

## Lesson 7

# Controversies on the Sabbath and the Sermon on the Plain

## Luke 6

### Controversies Regarding the Sabbath (6:1-12)

The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees is mentioned in the opening of chapter 6. Two incidents in which Jesus rejected the traditions of the Pharisees regarding Sabbath observance are recorded.

disciples (not Jesus) of violating the law which forbade work on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees had developed an oral tradition to explain what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. The plucking of grain, even for food, on the Sabbath was



**This photo of the interior of the first century synagogue at Masada gives a person some idea of what synagogues looked like in Jesus' time.**

In the first incident, the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of sin because they plucked grain and ate it while passing through a field on the Sabbath day. They did not accuse Jesus' disciples of stealing; the law provided for the hungry traveler to do what Jesus' disciples did (Deut. 23:24-25). They accused Jesus' dis-

a violation of oral tradition. In defending His disciples, Jesus called attention to David's conduct on one occasion of eating the shewbread, which was reserved for the priests alone (1 Sam. 21:1-7). The point of the comparison is this: The Jews honored David who had violated *a divinely ordained law*. So why did

they condemn Jesus' disciples for setting aside a *human tradition*.

Jesus said, “. . . the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath” (6:6). Jesus certainly did not mean that He had the liberty to set aside divine law and do as He pleased. Rather, what is intended is that He, as divine Lord, had the right to direct His disciples in how to observe the Sabbath law.

The second incident occurred when Jesus entered a synagogue and taught. A man was present who had a withered hand. The scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus to see whether or not He would heal on the Sabbath day. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus commanded the man with the withered hand to stand up. He asked, “Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?” They did not reply. He healed the man's hand immediately. The Pharisees were enraged and began to plot to destroy Jesus.

That the Pharisees had a perverted conscience is shown by the fact that they condemned Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath, but approved of using the Sabbath to plot the murder of Jesus. They condemned Jesus for doing good in healing a man with a withered hand, but approved of plotting to destroy a man.

### Selection of the Twelve (6:13-17)

Prior to His selection of the Twelve Apostles, Jesus withdrew to a private place and continued all night in prayer. The next morning, He selected His twelve apostles. The twelve were chosen from the disciples and were appointed apostles—men sent out on a special mission by the authority of Christ. They were:

The Twelve Apostles		
Peter	Philip	James (son of Alphaeus)
Andrew	Bartholomew	Judas (brother of James)
James	Matthew	Simon
John	Thomas	Judas Iscariot

**Sermon on the Plain (6:18-49)**

After appointing the apostles, Jesus came down from the mountain to a plain. He healed the sick in the multitude, then began preaching to them. This lesson is Luke’s ac-

do not hunger after righteousness, who laugh about their sins, and who are loved by the world. The traits are composite. Each Christian must manifest each of these traits and will receive all of the blessings.

2. *Love Your Enemies (6:27-36)*. Jesus taught that men should overcome the temptation to have a spirit of vengeance and learn to love their enemies. In discussing this, He spoke what has become known as the “Golden Rule”—“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (6:31). This rule obligates us to act positively toward others. We not only do not do to others what we would not want them to do to us, we also do for them what we want them to do for us. For example, if I wanted someone to ask me over for dinner, I should ask him over.

Blessings		Woes	
On Whom	Blessing	On Whom	Woe
Poor (in spirit)	Kingdom of God	Rich (in spirit)	Have received their consolation
Ones who hunger	Filled	Full	Shall hunger
One who weep	Shall laugh	Ones who laugh	Shall weep
Ones who are persecuted	Great reward in heaven	Ones who are loved	Like false prophets

count of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). The plain was no doubt a plain on a mountain; hence, the sermon is variously called the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain.

1. *The Beatitudes (6:20-26)*.

Jesus began by pronouncing several blessings and woes. The two groups are in contrast with each other.

Each of these blessings is related to spiritual things. The poor in spirit are blessed; those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed; those who weep over their sins are blessed; those who are hated because of their obedience to Jesus are blessed. In contrast, those who are cursed are those who are “rich” in spirit (cf. Rev. 3:17), who



**A house that is not built on a solid foundation will collapse in the time of storms. What is true of physical buildings is also true of one’s personal life and family.**

Jesus emphasized the selfish nature of love manifested by those of the world. Christians need to rise above a selfish level of love in order to love, not only those who love us in return, but also those to love who do not love us. In so doing, we manifest the same kind of love that God manifested. He showed love to His enemies and not only to His friends. He sends His physical blessings, such as the rain, on the just and unjust alike.

3. *Judging (6:37-45)*. Jesus warned that Christians should be careful in judging others. The measure which is used on others will be used on us, he warned. In this, He is speaking of how we treat others and how they will treat us.

He emphasized that our eye should be clear in making judgments. It can become blurred by following a blind leader (6:39). (Hence, if one followed the blind Pharisees, his judgments would be blurred.) He warned against hypocrisy in judging others (6:42). One can best judge others by looking at their fruit. A good tree brings forth good fruit and a corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit.

4. *Building on a Solid Foundation (6:46-49)*. He concluded His sermon with a parable which emphasized the need for building on the solid foundation of the word of God. The man who hears the word of God and obeys it is like a man who builds his house on a rock; the

man who does not obey the word of God is like the man who builds his house on sand. When the storms come, the house built on the sand will fall but the house built on the rock will stand.

Those who build their lives in obedience to the word of God are able to withstand the storms and trials of life. Those who reject God's word find that the storms of life cause their houses to collapse. Their marriages fail, their families separate, and their moral conscience is eaten up; in a word, their houses collapse. We need to be careful to build our lives on the rock of obedience to the word of God.

### Questions

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Matthew         | a. Judas                                |
| ___ 2. Peter's brother | b. Apostle who betrayed Jesus           |
| ___ 3. John's brother  | c. Tax collector                        |
| ___ 4. James' brother  | d. Andrew                               |
| ___ 5. Simon           | e. Apostle who doubted the resurrection |
| ___ 6. Thomas          | f. The Zealot                           |
| ___ 7. Judas           | g. James                                |

### True Or False

- \_\_\_ 1. Jesus violated the Old Testament law by working on the Sabbath.
- \_\_\_ 2. The incident of David eating the shewbread is recorded to show that right and wrong must be determined by the situation, not by an absolute law.
- \_\_\_ 3. Jesus initiated doctrinal controversy with the Jews by healing the man with the withered hand.
- \_\_\_ 4. The criticism that the Pharisees made of Jesus, that He healed on the Sabbath, is proof from His enemies that He performed miracles.
- \_\_\_ 5. The statement, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" means that Jesus did not have to obey the Sabbath law.

### Discussion of the Beatitudes

1. Explain the difference in being "poor" in spirit and being "rich" in spirit. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the contrast between being spiritually "hungry" and "full"? Describe each. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the difference in attitude in one who “weeps” and one who “laughs”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Since all suffering is not “for righteousness sake” (v. 22), what other causes of suffering exist? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What has happened to a man when all men speak well of him? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Short Answer**

1. Do you believe that what Jesus commanded in 6:28-30 should be literally applied? Give reasons for your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did He give evil the upper hand? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What sin was He teaching us to avoid? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Explain the difference in the following rules: (a) “Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you”; (b) “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How does Paul’s teaching in Romans 12:19-21 compare with Jesus’ instructions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Study Luke 6:37-42, John 7:24, and 1 John 4:1. Answer these questions on judging:
  - a. Does the Bible forbid all judging of others? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What kind of judging does God condemn? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What kind of judging does God require? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How is the divine principle, “you reap what you sow” (Gal. 6:9) shown in judging? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What danger does a blind guide pose to the soul of a good, honest, and sincere Christian (v. 39)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How are one’s actions and words related to his heart (vv. 43-45)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Does one who sins have a pure heart? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the meaning of the parable of the two builders (6:46-49)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. From your experience, describe someone who resembles the one who has built on the rock and who has weathered the storm. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. From your experience, describe someone who resembles the one who has built on the sand and whose house collapsed during the storm. \_\_\_\_\_  
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