

Luke 6:37-49 - A New Community: Foundation Issues

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[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Turn with me to Luke 6. Luke 6. We look this morning at a powerful and challenging conclusion to Jesus' sermon.

Before we read, let's remember the context of this sermon. Jesus is speaking to crowds of people who have gathered around. Some of them His new apostles.

Others coming from great distances away just to get a glance. Just to touch Him that they might be healed. To hear this new teacher they've heard so much about.

And Jesus has begun to shape this new community of followers. Others imparting to them radically new values. Blessed are the poor.

[1 : 01] The have-nots. Calling them to a strikingly new ethic. Love your enemies. Sacrificial generosity.

And here's what I think Jesus is doing in our passage this morning at the end of this sermon. He's issuing a clear challenge to all these people who've come to hear Him.

Not merely to hear, but to follow Him. Perhaps knowing all the motives of the people in the crowd. Curiosity.

Desire for healing. Entertainment. Sincere faith. Jesus wants to make very clear the need to have one's life reshaped by Him and by His kingdom.

And He does so with clear warnings for those who don't. For those who would hear Him, as they all would, but would choose a different path. Many of you have expressed what I've felt these last couple of weeks.

[2 : 04] As we've talked about the new values and the new ethic that Jesus has called us to. That they're very challenging. That need is difficult for us.

We feel it. And the call is hard. Lord, perhaps this week Jesus' words should be sobering for us. Everyone here this morning has in some way come to hear Jesus.

Whether to get something from Him. To see what He's like. To be entertained perhaps. Whatever the mixture of things that have brought you here this morning.

Jesus wants to speak clearly and directly to our hearts. Listen to Him as He picks up on that new ethic of love that He's been talking with His followers about.

At verse 37 of Luke 6. This is God's Word. He also told them a parable.

[3 : 17] Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye?

You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit.

For each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil.

For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you

what he is like.

[4 : 26] He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well built.

But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

Pray with me. Father, we thank you for your word. Even words that are hard to hear and that are warnings and challenges to us, our hearts need them.

Would we come to your word this morning as those dependent upon you and expectant to hear from you. We ask that you would speak and that we might listen and hear and do your word.

In Jesus' name, amen. It's hard to miss as you read that Jesus is wrapping up his sermon with a strong warning, isn't it?

[5 : 35] I mean, when you close this way, but the one who hears my words and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.

When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. End of sermon. It's hard not to hear a warning issued to those who are listening to those words, right? It's actually in all these verses building up to that last one that Jesus is warning very clearly. Eight plus years ago when Christy and I moved to Huntsville and bought our home, we loved the location of the home, the neighborhood.

We loved the backyard, the home itself. But there were these cracks in the walls. I don't know how well you can see them, but there are cracks there in the walls.

You may have seen some like that in your house. And I learned then that these are warning signs, right? When you see cracks like this in the wall of your home, you need to check, especially if they keep growing, for foundation issues.

[6 : 50] Now, the foundation of a house is of vital importance, isn't it? It's what holds everything else up, what everything's built upon. It's what will allow the house and the things in it to stand or fall when storms come, when there's strain on the house.

But you don't typically go around looking at foundations, do you? You don't see much of the foundation itself. What you see are cracks in the walls when there are problems.

They're warnings to you of issues that need to be addressed. That's a big part of what Jesus is doing here in these preceding verses. He's still building on his new ethic of love that he's been teaching.

Teaching what it looks like to live in his kingdom, to follow his ways. And as he comes to the conclusion of this and of the sermon, he's increasingly pointed.

While he lays out the true path for us to walk, he also creates sharp distinctions. Distinctions between two approaches to life. The way of his kingdom, which I'll call the Jesus ethic for our purposes this morning.

[8 : 05] And the other way. Perhaps the way of self or the world or just of not Jesus. Some other way.

In other words, what Jesus is doing is he's telling us what a stable house, a healthy life following him actually looks like.

As well as what is the danger in the other way. Over and over you're going to notice in this passage pairs of things that are contrasted.

Some of them I'll admit are a bit confusing when you read through them. Jesus is using imagery and humor and parables and so forth to teach these things.

So I want to walk through them with you to understand and apply that new ethic he's calling us to a little bit further. What does Jesus mean with each of these individual sayings?

[9 : 00] Then as we get to the end, we're going to revisit Jesus' bottom line. What's he using all of these things to get at in us? We'll see the bigger picture that these smaller parts combine to paint.

So along the way you may want to write words down that describe the ethic Jesus is teaching. And words that describe the other option.

What are the two things Jesus is showing us? What's on this list and what's on the other one? You can already start the Jesus ethic list with things from last week, from earlier.

Like love your enemies. Pray for those who abuse you. Sacrificial generosity. Those sorts of things from last week. Now Jesus adds to that picture.

What does it look like? The new ethic he's calling his followers to. Verse 37. Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned.

[10:04] Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.

Boy, some great verses to pull out of context right here if you're so inclined. If you really wanted to hear something that Jesus doesn't actually mean, these are great verses that are easy to do that with.

Judge not and you won't be judged. You've heard people tell you that, right? Christians should never judge, says the person who wants you to leave him alone so he can live any way he good and well pleases.

Judge not. Judge not. Is that what Jesus is saying? Christians should never judge, should never be thoughtful about things? Well, no. Multiple times just in these verses we're commanded to be discerning.

To distinguish truth from error in beliefs. To distinguish right from wrong in behavior. Just right here, the next words. How can you forgive unless something has been determined to have been wrong and need forgiveness?

[11:16] No, Jesus is not saying don't ever evaluate something. Instead, Jesus is fleshing out verse 36. Be merciful as your Father is merciful.

You should be looking to love your enemy, not to destroy him. Don't be judgmental, condemning, dismissive, assuming the worst of others.

Christians are actually pretty good at those things, aren't we? We do that pretty fast just with other Christians. We do it on social media. Especially if you want to talk politics on social media.

Every other perspective from mine is suspect. Motives are assumed. Dispersions are cast on anyone else who would see things differently. How many times recently have I read the statement, Any real Christian would support fill in the blank.

Meaning all of those of you who don't see things my way, of course, must not really be Christians. Is it that simple?

[12:26] Is condemning others what makes you feel significant? It doesn't have to be politics. We can do it over schooling, eating, worshipping.

Whatever is really important to you, whatever you're passionate about. Do you condemn those who do it differently? Do you think that they're less than you? Less of a person, less of a Christian.

Are you quick to judge? Jesus says, no, no, no, no, no. Instead, my people are to be forgiving and giving.

Patient and generous to others. Seeking their good, not to harm them or catch them. This is what it looks like to be a child of God.

Forgiven people, forgive people. This is not earn your forgiveness by your performance. See how well you do. Jesus is saying, you can tell a child of God who will not be judged or condemned, but who will instead be forgiven and given to because he treats others that way.

[13:41] If you don't forgive others, you evidence the reality that you haven't received the gracious forgiveness of God for yourself. Then there's the last part of these two verses about giving, which is another one people love to misuse regularly.

It's actually a picture there of harvesting grain, of what you would do harvesting the grain. I don't know much about harvesting grain, if I'm honest. I do rake leaves, though.

And I'm very particular when I rake leaves because I'm pretty tight-fisted. No, I'm really tight-fisted.

And so if you can cram more leaves into a bag in the long term, you're going to save yourself money.

And in squeezing leaves into bags, I believe I've probably saved nearly 73 cents in the last 10 years. So if you work really hard, it can pay off. But how do you do it?

Because it's the exact same picture that Jesus is giving. How do you squeeze more leaves in? You press them down, right? You shake the bag so that they settle out and fill it up more.

[14:45] But then when there are a lot of leaves, they still come overflowing out the top and all over the place. Those are the words Jesus is using here. That's what happened when you did the

grain. This is how God will give to us.

So graciously that it's overflowing into the folds of your garment all in your lap. You've got more than you know what to do with. And so people say, just give money to my church and God will give you more back.

Just tithe and God will bless your business tenfold this year. Just give and God will quid pro quo give you back.

He'll get you back exactly as you do. Maybe even more. That's what it says, isn't it? Rich Christians, all of us. If you really love Jesus, you'll keep getting richer because you'll be giving and he'll just give more back to you and so we'll all be rich.

And if you don't think this passage is used that way, you haven't been listening to much of what is said in our culture. Church culture. Really? Is that what Jesus is saying?

[15:56] Right here in the same breath with blessed are the poor and woe to the rich? I think we may be missing something.

There's certainly no need to deny God's good promises of provision for us. But we must not treat him as though he is controlled or manipulated by our giving.

Nor as though he pays back in the same currency that we give in. You may have read this week the story of a young man in Florida who was caught for stealing \$7 billion through fraudulent wire transfers.

That may happen. I don't know how common that is. This one was really unique though because you know why he did it? According to the Huffington Post story, he did it because Jesus wanted him to be rich.

He said he was just, and I quote, obtaining the wealth Jesus Christ created for him that belonged to him. This has nothing to do with the sermon, but the best line of the whole article was this.

[17:02] Jesus was unavailable for comment on this matter. Thought you would appreciate that. Except the reality is what? Jesus is available for comment on this matter.

He says, blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of God. Jesus says to us and even to the \$7 billion man who thinks that's what he has coming to him, your view of fullness is too small.

You don't have a big enough picture of what I intend for you. Your understanding of the riches I promised my children is too limited. I have a kingdom of eternal wealth awaiting them beyond anything they could ever give away.

Pressed down, shaken together, overflowing. And yes, it starts now. Yes, you begin to get a taste of it. But in particular, eternally, lasting you forever beyond your wildest dreams.

That's what Jesus has been promising. That's the way God gives back to us, right? He cares for his children, but he blesses us beyond what we think we could come make for ourselves in dollars and cents.

[18:15] That's how I'm going to bless you. So forgive, give, share. That's what he means. Verse 39.

He also told them a parable. Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher.

Here's a warning. Again, it's a warning against pride in one's own performance. I don't think you'll outperform Jesus. That's not even the goal, verse 40 says.

If you can't see your own weaknesses, your own sins, you're blind, and you will mislead others, verse 39 is saying. That's a good reminder for all of us, particularly for church leaders, as we look toward ordaining church officers next week.

Don't be a blind guide who is puffed up with pride. We'll talk more about that next week. It's a reminder to all of us. Are we following spiritual leaders who think too highly of themselves?

[19:26] Ask yourself, how human is your hero? Perhaps here, as you're thinking through what Jesus is calling us to, you're adding to the list of the other ethic, the not Jesus is one.

Not only judgmental, but now words like prideful, self-righteous, and so on. And Jesus is going to drive that point home deeper with a memorable image.

Verse 41. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye?

You hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. Ever walked around seeing somebody with a log sticking out of

his eye?

It's a crazy image, right? What Jesus is saying here, his ethic involves deep humility. Seeing your own sin as bigger than your brother's sin.

[20 : 39] Being slow to find faults in others and quick to see your own faults. While I was in school, I did a lot of journalism.

Spent a lot of time copy editing. I loved copy editing. Made me feel so good. You get the red pen out. Some of you have graded papers. Yeah, a comma here.

A split infinitive. A dangling participle. A few ideas. And by the time I get through, oh, if I've made your paper look bloody, I feel proud of myself.

Like I was important. Do you sometimes live that way? Copy editing? Spell checking other people's lives? Catching all the wrong?

Does that make you feel better? Most of us are ruthless with others' sin. And very patient and understanding with our own weaknesses.

[21 : 37] We've got lots of reasons and explanations for why we behave that way. Jesus says flip that around. Be ruthless with your own sin. Quick to acknowledge it.

Quick to repent of it. And patient. Understanding with others' sin. You may get to help them. They may have a speck in their eye.

But not until you've dealt with yourself. The log. See, some teachers in Jesus' day were making these detailed lists of religious things for God's people to do.

The goal that they had was that they would get God's people to do all of these things and not do other things so that they would be holy. And therefore protect themselves from the nations around them.

That was the heart behind it. That we're going to be different and separate and protected from others who don't do these things to be very holy. They were dealing in specks, right? All these details of laws and ways they were going to live.

[22 : 42] But the problem was they were missing the log. They were missing the big picture that the law of God was given to them. Not to protect them from other nations. But to make them into a light to the other nations.

That was the heart behind it. That was the big picture. And they missed that entirely. In being self-protective. We can miss God's heart.

And not deal with our own deep sin. And so Jesus adds to the other list. Hypocritical. You hypocrite. He says. One definition of a hypocrite is someone who sees his own sin only in others. He knows how to pick that one out. He loves to criticize the materialistic while denying his own materialism. He loves to catch cheaters while getting away with it himself. He loves to yell at those who are losing their temper. Calm down! Calm down! Any of your parents ever done that before?

[23 : 49] Calm down kids! No, no. Jesus says. You're seeing sin. But you're missing the log. You've found a speck. But you've looked right past a log in your own eye.

Deal with your own log. Confess. Repent. Find healing. So Jesus lays out this ethic.

What it's like to follow him. And he would push us this morning to self-examination. After showing us the true and beautiful way. How he would call us to live.

He says. Verse 43. No good tree bears bad fruit. Nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes.

Nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. And the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

[24 : 51] Your deeds and your words reflect your treasure. What's really in your heart. There's that word that we talked about a couple weeks ago, right? Your treasure.

Do we treasure Jesus? Jesus? Or is something else more valuable? For asking that question honestly, we find that our lives reveal the answer pretty reliably, don't they?

Jesus says, look at the fruit. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. But we love to say, oh I didn't mean it. What I said or what I did, I didn't mean that.

Most of the time you did. You just have realized you probably shouldn't have. So will you do honest self-examination this morning?

Good fruit or bad fruit? What do your actions reveal about your character? What do the cracks say about the foundation?

[25 : 57] Jesus says they're so connected. The tree and the fruit. The heart and the actions. It's maybe not the actions you'd think of.

It's not religious performance that is on the good list here, is it? What do you got written down for Jesus ethic? I don't know how your list reads there if you've been writing things down.

But it probably says things like loving enemies. Giving sacrificially. Repenting quickly. Forgiving deeply. Not necessarily performing perfectly.

Don't see that on the list. In fact, no points for hanging around Jesus a lot. For calling him Lord, Lord. Verse 46. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I tell you?

Lots of people show up at a church on a Sunday. Ask yourself honestly. Is the pattern of your life one of love?

[27 : 02] Repent. Forgive. Give. Does that characterize you? Or not? Young people.

Are you one of the so-called Christian kids at school? Who are actually what they're known for is being hateful. And exclusive.

Of others. Have you decided that you know best. And you can do what you think is best with your body. Regardless of what God's word might have to say about it.

Adults. Adults. Are you a critical spirit. That makes others feel unsafe. And unworthy. To be around you.

Are you impossible to critique yourself. Because you've always got an explanation. Or a defense. Is your lifestyle above the critique even of God's word?

[28 : 02] Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Or a defense. Maybe write something down there on self-examination. What do you see when you look at the overflow of your heart?

Do you see any patterns of cracks beginning to show up? There's a danger we all tend to fall into when we see these cracks.

You can do it with your home for years and years. I've heard the figures on foundation work. The dollar amounts it can cost. I don't want anything to do with it.

I've watched the lengthy projects across the street. As they go to fix the foundation of the other homes in the neighborhood. I don't want any part of them in my yard for months. Digging everything up.

It's so much easier just to hide the cracks. You know? A little bit of putty up there. Some good paint. Maybe. Maybe a few coats. It's a lot easier than all the pain of the foundation work.

[29 : 05] It's a lot cheaper. That's our tendency, isn't it? You know, just be a little nicer here. Bite my tongue there. Not going to say that anymore in front of her.

Maybe they'll think I'm getting better over time. I'll just hide what I'm indulging in from my parents. You know, I was a church kid.

Church kids really like to do that. It makes us feel better about ourselves. We think if our parents don't know if we can hide what we're doing from them, then everything's really okay.

Adults do that too, don't they? I'm just going to hide this from my spouse rather than confess it to him or her. It'll make me feel better.

Everything will really be fine if they just don't find out about it. Just a little bit of paint over the cracks. We spend most of our time thinking that's the solution, don't we?

[30 : 08] Brush up the image on social media. Stand in front of the mirror long enough. Work on the externals. Everything's going to be okay. That's our natural tendency in all of life.

And everything in this passage warns us against that. Jesus says if the heart is bad, if the foundation is problematic, the cracks will split right through the new paint.

No matter how many coats you've put on, that will come out. You can't hide. If you see things in your life that are warning signs, you've got to be willing to address the foundation issues.

That's the only solution, Jesus says. You see how Jesus makes that clear? You've got to start at the heart, at the foundation to address the real issues. Because Jesus says here as he gets to the end, floods are coming.

You see, the landscape in Israel where Jesus would have been looking out as he taught had lots of really smooth sand where it was tempting to think there was a quick building project ready. You could go and you could build there very quickly and easily.

[31 : 17] But to reach solid rock, you had to dig much deeper. It took a lot more work up front. And only that would actually withstand the floods that happened when the nearby rivers flooded.

The sand, of course, washed away. If you hadn't gotten down to the rock, you were in trouble. There are floods coming in this life, yes. But in particular, these would refer to the floods of judgment and eternal destinies.

And you won't stand in that day if you've just done touch-up work on the external exterior cracks. You've got to address the foundation.

Y'all, it would break my heart beyond what I can express to you if you sat in here in this room week after week and year after year thinking, I'm safe eternally.

I'm in. I'm good. I come to this place. Only to find out on that day that you were not.

[32 : 25] That you didn't actually trust in Christ. That you had a house without a foundation. To your eternal grief. How tragic that would be.

In verse 46. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I tell you? The one who hears my words and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great. Maybe you would call yourself a Christian.

And by that, what you mean is, well, I'm not a Muslim. And I'm not an atheist. So, I mean, I live in the Bible belt and I want to kind of be socially respectable.

And I want my family to be moral and upstanding. And so, yeah, I'm a Christian. But if you're honest, you don't really love Jesus or have a relationship with Him.

[33 : 36] You've just called yourself a Christian for other reasons. You don't see Jesus as that glorious. Maybe you don't see God's mission as that central to your purpose.

You don't see God's Word as that essential for directing your life. Jesus says this is what it means to follow Him, to be a Christian.

That you come to Him, that you hear His words, and that you love Him so much because of His great love for you that His words shape the direction of your life.

That's what He's saying. Listen, don't leave today without talking with someone about the foundation issues.

Pray that God would give you the courage not merely to paint over the cracks until it looks better, but to deal with eternal questions, to examine the treasure of your heart, what you really love and value, to address foundation issues.

[34 : 45] I think the great English preacher Charles Spurgeon was right on when he spoke about the danger for people like you and me who've been around church a lot.

And we've heard sermons like this before. And the danger is that we wouldn't actually engage. We would just talk about it. The common temptation, he said, is instead of really repenting, to talk about repenting.

Instead of truly loving, to talk of love without loving. Instead of coming to Christ, to speak about coming to Christ, and profess to come to Christ, and yet not come at all.

Y'all, how tragic would that be to spend your life doing that? God has so much more in mind.

He wants a relationship with you where you get to be everything he's created you to be, where you love him and you know of his love for you beyond what you can imagine.

[35 : 47] How tragic would it be to spend your life talking about Christian things? We're just not that interesting, honestly. Spend your life talking about church stuff and not know the one we're all talking about.

Jesus invites you this morning, truly, to come to him. Verse 47.

Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I'll show you what he's like. He's like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.

And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well built. It doesn't involve your perfect performance, but rather your complete trust in his.

Because you're not the foundation. You trust him to be the one that holds, the only thing that holds you. So you can actually have moments of failure without the house crashing.

[36 : 47] Because you're not the foundation. And you can have moments where the house actually looks like everything he designed and intended for it to be and not get prideful.

Because you're not the foundation. Jesus offers himself as the sure foundation. He invites us into a transformed life in relationship with him.

Where we're fully human giving and loving and repenting and forgiving. All of that. But his perfect life is the one we trust in.

His death on the cross covers all our failures so that he declares it is finished. There's nothing else left for you to do. Nothing more we have to earn or achieve.

He has done it for us. That's the kind of Savior invites you into relationship with him this morning.

That's the Savior we celebrate at this table. That we know a foundation like that.

[37 : 48] One who has never failed and will never fail us. Listen to how Paul records the institution of this supper we're about to celebrate.

He says, I'm going to read a little bit further.

Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then.

And so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

It may be hard to come to this table having just heard a sermon and a warning like that.

[39 : 06] Having just heard a call to self-examination and a warning of partaking unworthily like Paul writes there. Because we all examine our lives and see some cracks, don't we?

All of us who are willing to look honestly, we see some of those cracks and wonder what's the foundation issue. So it's good to examine ourselves.

Paul says examine yourself before just coming thoughtlessly to this table. But let me tell you this, if you examine yourself and you see those cracks and what they make you do is to cry out to Jesus for forgiveness because you have no other hope, then come to this table and find that He is indeed your foundation, the one you would hope in rather than yourself.

When you have no way to defend yourself or hope in yourself any longer, pray for His forgiveness.

Pray that He would give you more love for Him and come eagerly to this table.

Come to His body and blood given to cover the cracks permanently for you forever. To come to this table, you don't have to be Presbyterian.

[40 : 27] You just have to be repenting of yourself and trusting in Jesus. May you pray for us and then we'll come.

Father, thank You for such a table. Thank You for a foundation that is not one we have built. We see all the places that we have messed up.

Father, would You show us the beauty of a foundation built by another. Show us for those of us who have never known Him our need for it, that we may come and find Him to have lived that perfect life and died for all of our failures.

Father, use these elements in our hearts for a spiritual purpose that they would strengthen our trust in Christ again. We ask in His name.

Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org. website or at southwood.org.

[41 : 54] www.funkful.org. irian.org. our