

**Reading Together**  
**New Testament Bible Reading**  
**July 25 – July 31**

**Monday, July 25 – Luke 5: 33 – 6: 16**

After Jesus went to the party at Levi's (Matthew's) house the Pharisees questioned Jesus about why he and his disciples were having a good time while John the Baptist and his disciples were fasting. Jesus' answer is very simple, there will be a time for his disciples to fast after he has been taken from them. Jesus, of course, was alluding to the time he would go to the cross and then later leave this earth to return to the Father; this would be the time the disciples would fast and pray as they wait for his return. We are in that time now. There is the promise of a great banquet in heaven that awaits those who trust Christ as their savior, but until that day comes suffering is part of what followers of Christ should expect in their lives.

Jesus then teaches a parable to illustrate his point. Jesus talks about cutting a patch from a new garment to put on an old garment, and pouring new wine into old wineskins. Clearly, it doesn't make sense to ruin a new garment to fix an old garment, and if you put new wine in an old wineskin, the old wineskin will explode, because it cannot stretch as the new wine ferments. What Jesus is saying is that he did not come to tweak the old system of legalism of the Pharisees; he came to replace it with something new and vibrant, Christianity. The problem was in the Pharisee's minds the old was better than the new (verse 39).

In the Pharisees old way of thinking, a person could do nothing on the Sabbath, so in chapter 6 as Jesus' disciples nibble on some grain as they walk through a grain field, the Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of working on the Sabbath (harvesting and processing grain). Luke next records the story of what happened on another Sabbath to further contrast the Pharisee's old way of thinking with Jesus' new way of thinking. To the dismay of the Pharisees, Jesus heals a man with a shriveled hand in the synagogue. The Pharisees are completely scandalized by this, because in their minds once again Jesus is working on the Sabbath—the new wine of Jesus' teaching that it is better to do good on the Sabbath than to sit back and do nothing, stands at complete odds with the teaching of the Pharisees.

## **Tuesday, July 26 – Luke 6: 17 – 49**

In this section of Luke's Gospel, Luke records a series of Jesus' teachings that closely resemble the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. Most Bible scholars believe that while the teachings in Matthew and Luke are similar, they actually come from two different sermons that Jesus gave. While Matthew's account takes place on the side of a hill, Luke's account takes place on a "level place" (verse 17), and there are some slight variations in the sermons themselves. If you think about it, it would make complete sense that Jesus would go from place to place and teach the same things to different audiences.

Jesus begins his sermon with a series of blessings. As you read these blessings you need to think in spiritual terms rather than just physical terms. Just because you are physically poor, or hungry or in mourning doesn't mean that you will be blessed spiritually. What Jesus means is that to be blessed spiritually we have to see our spiritual poverty, so we see our need for Jesus. We have to have a spiritual hunger that we know can't be satisfied by the world. We have to mourn over our sin, and be willing to suffer for the name of Jesus. The person who understands these things and puts them into practice in their own lives will be spiritually blessed for all of eternity. In the verses that follow, Jesus pronounces a series of woes, or curses, on those who are satisfied with what they have in this life.

Next, Jesus moves on and touches on some of the same themes that we find in Matthew 5-7: loving your enemies, judging others, and building your life on what is truly important—the teachings of Jesus. These verses are self explanatory, but as you read them think especially about verses 43-45. What is the fruit of your life? Is there evidence in your life that you are building your life on the teachings of Jesus?

## **Wednesday, July 27 – Luke 7: 1 – 17**

These verses contain the story of a healing and a resurrection from the dead, and what is truly interesting is that these accounts involve people from two very different levels of society. First, there is the account of the Roman Centurion whose servant is deathly ill. This Roman Centurion is a God-fearing man (but not a Jew) who hears of Jesus' miracles and sends some Jewish elders to see if Jesus will come to heal his servant. What is remarkable about this account isn't that Jesus heals the servant (we expect him to do that), it is the faith of the Roman Centurion. Unlike many of the Jews, who should have believed Jesus, this Roman

Centurion's faith in Jesus is so complete that he realizes that Jesus doesn't have to come in order for his servant to be healed. Jesus can just simply say the word and make it happen.

In the next verses, Luke describes Jesus bringing a young man back from the dead. This young man was the only son of a widow and his death would have left his mother destitute. With no son, and no husband there was no hope for her financially in that day and time. This widow is at the bottom of the rung of those who were powerful in the world Jesus lived in. She is the complete opposite of the Roman Centurion. Jesus' grace and mercy flow to all no matter what their station in society is.

### **Thursday, July 28 – Luke 7: 18- 50**

In today's reading Jesus and his actions are investigated by two completely opposite groups of people. First, John the Baptist, while he is in prison, sends some of his disciples to investigate if Jesus is really the Messiah. Jesus answers their question by listing all the things he has done. The miracles that Jesus did could only have been done by the messiah. After Jesus says these things to John the Baptist's disciples, he then explains to the crowd that John the Baptist was the greatest of all prophets, but even John the Baptist is not as great as the least of those in the Kingdom of Heaven. You see those who are in the Kingdom of Heaven have something that John the Baptist didn't have; they have Jesus. John the Baptist could only point people to Jesus, but those who trust Jesus as their savior have Jesus living in them. Jesus then goes on to tell a short parable to point out the hypocrisy of those who criticize both he and John the Baptist (verses 31-35).

Next, Luke records an account of Jesus meeting a Pharisee named Simon, who invites Jesus to his house for a meal. Simon's purpose in doing this is to investigate Jesus. As host of the party, Simon is scandalized when a sinful woman (a woman who clearly has a bad reputation in the town) comes and washes Jesus' feet with her tears, dries them with her hair, and then anoints Jesus' head with oil. These are all things Simon, the host of the party, should have done, but didn't do. Simon shows no love or hospitality to Jesus because he doesn't see his need for Jesus' love in his own life. On the other hand, the sinful woman can't help herself. She has to pour out her love for Jesus in a way that publicly humiliates her because she understands how great the love and mercy are that Jesus has shown to her. Jesus illustrates this very well with the parable he tells Simon in verses 41-43.

## **Friday, July 29 – Luke 8: 1 – 21**

This passage contains the parable of the sower. This parable was also recorded in Matthew 13. In this parable Jesus shows the things that keep people from receiving the Gospel into their lives: hard hearts, shallow hearts, and worried filled hearts. Jesus explains that only those who receive the Gospel and put it into practice, so that it bears fruit in their lives, are those who will receive the Kingdom of Heaven. In verse 21, Jesus once again emphasizes the importance of putting God's Word into practice in our lives. The only way we can be called his brother is if we put what he has taught us into practice in our own lives.

## **Saturday, July 30 – Luke 8: 22 – 39**

In these verses, Jesus shows his power against the power of nature and the power of Satan. With just the word of his mouth Jesus calms a storm and drives out demons that have possessed a man for years. Notice that the things that Jesus does actually cause fear in the lives of those who witness his power. First, his disciples tremble in fear as Jesus demonstrates his power over the forces of nature, and then the townspeople are so afraid of Jesus and his power that they ask Jesus to leave their town. But even as Jesus leaves town there is a faithful witness to the power of Jesus, it is the man who was once demon possessed. Notice that Jesus tells this man to go and tell the town how much God has done for him, but instead the man goes into town and tells everyone how much Jesus has done for him. In the mind of the man who was once demon possessed Jesus is God!

## **Sunday, July 31 – Luke 8: 40 – 56**

In today's reading, Jesus heals two people, one is a woman who was considered ceremonially unclean and an outcast because of continual bleeding, while the other was a symbol of Jewish religiosity—Jairus the ruler of the synagogue. Notice that even as the crowds push in on Jesus he is aware that this unclean woman has touched him and power has flowed from his life into her life. Jesus not only healed the woman's medical problem he made her clean as well. Notice in verse 48 that it was faith that made the woman well, and that it is also faith that raises Jairus' daughter back to life again. In verse 56, Jesus tells Jairus and his wife not to tell anyone what he has done. The reason for this is that Jairus is a very important and influential man and word of this miracle would have made many Jews want to take Jesus by force and make him their earthly king, which wasn't what Jesus came to be.