

Luke Chapter 6

Luke 6:1 "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing [them] in [their] hands."

Eating corn from a neighbor's field was not stealing. The law (in Deuteronomy 23:25), says: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing corn."

Luke 6:2 "And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?"

“Not lawful”: Actually, no law prohibited the plucking of grain in order to eat on the Sabbath. Gleaning handfuls of grain from a neighbor's field to satisfy one's immediate hunger was explicitly permitted (Deut. 23:25). What was prohibited was labor for the sake of profit. Thus, a farmer could not harvest for profit on the Sabbath, but an individual could glean enough grain to eat.

These Pharisees were caught up in the law. They did not realize that the Word of God had taken the form of flesh, and this was He that was walking through the corn field. These Pharisees were so caught up in the "thou shalt not" in the Bible, they had no time to do anything for God.

There was a law against reaping and against threshing. Pulling these ears of corn would be classified as work. In the law, there was no work at all to be done on the Sabbath (Exodus 20 and Numbers 15).

Even in the tenth chapter of Nehemiah, the gates were closed to stop trade on Sabbath. There are a number of other books which deal with this. I really believe, in all of this, that Jesus allowed this situation to arise to teach the disciples, the scribes, and the Pharisees the lesson that God made Sabbath for man's benefit.

God knew that the human body needed to rest in one out of 7 days. Jesus is telling them not to be so technical. Understand the meaning behind Sabbath.

Luke 6:3 "And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;"

“Have ye not read”: A rebuke, suggesting that they were culpable for their ignorance of so basic a truth (Matt. 12:5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31).

“What David did” (1 Samuel 21:1-6).

Luke 6:4 "How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?"

“The showbread”: The consecrated bread of the Presence, 12 loaves baked fresh each Sabbath, which was usually eaten by the priests only (Lev. 24:5-9). God was not offended by David’s act, done to satisfy a legitimate need when his men were weak with hunger (1 Sam. 21:4-6).

Jesus is saying here, you men of the law do you not know your own Scriptures? Then He quotes to them about David going into the temple and eating the forbidden bread. You can read about this bread that was reserved for the priests (in Exodus 29:32).

The thing that Jesus is trying to make them realize is that the law was given to help man, not to box him in where he was just keeping ordinances with no reasoning behind them. Jesus is trying to teach them the purpose behind the ordinance.

Luke 6:5 "And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

“The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath”: Christ has the prerogative to rule over not only their man-made Sabbatarian rules, but also over the Sabbath itself, which was designed for worshiping God. Again, this was an inescapable claim of deity, and as such it prompted the Pharisees’ violent outrage (verse 14). Jesus is Lord of everything.

Mark 2:27 "And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:"

You see, the rules that the Lord set up for us to live by are for our benefit. Jesus (in verse 5), is letting these scribes and Pharisees know that He is Messiah (the Anointed One), the Christ.

Luke 6:6 "And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered."

We see here a continuation of the teaching on the law of Sabbath, even though this was at least a week later than the teaching of going through the corn field. One of the main differences, in this and the eating of the corn, is that the first one is outside the church, and this one is in the synagogue.

Luke 6:7 "And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him."

“Watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath”: The scribes and Pharisees spotted the man with the withered hand (verse 6), and with Christ present, they immediately knew that this would be an occasion for the man’s healing. In stark contrast to all other so-called healers, Christ was not selective. He healed all who came to Him (verse 19; 4:40 Matt. 8:16).

Notice that it appears these scribes and Pharisees are sent by the authorities to try to trip Jesus up. It seems to be their job. They are there at every hand. In (verse 7), it makes it sound like it is bad to heal someone, at least in the sight of these scribes and Pharisees. It was illegal to heal on the Sabbath.

Luke 6:8 "But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth."

“Knew their thoughts”: (Matt. 12:25; John 2:24). Though the Lord Jesus humbled Himself (Phil. 2:4-8), and set aside the independent use of His divine prerogatives in incarnation (John 5:30), He was still fully God and therefore, omniscient (see Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52).

Jesus will not disappoint them. He, without hiding or sneaking around, tells the man to boldly stand to receive his healing so that all might see. The man had sought Jesus out for just this purpose, and he was not about to lose this chance. He arises and stands in the midst of the people for all to see.

Luke 6:9 "Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy [it]?"

“To do good”: The Sabbath laws forbade labor for profit, frivolous diversions, and things extraneous to worship. Activity per se was not unlawful. Good works were especially appropriate on the Sabbath, particularly deeds of charity, mercy, and worship. Words necessary for the preservation of life were also permitted. To corrupt the Sabbath to forbid such works was a perversion of God’s design.

“To do evil”: Refusal to do good is tantamount to doing evil (James 4:17).

Here again, we see Jesus asking a question that they cannot answer. They would be trapped themselves if they answer either way.

Luke 6:10 "And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

“Looking around about upon them”: I.e., giving them a chance to respond to the question of (verse 9). Evidently no one did.

This was a strange request to a man who could not stretch forth his hand. The power of the Word of the Lord caused the diseased hand to obey and stretch forth. As the man extended his hand, he was made totally whole.

Luke 6:11 "And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."

“Filled with madness”: A curious response in the face of so glorious a miracle. Such irrational hatred was their response to having been publicly humiliated, something they hated worse than anything (Matt. 23:6-7). They were unable to answer His reasoning (verses 9-10).

And furthermore, by healing the man only with a command, He had performed no actual “work” that they could charge Him with. Desperately seeking a reason to accuse Him (verse 7), they could find none. Their response was blind fury.

This anger they felt should have been joy for the poor man's hand being healed. I personally believe their anger was fueled by jealousy, because they could not heal. Jesus was making them look bad. They wanted to get rid of Him before everyone followed Him.

Luke doesn't even find it necessary to mention that these scribes and Pharisees were not able to do anything to Jesus.

Luke 6:12 "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

“Continued all night in prayer”: Luke frequently shows Jesus praying, and particularly before major events in His ministry. (3:21; 5:16; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 22:32, 40-46).

If we would take an example from Jesus and take more time to pray, we would find greater things happening in our own lives. An important decision was to be made. Jesus' and the Father's wishes must be one.

Luke 6:13 "And when it was day, he called [unto him] his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;"

“He called unto him his disciples”: Christ had many disciples. At one point, He sent 70 out in pairs to proclaim the gospel (10:1). But on this occasion, He chose 12 and specifically commissioned them as apostles, i.e., “sent ones,” with a special authority to deliver His message on His behalf (Acts 1:21-22).

It appears there were many disciples who followed Jesus. After praying all night, Jesus calls them all to Him and chooses 12 apostles. These would be the leaders of the larger group. This would be the close knit group that He would teach so that they might be the leaders in His church. The word "apostle" means one who is sent or ambassador.

Luke 6:14 "Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,"

It is believed that Bartholomew, here, and Nathanael in John are the same person. Simon, whom Jesus called Peter, was surnamed "Cephas", which literally means a mass of rock. James and John were sons of Zebedee, sons of thunder.

This "sons of thunder" came from the name Mark gave them of Boanerges. Peter, James, and John were the three Jesus had with Him the most. They seemed to be the closest to Jesus.

Luke 6:15 "Matthew and Thomas, James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,"

Matthew was the tax collector. Thomas was the doubter. This "Zelotes" is a group Simon belonged to.

Luke 6:16 "And Judas [the brother] of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

These two named Judas completed the 12. Of course, there were many more disciples, these were just the representative (12), group Jesus entrusted His church to.

Luke 6:17 "And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;"

“Stood in the plain”: Elsewhere it says “on the mountain” (Matt. 5:1). These harmonize easily if Luke is referring to either a plateau or a level place on the mountainside. Indeed, there is such a place at the site near Capernaum where tradition says this sermon was delivered.

“Tyre ... Sidon”: Phoenician cities on the shore of the Mediterranean.

We see now, that after Jesus went to the mountain and prayed, and after He chose the 12 out of all the disciples to walk the closest to Him, He comes down the mountain with His disciples and meets a large company of people. Many want to be healed. Many came to hear His teachings because His message was full of hope.

Luke Chapter 6 Questions

1. What forbidden thing did His disciples do on this second Sabbath?
2. What 2 things did the picking and rubbing represent?
3. What Scripture tells us that it was alright for them to pick the neighbor's corn?
4. What did the Pharisees say to the disciples?
5. What lesson was Jesus teaching them in all of this?
6. What had David done when his men were hungry?
7. More so than the law, we should learn the _____.

8. Who is Lord of the Sabbath?
9. What Scripture tells us the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath?
10. Who is Jesus trying to tell the Pharisees that He is?
11. What was wrong with the man's hand who came to the temple to be healed?
12. What did Jesus tell him to do?
13. What effect did this have on the Pharisees?
14. What questions did Jesus ask the Pharisees about healing the man that they could not answer?
15. What should they have been feeling?
16. What was the real reason they wanted to stop Jesus' ministry?
17. Where did Jesus go when He prayed all night?
18. What did Jesus do when morning came?
19. How many disciples did Jesus choose to be His closest associates?
20. What does "apostle" mean?
21. What was Peter's other name?
22. Who was Peter's brother?
23. What do most people believe is another name for Bartholomew?
24. What does the name "Cephas" mean?
25. What, besides James and John, were they called?
26. Who were the 3 disciples closest to Jesus?
27. Which disciple had been a tax collector?
28. Which disciple was known as the doubter?
29. When He came down from the mountain, where had many people gathered from?
30. Why were they there?