

Get more out of the message



LUKE

Luke 6:12-26

How can we become the Christ-centered church our world so desperately needs? Join us in Luke's Gospel, the most expansive biography of Jesus in the Bible. With the beloved physician as our guide, we hope to experience Jesus so we can participate with the new reality God is bringing into our world.

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The Big Idea

What kind of movement did Jesus launch? A gathering of all sorts of people who radically reorient their lives to His coming Kingdom.

Good to Know

- **Luke 6:12-49 describes what you might call the world's first "Christian church service."** Not only does Jesus officially authorize His first "apostles," but this passage is also one of only two places in the Bible (see Matthew 5-7) that give us Jesus' most important sermon—sometimes known as "The Sermon on the Mount" (sometimes also called the "Sermon on the Plain").

Why did Luke include this?

- Jesus' message was so provocative and countercultural that as Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, Luke's audience began facing intense persecution. They were being ostracized, mocked, kicked out of synagogues and even killed. Can you imagine how tempting it would be to abandon or change Jesus' original vision for His people because of that?
- Luke was sure to include the origin story of the church in great detail because he wanted to make sure Theophilus and the rest of his readers remembered their roots. **This passage was a reminder of exactly what kind of movement Jesus was starting, and to this very day, it powerfully reorients us to Jesus' original vision for His gathered disciples.**
- **The mountain (vs. 12)** is probably referring to the same mountain mentioned in Matthew 5. You can visit the beautiful "Mount of Beatitudes" (locally known as Mount "Eremos") to this very day.
- **"All night he continued in prayer to God" (vs. 12)** – This is the only explicit mention anywhere of Jesus praying all night. Why did Luke mention this? To make sure his readers understood that Jesus saw what He was about to do as one of His most important undertakings.
- **"He chose from them twelve" (vs. 13)** – This detail would have leaped off the page for Luke's Jewish readers. They would have immediately understood that Jesus was rebooting the broken-down "Israel project." His twelve apostles represented the twelve tribes of Israel, through whom God had long ago promised to unleash His blessing to all the peoples of the earth (Genesis 12:2-3).
- **"Whom he named apostles" (vs. 13)** – The word apostle (the Greek word apostolos, which means "delegate" or "messenger") refers to twelve ordinary men carefully selected from among the crowd of disciples (the Greek word mathetes, which means "apprentices" or "students"). These twelve

men were the first people Jesus authorized to teach, heal and announce His coming Kingdom on His behalf.

- **“Simon...Judas Iscariot” (vs. 14-16)** – These are not the guys you would expect Jesus, the team captain, to pick for His twelve-man squad. For one thing, most scholars believe that Matthew was another name for Levi, the tax collector. If that’s the case, it’s crazy that Jesus would have him working alongside “Simon the Zealot.” One of them was basically a puppet for the Roman occupiers, while the other was a Jewish nationalist fanatic bent on kicking Rome out!
- **“Tyre and Sidon” (vs. 17)** – These were regions along the Mediterranean coast. Luke’s point was that people were coming from all over to hear Jesus and experience His healing power.
- **“Power came out from him” (vs. 19)** – Luke wanted to make sure his readers understood that the power center of the Jesus movement wasn’t political—it was divine.
- **The sermon that Jesus preaches in Luke 6:20-49 is Luke’s version of Matthew’s “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5-7).** These two recorded sermons represent what you might call Jesus’ “stump speech.” They convey what you might have heard Jesus preaching not only on that fateful day on the Mount of Beatitudes, but also in many other places as He traveled around.
- **The first part of both Luke’s and Matthew’s sermons is known as the “Beatitudes.”** This name comes from the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible, where the Greek word “makarios” is translated into Latin as “beati,” meaning “blessed” or “happy.” Matthew lists eight while Luke only lists four.
- **“Blessed...” (vs. 20-22)** – The Greek word μακάριος (makarios) is often translated as “blessed” in our English Bibles. While this is a good translation, makarios is actually a tough word to translate because there’s no exact English equivalent. Though different Bibles render this word in different ways, it’s helpful to think of Jesus as saying, “Congratulations, you who are poor, hungry, sad and persecuted!” Think about how crazy that must have sounded! This captures just how provocative and surprising Jesus’ sermon was.
- **“Blessed are the poor/hungry/weeping/persecuted” (vs. 20-23)** – This can be confusing, so first, what did Jesus NOT mean?
 1. He wasn’t describing four different kinds of people.
 2. He wasn’t saying that you have to be poor, hungry, sad or persecuted to go to heaven.
 3. He wasn’t saying that poverty, hunger, sadness and victimhood were ideal character traits for Christians.

So, what DID He mean?

- Jesus was proclaiming that His Kingdom would culminate in a day of restoration and reckoning, so powerful it would turn the normal order of things on its head. His poor, hungry, sad and persecuted followers would finally experience God’s vindication and comfort, while the arrogant and elite would see that their happiness was only temporary.
- Following Him didn’t just mean hoping for a better life now (though that was sure to happen as people obeyed Him and served one another). It also meant that those who were miserable now could hold on to a future “day” (vs. 23) when all wrong things would be made right.
- **“Woe to you who are rich/full/laugh/respected” (vs. 24-26)** – Interestingly, this section is not in Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount.
- Just like the “blessed” statements, Jesus wasn’t referring to four different kinds of people. Instead, He was warning anyone who believed themselves to be “better” than Jesus’ followers because of their status and wealth.

- Just as Jesus' promise of a future day of restoration comforted the afflicted, His warning of a future day of reckoning was a shot across the bow for the proud and arrogant.

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. Why do you think Luke made sure to include the detail that Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before choosing His apostles?
2. Jesus chose a diverse group of men—fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot and even Judas, who would betray Him. What does this reveal about the kind of people God calls to build His Kingdom?
3. The crowd that gathered around Jesus was full of the sick, the oppressed and the desperate. What does this tell us about the kind of people the Kingdom of God is for?
4. Jesus declares that the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted are blessed. How can Jesus so provocatively challenge the world's view of success and happiness?
5. Jesus warns those who are rich, full, laughing and well-liked. Does this mean wealth, happiness and a good reputation are bad? Why or why not?
6. Where do you see the church at large "drifting" from Jesus' pure, original vision for the church?
7. If Jesus showed up in your small group, what would He recognize as His "fingerprints" in your group? Where might He encourage you to get back on track?

Prayer

Jesus, you called together a community of ordinary, broken people to carry out your extraordinary mission. Help us reorient our lives to reflect your heart for the poor, the hungry and the outcast. Strip away any love of comfort, success or reputation that hinders us from fully following you. Teach us to embrace the radical, beautiful, sacrificial life you modeled for us. Amen.

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