

# THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Leader pages on pp. 106-109

**THE POINT:**  
THROUGH HIS MIRACLES  
AND TEACHING, JESUS  
POINTED US TO A  
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## LUKE 6:17-23,27-31

<sup>17</sup> After coming down with them, he stood on a level place with a large crowd of his disciples and a great number of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>18</sup> They came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those tormented by unclean spirits were made well.

<sup>19</sup> The whole crowd was trying to touch him, because power was coming out from him and healing them all.

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<sup>20</sup> Then looking up at his disciples, he said: Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God is yours.

<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man.

<sup>23</sup> "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note — your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

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<sup>27</sup> "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

<sup>29</sup> If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either.

<sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don't ask for them back. <sup>31</sup> **Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.**

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### MEMORY VERSE

### KEYWORDS

**Were made well (v. 18)**—Jesus didn't distinguish between diseases, healing some but not others, nothing is beyond His power. Our English word therapeutic comes from the Greek word rendered *made well*.

**Take note — your reward is great in heaven (v. 23)**—Jesus's followers are citizens

of heaven and therefore temporary residents on earth (Phil. 1:27; 3:20). Experiencing God fully in heaven is the greatest reward one can attain.

**Do the same for them (v. 31)**—To the extent we follow Jesus, this will be our guide in all our human relationships.

# WHY DOES HUMANITY NEED A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Unless you live in a home that's been newly built, there are likely imperfections everywhere you look. Paint gets chipped; walls get dented and dinged; floors get scratched. Further, as a home ages, it also settles, and with that settling generally comes some minor cracking. You might turn around one day and find that the doors don't close as smoothly as they once did, or that there are some hairline cracks in the corners of rooms.

While that's generally nothing to worry about, occasionally these types of things are symptoms of something much more serious happening in the foundation of the home. In that case, you might try and patch the cracks or paint over the blemishes, but they will always return . . . and worse.

In a similar way, it's not hard to find "cracks" in the world today. We are daily bombarded with reports of violence, anger, disease, and a host of other issues. It's important to note that as terrible as these issues are, they are symptoms of an even greater issue—one at the very foundation of who we are as human beings. The ministry of Jesus helps us to understand not only these surface-level issues, but it points us to the deeper issue at hand.

## Experience Healing // Luke 6:17-19

One of the marks of Jesus's ministry was healing. Everywhere He went, people with all kinds of diseases and infirmities lined up to see Him; because they held out hope that the healing power, they had heard about would fall upon them as well. If it did, it meant that they could be free from that which had afflicted them for years. Here we see the same thing happening—by the droves, people lined up to try and get close to Jesus, hoping to experience the kind of physical healing He brings. And Jesus was indiscriminate and generous in that healing, for He healed them all. But even as He did, we would do well to recognize that there are two distinct purposes in the healing Jesus brings:

- **Jesus heals . . . to heal.** This, of course, is the simplest and most straightforward reason behind Jesus's healing. He heals people, both then and now, because He is loving and compassionate. Jesus encountered people in pain and desperation, and having the power to do so, He affected real and lasting physical change in their lives. The lame were able to walk; the blind were able to see; those who were possessed by demons found themselves free from their influence. In so doing, Jesus



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showed His power as well as His compassion. But as important and life changing as those physical healings were and still are, we should recognize that Jesus's ministry was not isolated to the physical needs of people. Indeed, those physical ailments were only symptomatic of something deeper, more foundational, that is wrong with every human. It was this deeper issue that Jesus's ministry is ultimately directed toward, which leads to the second purpose in Jesus's healing.

- **Jesus heals . . . to reveal.** In every healing, Jesus was revealing something about Himself. He was revealing throughout His ministry His identity as the Son of God. Slowly but surely, by His various actions, Jesus was opening the eyes of people to who He truly was. This is why, in the Book of John, the miracles of Jesus are referred to as "signs." It's because these miracles are not only meant to help; they are meant to illuminate. Jesus revealed not only who He was and is but also the truth behind our greatest need. Though we might think that some kind of physical healing is our most pressing issue, that physical need is only the presentation of something deeper. We might be sick in the body, but we are certainly sick in the soul. We need to be healed from the disease of sin and death more than any physical need. And this ultimately is what Jesus is after. It is for us to recognize the true nature of our needs and to see that He is the only One who can bring that kind of deeper healing. The physical healing that Jesus brings is only a shadow of the spiritual healing He is willing to bring to all who call upon Him. He alone can heal the relationship, broken by sin, between God and humanity.

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS OUR WORLD NEEDS HEALING TODAY?

## Experience Blessings //

Luke 6:20-23

Having arrested the crowd's attention with His miraculous power and the healing that came from it, Jesus took the opportunity to teach the crowds about what it meant to be blessed. But the way He described blessing must have sounded strange to the people of His day; in fact, it still sounds strange to us today:

- Blessed are the poor.
- Blessed are the hungry.
- Blessed are the sad.
- Blessed are the hated.

That's a very different definition of what we typically think of as being blessed. Then again, everything is different in God's



## DIGGING DEEPER A LEVEL PLACE

In Luke 6:17 we are told that Jesus "stood on a level place." The purpose of this statement is twofold. First, throughout his book Luke consistently provides us with the details of events as they were articulated by the eyewitnesses he interviewed (Luke 1:2). Still, Luke did not tell us the time of day nor the temperature. Some of his eyewitnesses might have offered this information but when Luke sorted through this information, the Holy Spirit prompted him to include only the detail related to Jesus's location; Jesus "stood on a level place." This leads into the second point. Luke was intent on emphasizing that Jesus is performing the messianic ministry explained in Isaiah 40:3-5 (Luke 3:4-6). Those in a valley were brought up and those on the mountain brought down. In other words, Jesus chose to deliver His message about true blessings when everyone was in a "level place."

**Is there an area of your life that you need Jesus to bring to a "level place?"**

kingdom. In God’s kingdom, the way to lead is to serve. The way to be first is to be last. And the way to truly live is to die. It makes sense, then, that when we embody these things in our character, things that in our culture might be the very definition of UN-blessed, we find out what it truly means to be blessed.

If it sounds different to us, think about how the people listening to these words must have felt. Jesus had attracted quite a following, but the following wasn’t pretty. He had the reputation of being able to heal diseases, befriending the outcast and the lonely, and being critical of the religious leaders of the time. So, the people who gathered to listen to Him teach were a reflection of that reputation. They were the sick, the broken, the poor—these were the fringe people of their society, not the elite.

They were the ones who, because of their life situations, had been told their whole lives they were the furthest thing from being blessed. It’s shocking, then, to see Jesus step into their brokenness and provide them with God’s definition what it means to be blessed. In a few simple words Jesus revealed the heart of God.

Jesus was helping them understand that the pathway to joy and favor with God rested in the opposite direction. The wealth of the world is worthless to God. Instead, the pathway to joy and favor, is marked by things like:



- **Humility.** The humble are those who recognize their true state before God. They do not pridefully refuse the authority of God, but gladly submit to it in all respects.
- **Dependence.** Joy is found when we forsake the way of independence and instead trust in God to provide what we need on a daily basis.
- **Future.** True joy and favor are future oriented. We must be willing to look past the temporal pleasures of the earth and trust that there is a greater joy God is holding for those who trust in Him.

Jesus was not merely teaching people how to be good citizens or to simply live upright moral lives; His teaching was pointing to the way back to God. This is where true joy and favor are found, not in the things of the world, but only when we live in a real relationship with our Heavenly Father.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND ENCOURAGING ABOUT JESUS'S TEACHING IN THESE VERSES?

### Exemplify Love // Luke 6:27-31

Though the ministry of Jesus was marked by many things, surely one of the most evident was His love. Jesus’s love transcended the boundaries of His day; it was not confined to a specific nationality or social class of people but extended to those considered to be out of bounds. He was around those who were cast aside; He loved the unlovable. And He calls us to do the same.

Love is the mark of the disciple. Jesus said that “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). Being a true disciple is not defined by: Bible knowledge, fasting, or a particular stance on public issues. Those things are important, but according to Jesus, the defining mark of a Christian disciple is love.

It makes sense, then, that Christians should not only be marked by love, but that Christians should be growing in love. But how do we do that?

When we embrace that being a follower of Jesus means that our lives will be known for the love that we have for others, we can actively grow our capacity to love. So, what do we do next?

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The Bible reminds us that love—real love—does not generate with us. The truest, best, and most lasting definition of love we can or ever will experience comes from God: “Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

This is how we have been loved: sacrificially, completely, eternally, unflinchingly. And what is the effect of experiencing that love? John tells us that too: “Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another” (1 John 4:11).

Paul also reminds us “Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

If we want to grow in our love for others, let us return and be reminded over and over again just how deeply, completely, and wonderfully God has loved us in Christ. We go back to what love really is, as it is displayed and validated at the cross, and let that experience overflow into our interactions with others, even our enemies (Luke 6:27).

### IN WHAT WAYS DO JESUS'S TEACHINGS DIFFER FROM THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM OF THIS WORLD?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Luke 6:17-49 is known as the “Sermon on the Plain.” This section of Luke is often compared to Matthew 5-7, which is known as the “Sermon on the Mount.” These sermons are very similar in many ways and the “Sermon on the Plain” appears to be a condensed version of the “Sermon on the Mount.” Jesus’s message was drastically different from the message of the world. The world would seek revenge, Jesus says to “love your enemies.” Throughout the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus charges the audience to live with an eternal perspective. He presents Himself as the standard of righteous living, not the culture. The Word should be the foundation of our lives. The Sermon on the Plain closes with the profound question, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say?” (John 6:46). That question goes for believers today as well.

**Biblical Truth:** As Christians, we are the image bearers of Christ. We live in the world, but not of it.

**Do our actions reflect that Christ is Savior and Lord of our lives?**

## LIVE IT

### Are you blessed like the “Children of the Most High?”

Jesus states in Luke 6:35 that those who love their enemies are given the title of “children of the Most High.” Jesus invites all of those who seek to be blessed to demonstrate their status of adoption by loving their enemies. It is only when we place our trust in God’s ability to deal with all injustices that the burdens of this world begin to lift off our shoulders. As we follow Jesus, our lives should hold out the same promise to others, even our enemies. This is why we should:

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- **Commit to Prayer.** Who in your life is difficult to love right now? Commit to praying specifically for them each day this week. Ask God to help you to love that person and to demonstrate love to them.
- **Commit to Memory.** Commit Ephesians 5:1-2 to memory this week.
- **Commit to Action.** Perform an audit of your actions this week. How do your actions, reflect your definitions of “blessed” and “love.” Identify actions needed to bring your definition in line with that of Jesus.

# DAILY READINGS

## 1. BOOTS ON THE GROUND // LUKE 6:17-18

A skyline filled with skyscrapers is a major attraction to large metropolitan areas in highly populated cities worldwide. Corporate Headquarters and Office Space on the highest floors are the desires of many business executives. With most high-level decisions executed on the top floors, the true need for life impact and change happens at ground level. It means a lot to those in need when those with influence meet them where they are. This takes care from merely "lip" service to action and "I am here for you" service. This type of compassionate ministry is soul-reaching at its core. This was Jesus' model for ministry.

**The Church's role is to follow His lead and be counted among the "Boots on The Ground."**

## 2. TOUCHABLE MINISTRY // LUKE 6:19

So many people take for granted the power of touch until they need one. Touching makes a connection. Touching expresses life. Touching gives expectation. Touching gives hope. Touching stirs up faith. We touch in many ways, but there is something unique to the physical touch. Luke writes that the gathered crowd sought to touch Jesus. They believed that their needs would be fulfilled at the point of touch. They believed whatever was broken, would be fixed when they touch Jesus. They could see that He was fine with fixing them, but little did they know that for that reason He had come. Luke says, "for power came out from him and healed them all."

**Does your ministry look and feel like Jesus'? He had a "touchable" ministry.**

## 3. A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE // LUKE 6:20-23; 27-31

Popular cultures and systems seek to shape and define who we are, how we live, behave, and what we think is right or wrong. While following the culture may be satisfying, conflict will arise for the Christian. Conflicts arise when the culture doesn't align with how the Bible says we should live.

Nothing about Jesus is seen as culturally popular today. Jesus introduced His ministry to establish a new way of living and thinking. When He returns to establish His kingdom, it will be like no other kingdom on earth. Following Jesus helps us to see when some of our ways may be out of alignment with the Word of truth.

**Jesus gives us a different perspective on who we are and how we live.**

## 4. LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF // ACTS 9:1-6

Having a made-up mind has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is when your mind is set, focused and lines up with the will of God. It is a disadvantage when your mind is set, focused, and self-willed. When it comes to following God, He knows your thoughts beforehand. Whether you offer your plans to God or not, He still knows them. The goodness of God is that He will step in when He knows that you are heading in the wrong direction. He has a way of introducing and reintroducing Himself. Saul had a made-up mind until Jesus introduced Himself.

**Once God can get your undivided attention, He can cause you to identify with Him and change the course of your life.**

## 5. COME CLOSER // MATTHEW 11:25-30

The Earth is very small compared to the entire solar system and the universe. At the same time, the world we know and live in is quite large. Sometimes living in this world and experiencing life's trials causes one to think and feel extremely small, unseen, and insignificant. However, You are seen and you are significant. The enemy would love for you to think otherwise, but God sees you and you are exceptionally significant to Him. Matthew records Jesus' words in his Gospel, (11:25-30), which provides reassurance and direction for such thinking and feeling. We are invited to come to Him and find rest.

**Intimacy with God and identifying with Jesus reveals, restores, and reassures.**