



Smith Rock
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group study guide

LUKE
J E S U S F O R E V E R Y O N E

**For the week of
19th of April 2020**



I came across a proverb the other day, apparently it is Mongolian and it goes like this, "if you want to build high, you must dig deep." I don't know if they have a lot of tall buildings in Mongolia or not but the principle is easily understood by everyone. If you have ever seen the beginning of a skyscraper you will have seen they go down a long way before they start the upward build. The building has to be anchored to something, it has to have a foundation to stand on, or at the first decent wind it will come down.

We don't have to be in the skyscraper building industry to know this to be true, most of us have probably made sand castles on the beach at low tide only to watch the incoming tide wash our construction away, as there was nothing for it to anchor to and resist.

What is it that anchors our lives to Christ? How far down do we need to go?

Here is a hint, the answer lies in the title!



39 He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. 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? 42 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 no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 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. 46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell

you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 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. 49 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.”

Luke 6:39–49 (ESV)

Commentary

In this passage we reach the conclusion of Jesus “sermon on the plain” which started back in verse seventeen. Jesus had been up a mountain praying the previous night, and the next day we see why He spent that time up there. He was seeking His Father’s guidance for who He was going to choose to become His apostles out of the crowd of disciples; the twelve He would leave behind to continue the work of the proclamation of the Good News of the Gospel. Jesus then comes down the mountain and the crowd of disciples is joined by a crowd of Jews and gentiles who are desperate to hear Him speak and see Him act on their behalf. These are people who desperately need the power of God in their lives, and as they reach out to touch Jesus, power comes from Him and He heals them.

Jesus then talks about what it means to be blessed, and surprisingly it’s not what we might think. Poverty, hunger, thirst, sorrow, and being maligned by people are considered blessed

ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF JESUS

1ST CENTURY AD



states by Jesus. Why? Because those conditions tend to turn our attention to the one who can truly provide for us. Equally Jesus pronounces woes to those who have these resources in abundance because it leads to self reliance and self satisfaction and hoarding.

Jesus then fleshes out what it means to use our resources as God does; loving enemies, not just the people who love you back but actually dislike you. Blessing and praying for those curse you, and lending to those who can't/won't pay you back. In fact Jesus says, we should do to others as we would have done to ourselves. This also involves judging others, not that we aren't called to have wise biblical discernment, but that we not to pre judge who we give God's grace and mercy to.

Jesus wraps up His address with some seemingly disconnected teachings on the blind leading the blind, specks and planks found in the eyes, a basic horticultural lesson about where to find fruit, and a building illustration about foundations. What is Jesus getting at? What Jesus is getting at is that to be a disciple of His entails more than just knowing His words as good as that maybe. Words uncoupled from actions are unheard words as far as Jesus is concerned. But goes even deeper than that, because Jesus doesn't just want behavioural change He wants heart change. The heart is the centre of our actions, as is our mind and words which have been truly heard change our hearts and minds which are then lived out by our actions.

The Pharisees saw themselves as the guides of the people, they knew the words of God, and yet Jesus on multiple occasions calls them blind guides, which of course means that they are not

guides at all because they can't see where they are going to lead other people. They had heard but not applied; their hearts remained unchanged and thus so did their actions.

Jesus also called them hypocrites - the word comes from the stage where an actor plays a role. They were very good at picking out all the little faults of everyone around them but completely oblivious to their own short comings. It's what Jesus means by seeing a speck in another's eye but missing the beam in your own.

Nobody is going to look for figs on a thorn bush or grapes on a bramble, neither would we expect a thorn bush to produce figs or a bramble grapes. The fruit of a plant is true to its DNA, and Jesus says in the same way the actions of our lives are true to our hearts. If our hearts have been changed because we have "heard" Jesus' words then we will have actions which show some evidence of that, not perfect but some that has the trait of a changed heart.

Lastly, Jesus gives the illustration of two houses which are built; the first one the builder goes to the work of securing his house to a foundation attached to the rock, but the second builder doesn't worry about going to all that work, he just builds on the ground. Both houses are hit by a flood and of course the one without the foundation is washed away while the other stays put.

The point is only a life which is built not only on the words of Jesus Christ, but has its foundation in them being internalised in the heart so they are lived out in action, is a life that is secure and can withstand the coming flood of God's judgement.

Group Study

Open the group with prayer and discuss how you have used your application from last week's study in your life, and what you have learned from it.

During the last few weeks have you had to change any of your habits?

What has been the hardest one to change?

Is Jesus primarily interested in changing behaviours or hearts?

What is the difference between the two?

Why is the heart so hard to change?

What is the indication that the heart has changed?

Read the following excerpt:

Our modern church is filled with many people who look pure, sound pure, and are inwardly sick of themselves, their weaknesses, their frustration, and the lack of reality around them in the church. Our non-Christian friends feel either "that bunch of nice untroubled people would never understand my problems;" or the more perceptive pagans who know us socially or professionally feel that we Christians are either grossly protected and ignorant about the human situation or

are out-and-out hypocrites who will not confess the sins and weakness our pagan friends know intuitively to be universal.

Keith Miller in The Taste of New Wine. Christianity Today, Vol. 31, no. 12.

Discuss Miller's statement and the charge of hypocrisy

Read 2 Samuel 12:1- 15

What was the beam David was missing when he heard Nathan's story?

What did he need in able to see the beam?

How can we gently help each other see the beams and specks in our lives?

What is the connection between hearing and doing, and why do we mistakenly think that merely listening is the same thing?

What can you do this week to attach your foundation to the solid rock of Jesus Christ?

How easy will it be, and what obstacles do you foresee?

Personal study time

Read the following passage and use the REAP method to reflect on how you can bear fruit that reflects the heart of the Lord.

15 *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.*

2 *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

6 *If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

11 *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

12 *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did*

not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another. John 15:12–17 (ESV)

Reflection

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features a series of evenly spaced, horizontal blue lines running across the entire width of the page. The background is white, providing a clear contrast for the blue lines. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

REAP Method of studying Scripture

READ

Find the passages for today's reading in the Bible Reading Plan. Read the passages with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction, and correction (2 Timothy 3:16). Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Spend some time reflecting and writing about what you've read. Write down one or two of the key verses that stuck out to you. Ask yourself these questions and write down your thoughts:

- * What is going on in the passage?
- * Who is writing and whom is he writing to?
- * When was the author writing?
- * What are the circumstances that the author is addressing?
- * Does the writer mention anything that might indicate his purpose or intent?
- * How do you think the author wants his audience to respond?

APPLY

After examining the passage, apply the text to your own life. Ask yourself these questions:

- * What is God's word for me from this passage?
- * How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

KIDS CORNER



A Solid Foundation

1.What's the coolest building you've ever seen?

There are a lot of different types of buildings. Some are huge skyscrapers that reach high into the sky, and some are cozy homes belonging to families like yours. They come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors, but they all have one thing in common. Every building you see has a foundation. The foundation is the very bottom of the building - the part that everything else sits on top of. It holds everything in place, and without it, the building would collapse! People are the same way. We all “build” our lives on something, hoping that it will keep us secure. Our life's foundation determines how we make decisions and what our values are.

Jesus told us how important it is to build our lives on Him. He is the only foundation that will keep us steady and strong no matter what. If we try to make our lives secure with anything else, we will eventually crumble! But if Jesus is our foundation, then no fear, disappointment, loss, or disaster could ever take away our hope and security. Nothing else can promise that. Our skills and talents can't. Our dreams and goals can't. Not even our parents and family can keep us secure in every situation. That kind stability is only found when we let Jesus and His teachings determine our decisions, actions, and values. What a blessing it is to have such a solid foundation to build our lives on!

2. What are some ways we can build our lives on Jesus?

