

## Sunday, June 4, 2023 | Everyday Disciple

### Week 8 | Luke 6:43-45 | "Inside Out"

We've been going through the so-called 'Sermon on the Plain,' and we've covered several topics so far:

With our discussion of the beatitudes and woes (cf. Lu. 6:20-26), we learned that, **depending on our values, God will call us blessed or cursed.** Should we value His Kingdom and his principles, we'll live in a state of blessedness. However, should we value this kingdom over God's, we are cursed, no matter how "good" our life may seem.

After that, we studied Jesus' most challenging commandment: *love your enemies* (cf. Lu. 6:27-36). And, as with the beatitudes and woes, this commandment shows us that God's values are different from the world's values. Admittedly, this may seem insane at first glance. Bad guys are supposed to be hated, not loved! But, for the Christian, this commandment ought to make perfect sense. After all, if God did not love the sinner, where would that leave us? So, since we have been adopted into the household of God, he will expect his children to love others as he has loved them, even if that means loving the unlovable. **Children of God return virtue for vice.**

Last week, we studied Jesus' most misunderstood saying: *judge not, and you will not be judged*. Contrary to what many think, the Lord was not prohibiting all moral judgments. Instead, he was banning the type that is disingenuous and vindictive, the hypocritical kind. In fact, that passage actually encouraged us to humbly judge our brother after we've taken care of our own faults. **Otherwise, we'll give bad advice because of our self-esteem and hypocrisy. After all, good advice is the product of self-examination and humility.**

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Today, we'll be discussing the topic of speech. As we all know, what we say can impact others for good or evil. How many of us have been low, and then a friend comes along, boosting our morale? After all, does not Proverbs 12:25 say, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad"? But just as it is in our power to lighten a load, it is also our power to make someone's burden even heavier by what we say. As much as we would like to think that the old-school-yard rhyme "stick and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is true, anyone who's been given a verbal beating knows it takes far longer to heal emotional wounds than physical ones. Few things can be as sharp as words; they often do far more harm than sticks and stones.

And so, as Jesus begins to close out his sermon on the plain, he has some parting words about the power of speech. He reveals that there is no such thing as meaningless words. Every sentence, phrase, and syllable can tell us something about the person who said it. Words are the window of the heart (i.e., Inside Out). We need only listen and discover what sort of person is behind the curtain.

Jesus teaches us **two** things:

**i. A tree is known by its fruit (vs. 43-44).**

**READ:** Luke 6:43-44 (ESV)

<sup>43</sup> For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup> for each tree is **known** by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

It is not hard to judge a tree by its fruit. And while Jesus will, specifically, apply this principle to speech, generally speaking, this is a good rule to follow. To know if something is worth investing in, looking at what it produces is good practice. And, in light of the verses that preceded these, how a person judges another, whether humbly or hypocritically, determines what kind of tree they are. No matter our intentions, we will reproduce what we are, not something different.

Interestingly, Matthew has a similar passage to the one here in Luke.

**READ:** Matthew 7:15-20 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits.

False prophets may sound good, but they produce "diseased" fruit. The works of those who are nothing but wolves in sheep's clothing are a ravenous decay that only brings about death. As Shakespeare once said, "All that glisters is not gold." To see if a person is worthy of following, one needs only to look at the effect a leader has had on the people.

**ii. A person is known by their speech (vs. 45).**

**READ:** Luke 6:45 (ESV)

<sup>45</sup> 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.

Just as a tree is known by its fruit, a person is known by speech. **The condition of our heart determines the content of our vocabulary.** Listening to what a person says helps us learn what sort of heart is speaking.

An evil and unregenerate mind produces corrupt and unregenerate ideas which make their way to our tongue and then out into the world. A good and regenerated mind creates good and regenerated ideas which make their way to our tongue and then out into the world.

Listen to how James talks about the tongue.

**READ: James 3:1-12 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. <sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup> Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and saltwater? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

James is not saying that the tongue is untamable. James says that the tongue is only untamable if the heart is unregenerated, if it is a spring of salt water rather than fresh. James would have us change the heart to change what comes out of the heart. He would have Jesus transform us from a bristle bush to a fig tree. He would have us bridle our whole body by controlling what we say.

## **So, what's the takeaway?**

What goes in must come out.

Whatever is inside will come out. So, should you fill your heart with good, you will fill the hearts of others with good. But should you fill your heart with evil, you will fill the hearts of others with evil.

**READ:** Matthew 15:18-19 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

<sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

Fix the heart, and the tongue will be tamed. Jesus and so transformed our hearts that we no longer talk as we once did.

## Video Description

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Pastor's manuscript can be found here: