

Luke 6:37 – 49

^{6:12} It was at this time that he went off to the mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. ¹³ And when day came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also named as apostles... ¹⁷ Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of his disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon... ²⁰ And turning his gaze toward his disciples, he began to say... ³⁷ Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.' ³⁹ And he also spoke a parable to them: 'A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit?' ⁴⁰ A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² Or 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. ⁴³ For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. ⁴⁴ For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. ⁴⁵ The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. ⁴⁶ Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.'

Historical and Cultural Background

- *The twelve disciples:* Jesus was rejected by two synagogues, Nazareth (4:14 – 30) and Capernaum (4:31 – 44). So he started recruiting his disciples from fishermen (5:1 – 11) and tax collectors (5:27 – 32). The number twelve symbolically represents a new beginning to Israel, which began with twelve brothers and twelve tribes in Genesis.
- *Jesus came down the mountain to speak:* In Exodus 19, God invited Israel up the mountain, but only Moses went up to the top to meet with God (Ex.19:13; Dt.5:5). Moses came down the mountain to speak to Israel. Notice Jesus went up 'the mountain' (Lk.6:12, a curious phrase) to meet with God. Jesus called the twelve up to him, then 'came down with them' to speak to Israel (6:17).

Questions

1. What does it mean to 'judge' someone? (How does it feel like? What do other people feel it as?) Notice that we tend to judge people who are close to us. That might be why Jesus uses the example of the 'brother' in v.42. Who are the people close to you that really bug you?
2. With whom do we say or think things like, 'That's it; I've had it up to here.' 'That's the last straw.' 'You've just exceeded your limit,' 'You pushed me over the top.' In what areas of life do we tend to use 'standards of measurement'?
 - a. With people who upset us, with whom we have short tempers. We judge them by minute and demanding standards. They fill up our impatience quota pretty quickly.
 - b. With people who have a different sense of 'balance' than we do. We tend to think that we are the only ones who live a truly 'balanced' life. So people who drive under the speed limit are too slow, whereas people who drive 20 MPH over the limit drive too fast. People who drink too little or drink too much. People who date too little or date too much. But this is all very moralistic!
 - c. Note: If we operate out of our short measure of emotional resources, we feel like God is ripping us off, demanding from us patience and love that we don't really have.
3. What would it mean for you to have a large measure of emotional resources? This is exactly what Jesus provides us!!!
4. How does Jesus address that in v.38 by saying that God will not be stingy with us? What will we be running over with?
5. By having more inner resources, we can contribute to the healing of others (helping them remove the speck). First, we won't react to others out of our own sense of irritation or hurt or 'I have limited resources and you're not worth it.' Second, by getting the log of judgmentalism out of our own eye, so we don't run smack into them and injure them more. Third, by compassionately addressing ways we see them in pain, and letting them touch their own eye (area of injury) so Jesus can remove the speck.
6. Does Jesus believe bad trees can become good trees? What is Jesus' point about trees and fruit in v.43 onward?
 - a. One's actions are according to one's nature. A good nature produces good actions. An evil or corrupt nature produces evil or corrupt actions. *Therefore, Jesus wants to change our nature to match his.*
 - b. How can we be changed on the inside, or fundamentally? Apparently, by internalizing Jesus' word. By laying the foundation of our lives on his word.
 - c. But what is Jesus saying about how attractive it seems to build your life on something other than his word? Why is it easier to build a house on sand than on rock?
7. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Loving Jesus and following him is about him changing our nature, so that we can grow in that nature. He has a moral direction for us. *But this does not lead us into moralism or moral judgmentalism.* Here is an illustration of that: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The rules were simple: If a white policeman or army officer voluntarily faced his accusers, confessed his crime, and fully acknowledged his guilt, he could not be tried and punished for that crime. Hard-liners grumbled about the obvious injustice of letting criminals go free, but Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu insisted that the country needed healing even more than it needed that particular brand of justice. At one hearing, a policeman named van de Broek recounted an incident when he and other officers shot an 18-year old boy and burned the body, turning it on a fire like a piece of barbeque meat, to destroy the evidence. Eight years later van de Broek returned to the same house and seized the boy's father. The wife was forced to watch as policemen bound her husband on a woodpile, poured gasoline over his body, and ignited it. The courtroom grew hushed as the elderly woman who had lost first her son and then her husband was given a chance to respond. 'What do you want from Mr. van de Broek?' the judge asked. She said she wanted van de Broek to go to the place where they burned her husband's body and gather up the dust so she could give him a decent burial. With his head down, the policeman nodded agreement. Then she, a follower of Jesus, added a further request: 'Mr. van de Broek took all my family away from me, and I still have a lot of love to give. Twice a month, I would like for him to come to the ghetto and spend a day with me so I can be a mother to him. And I would like Mr. van de Broek to know that he is forgiven by God, and that I forgive him too. I would like to embrace him so he can know my forgiveness is real.' Spontaneously, some in the courtroom began singing Amazing Grace as the elderly woman made her way to the witness stand, but van de Broek did not hear the hymn. He had fainted, overwhelmed. (from Philip Yancey, *Rumors of Another World*, 2003, Zondervan) *Do you want Jesus to lead you?*