyond acquiring teacher's knowledge; they want to become "like" their Teacher. Living their life after their Teacher's pattern is the highest goal of the Talmid.

The Rabbi points out that the sinners, meaning those among the multitude who are not called to be Talmid or apostles, know how to love those who love them. If the Talmid shows love for those who love them, how will others know that He is set apart and following the life pattern of his Rabbi and a representative and witness of God's kingdom?

The same principle is applied if the Talmid does good to them, and that does good for them. The Rabbi commands them to love as God loves, following the pattern of their Teacher and representing the Kingdom of God.

(Luke 6:34) – Setting themselves apart from the multitude, the Talmid were challenged to lend to those who could never repay their debt. Lending to those they knew would pay their debt, including interest, was a standard practiced by the ordinary sinner.

(Luke 6:35) – The commandment to love your enemies is repeated for emphasis. Doing good and lending to others without expectation of a return favor would position the Talmid for greater rewards that would be eternal.

The Rabbi-Messiah finalizes His emphasis, revealing how others will know the Talmid are children of God. The way God shows love to those opposing Him best demonstrates His nature to love. God's love is demonstrated in His kindness to the unthankful and the evil.

The Talmid and all those who follow God and claim to be His children will be known as the “children of the Highest” when they can love their enemies and do good to those who hate them.