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Luke

Chapter 6 - An Uncommon Perspective

Mans: Thoughtless Negligence (vs. 1-6)

Luke 6:1-6: Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. But some of the Pharisees said, “Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” And Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?” And He was saying to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.

Scripture tells us that we misunderstand God. Surprised? 1 Corinthians 2 tells us, “Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, nor has it entered the heart of man the things of God.” That's telling us that through empirical reasoning, we cannot fathom God, we can't think like Him. We don't think like Him, as we've oftentimes said, quoting the wonderful text in Isaiah, “As high as the heavens are above the earth, His ways are higher than ours.” So, impossible. But as that passage goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 2, it says that we have the mind of Christ through the Spirit of Christ, and God implants within us His heart. That's a miraculous event. Jesus will call it being born again. There is something that happens that God does within us that changes us. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. We then begin to think differently, and we perceive things differently. As we've been going through the Gospel of Luke, what we have seen throughout the pages of the Gospel of Luke is that, wow, everything is different than we thought, and that's why if you look at your outline, we use words like,

“inconceivable, unusual, different, unorthodox, unconventional,” because it's not the way that we think.

As we come to this passage, we're going to be dealing with the uncommon, and it is our nature to think in terms of what we have to do. From time to time, I have people coming up, “Do I have to do this?” They’ll ask that question and I'll go, “Ok. So, we're not on the right level here. Because the “have to,” that's the Law, and that was never intended.” In fact, the whole purpose of the Law was literally to push us; as Galatians says, “The Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ.” And I think of the Law as this teacher with a big old stick chasing me, I had a few of those, and I'm running home to get away from him, and that's what the Law does. It chases you because what the Law does is it condemns you and you're in a realm in which you're thinking fundamentally, in terms of averting condemnation or judgment. You're trying to get away from it and you're always thinking, “Well, I did something else wrong. Now, I'm really going to be in trouble.” You always looking for the other shoe to drop or a lightning bolt to come out of the sky, and you live your life in that

realm, or maybe it's a set of scales that you think in terms of, "I've been pretty good, and if I can just balance that out..." From time to time, my mother says, "I just hope the Lord gives you what you deserve." I said, "Mom, I hope He doesn't. I don't want anything close to what I deserve." You realize that just the way that we think is distorted and twisted and it is about the Law.

When we looked at Chapter 5 in particular and Jesus talks about the fact that "You guys aren't thinking right." Because of course, they were thinking in terms of the Law, and they were saying to the disciples of Jesus, "You guys should be fasting like we fast." And of course, we know that as it goes on to say in the Gospel of Luke that the Pharisees would actually fast twice a week consistently, for the purpose of the ritualistic realm of it, as well as the legalistic thing of it. The perception is, "If I continue to do these things that somehow, it's going to bring me into quasi perfection that will be acceptable to God as long as I just kind of get into this realm of doing things." But the fact of the matter is that you're not even going to get close. As Scripture so aptly puts it, all of our

righteousness is like filthy rags, and it goes on to say all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So, give it up, because you're not going to make it through the Law. However, there's just something that keeps bringing us back to the Law.

There's a passage in the Book of Micah, and we oftentimes refer to it, Micah 6:7-8 in particular; the way that it's basically worded is, "What do you think God wants?" And then it goes on and says, "Do you think He wants 1,000 sacrifices or 10,000 gallons of oil? Do you think that's what He wants?" I mean, it uses hyperbole within the passage to give a point. He goes, fundamentally, "Or how about offering your first born for the sins that you committed? You think God wants you to do that?" He says, "Oh, man, God has told you what He wants." You go, "Well, I thought that's what He wanted. I thought He wanted me to give all this stuff and do all this stuff and do all these things." And he said, "Look, God has told you what He wants. He wants you to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." I mean, it's not a complicated thing. You could basically

fundamentally sum it up by saying He wants your heart to be in this. But it's not natural for our heart to be in it, and we think in terms of lists, and we think in terms of do's and don'ts and what we have to do. The wonderful thing about salvation is that He just literally eradicates all that.

In the text of Luke 5, Jesus turns to those that were saying, "You need to fast," and He goes, "You don't get it. We're celebrating." And if you think about it, the law focuses on averting condemnation and judgment. Grace literally celebrates the presence of Christ all the time.

That's a different way of thinking. Where most people are thinking, "Wow, I'm really in trouble now. Think of all the terrible things I did this week." A person that's walking in grace is going, "How wonderful it is, all the things that Christ has done for us." And you have that wonderful picture of the celebration of the bridegroom as He gives in Chapter 5, that it is a celebration that we should be walking in. Paul talks about this in many different ways.

Of course, you look in the Book of Hebrews and it says the great promise that we oftentimes grab hold of in Hebrews 13, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Now, Jesus

fundamentally was saying in Luke 5, “If I’m with you, there’s no reason to be upset. If I’m on your side,” Paul will put it this way in Romans 8, “If God is for you, who could be against you?” and he goes on to say, “And who could separate you from the love of God? What could separate you from the love of God?” Well, if the love of God is always with me, then why am I upset? Why am I fearful? Why am I in anxiety? Once you come to Christ, there’s no need for any of that, and let me just say this, there’s really no need for you to fast. Now, that doesn’t mean you can’t stop eating. If you want to stop eating, that’s fine with me, and I’m sure it’s probably good for some of us. It would be good for me, I know. The point is that the purpose of fasting was you were pouring ashes upon your head, and you were making yourself humble before God so that He would hear your prayer. But in Christ, He hears our prayer now, and we know that we come boldly before the throne of grace.

Paul will kind of work through this in many ways, but one of the statements that he makes in Philippians 1:19 is, “I

know that I will be delivered.” That doesn't sound like somebody that has to fast, does it?

He goes,

(Philippians 1:19) “for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

In other words, “God has already provided a way for me to be heard. It’s through the Spirit of Christ.”

So, Romans 8:37 will say, because of this, we're not just conquerors, we're overwhelmingly conquerors through all things, and it actually uses the phrase, “through Him who loved us,” and it is that great confidence that we walk in.

Philippians 4:4 reads, “You are to rejoice.” This doesn’t sound like fasting, does it?

“Rejoice in the Lord always...”

And that is kind of that new wine that Jesus begins to talk about in Luke 5, that “You guys are going so far off.” And of course, He'll say to Nicodemus, “You have to be born again. You're not even close” as he had been going and working so hard in the law and then not being able to find

that truth, that it literally is a totally different way of thinking.

Let me just show you an example of this as well in 2 Corinthians 1. Paul writes this wonderful epistle to the Corinthians to encourage them, and in many ways, you read the beginning of a particular epistle, and it'll give you a clue what the book is about in case you're ever confused.

(2 Corinthians 1:3) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.”

Ok. So, what do you think he's going to be talking about?

(2 Corinthians 1:4) “who comforts us in all our affliction...”

This is in case you didn't know, or you missed it in verse three.

“... who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

I don't know. Is there a word repeated there? So, what we know is he's talking about the great comfort that God

gives us. “Well, does that mean that I need to fast?” Why? Comfort comes from God, and comfort, He wants to give you generously. Now, then you have to ask yourself, “So, why do I have all these problems that I have to deal with?” I mean, you think about it, in many respects, we still have misery chasing us around and heartache and pains and suffering. “So, I need to fast to get out of that.” No, no, you don't need to fast.

In fact, one of the wonderful things these states in this, he says in verse 7,

(2 Corinthians 1:7) “and our hope for you is firmly grounded...”

And he's going to be repeating this throughout the Book of 2 Corinthians.

And he states in verse 8,

(2 Corinthians 1:8) “For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us...”

So, it's not like Paul never was afflicted, but why don't we ever see Paul fasting? Because he has the “bridegroom” with him. So, is he going to go through difficulty? Yes. Are

there going to be times that he feels miserable? Yes. But the answer is not fasting. Here's the answer. I want you to read it with me.

“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength...”

Ok. So, I can relate to that.

“... so that we despaired even of life;

(2 Corinthians 1:9) indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves...”

And here's the point,

“... so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

(2 Corinthians 1:10) who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us...”

Does that sound like somebody is praying for something to happen? No, no, it's going to happen, and he goes on and says,

“... He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us.”

There is a confidence that just can't wane, and then he goes on and says, "And you helped us by praying with us." So, it wasn't through me or Paul going through this sense of, "Woe is me. I'm going to get right with God and I'm going to fast until He hears my prayer." It's "I know He hears me." So, the question is, "So, why do I go through those difficult times of affliction, and why during those times of affliction am I suffering to the degree of having a sentence of death within myself?" Here's the point. You're not trusting in God. So, the fundamental point of the text is that our trials actually move us to real faith. Because up to that point, I mean, when you have the sentence of death within yourself, you're not really trusting.

I can say Paul wasn't really trusting to the degree that he needed to because his statement is in verse 9,

(2 Corinthians 1:9) "indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves..."

So, what was he fighting? He's fighting trusting in himself.

"... but in God who raises the dead."

When I come to the point of going, “God’s got this,” It's gone, everything is fine. But it's that wrestling time where I'm going, “What do I have to do? What do I have to do?” And unfortunately, I think a lot of people think, “Well, I'll fast and by virtue of the law, I'll get God's attention, or I'll be better because of this process.” And the answer is no, you won't. Your hope has to be completely on God. The wonderful thing of trials is it moves us to faith, and it does something else, if you look in verse 11,

(2 Corinthians 1:11) “you also joining in helping us through your prayers...”

It unites the body. So, you go through a trial, and you go to a brother, “Would you pray with me?” and your brother goes, “Yeah, I'll pray with you.” You feel united because you're on the same page and you feel like somebody actually cares; you feel the Spirit of Christ caring for you.

James will say this, “If you're going through trials, this is a time to celebrate.” Ok, that doesn’t sound like fasting. “Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces

endurance.” So, therefore, we consider trials a thing of joy because they move us away from things that can't save us, sometimes that's us, and it moves us toward the One who can raise from the dead. So, the purpose of these things is to bring us closer to God. But once again, we don't naturally see things this way.

Paul will state in 2 Corinthians 4 that we actually look at things which people can't see. That's where our focus is. People go, “Did you see that?” No, we didn't see that. We see what you can't see because we look at the invisible, and that is the hope of God, the firm foundation of God, the trust in God.

So, as we come to this passage and through the Gospel of Luke, it's very clear that we don't see things the way that God sees things, and we need to see things differently. It's one of the things that is repeated over and over again in all the Gospels, that word, “repent”. “Repent” means not only that you think differently, but it's also that you perceive things differently than you had been.

So, as we come to Luke 6, we realize that the Pharisees and scribes and the religious leaders; isn't it strange that

the religious leaders are the very ones that aren't seeing things at all? Jesus would say, "If you would admit that you are blind, I could help you see, but you won't even admit that you can't see it."

So, it reads this way,

(Luke 6:1) "Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath ..."

Your King James actually quotes that particular phrase in a different manner. It's a very unique and strange phrase, and I don't want to spend a lot of time on it, but I do want to mention it at least while we're here. The way that the King James translates that is, "on the second sabbath after the first." That's an interesting way of bringing it in and probably the text has a tendency more towards that translation than it would to the NAS in the passage. The NAS is conveying this as another Sabbath. By the way it's stating "a certain Sabbath" is telling us it's a different kind of Sabbath. Now, the reason I bring that up is that throughout the Gospel of Luke, God is having us think differently than we normally think. So, we're on a

particular day in which we normally wouldn't think of this necessarily being a Sabbath.

The context is, if you look at the passage that Jesus was passing through some of the grain fields,

“... and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands...”

It's actually barley. They wouldn't be doing that with wheat. So, they're rubbing them in their hands and they're eating at this time. This would have to be at a particular time of year for the barley harvest to come in, and that barley harvest would be the time in which would be around Passover. It would be at the early spring in which these would start, and apparently it hasn't been harvested yet. So, we're not actually in the feast, but it's still in the grain field. So, it's letting us know what time. I don't want to do too much speculation on this, but I just want to prove a point. If in fact we're around the time of early barley harvest, we would be around the time of Passover, which would be a celebration of the Jews.

Let me just show you something in Exodus 12. Once again, I don't want to spend a lot of time in this. But in

Exodus Chapter 12 we read about that special time of the Passover and it actually in the Jewish calendar became the first month of the year. So, April-May actually became the first month of the year or was intended all along to be the first month, which makes more sense. I mean, spring, newness of life, first of the year. That makes more sense than January when things are dead.

(Exodus 12:2) “This month...”

Coming out of Egypt and of course, Passover being the beginning of that feast.

“This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.”

Then He goes on and talks about the different days and the different days that you should be doing certain things on Passover. But He makes this interesting statement, once again, without me going to all the depths of this,

(Exodus 12:15) “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day...”

Of course, if you're gleaning from the fields, you're not eating leaven bread.

“... for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

(Exodus 12:16) ‘On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day...’

You know what you have there. Two sabbaths. One is on the first of the week, first day of the week, which is where we celebrate at this time Sunday, the first day of the week. We don't celebrate the Sabbath of the Jews, because we've entered into the Sabbath of God's rest through Jesus Christ, but we celebrate a new day or a new beginning, which is the first day of the week which was the Resurrection Day in which Jesus rose from the grave, and that's why we meet on Sunday. But both days were holy; in particular, at this time. So, what we have, and just to set the stage, is a day that may have been a little bit confusing to the disciples. Regular Sabbath, they're on it, and part of this is God's wanting us to think differently,

even about the whole Sabbath. Just a reminder, the name “sabbath” means to seven yourself or to make a commitment. So, when you have the word “commitment,” “*šabāt*” is to seven yourself; swear; make a promise. So, when you promise, and then “to rest” is the next word that is used, which literally points to cessation. So, you're promising to cease going your way, doing your work, doing your desires. You've made a promise. That's the sabbath. That's you making a promise to God. Well, on the Sabbath, God has ordained this for a purpose, but man just naturally sees it as something he's got to do. It's a regiment. It's something that he does to make himself a little bit holy and quite frankly, the law focuses on the details of ritualistic performance and seeks perfection through that which, once again, is an impossible event to take place. So, Scripture is letting us know there's a Sabbath that's involved. The disciples are working on the Sabbath. As Scripture says, you want to keep this day holy. You don't want to do any work at all. Of course, what it's talking about is you doing work that in some way aggrandizes yourself or brings a profit to yourself. This is a day which you cease from your ways

and cease and desire to glorify God. It doesn't mean that you just rest from all things. However, because they are legalists, what are they thinking in terms of? “Well, what we're going to do is we're going to focus on the details of this ritualistic performance and seek perfection through it.” So, that's what they do. If you were to go into the Jewish law, they have this thing called the “Avot”. The Avot is a list of rules that you have on the Sabbath that you can't do. So, they have 39 categories, and of these 39 categories, just to list some:

- 1) No cooking.
- 2) No riding.
- 3) No carrying stuff.
- 4) No burning, which even Orthodox Jews today, that would be burning a filament in your light bulb. So, you can't turn on your light.
- 5) No extinguishing. You can't extinguish anything. I guess if your house is on fire, too bad. It's a real problem.
- 6) Planting.
- 7) Reaping.

In this, what you have descending from the 39 principles is a plethora, innumerable details that go beyond your time and mine to investigate, but within this, fundamentally, where it says, “no reaping,” they have under the heading, which literally means no plucking, and the threshing, you can't thresh, which means no rubbing. Which both those things they were doing. So, they were going against the law, obvious within the passage.

It's interesting, there was an event that took place in 1492. I know what you're thinking, “Columbus sailed the ocean blue,” right? That wasn't the one I was thinking about. In 1492, in Spain, they expelled all the Jews from their country. They were forcing people to submit to the Catholic Church and so they literally had forced all the Jews out and would not let them in their cities. There was a particular event at that time in which the Jews tried to get in one of the cities, and I think it was city of Fez, and they literally blocked it; wouldn't let them get any food or eat there. So, they had to resort to eating the grass of the field. This is actually a recorded event. It was a day that was a Sabbath, and the Jews would not pull the grass up

but would get on their hands and knees and graze because the law said that they couldn't pluck or they couldn't thresh. It demonstrates just how intense this law was and how it had been ingrained in the minds of people.

We come to this passage,

(Luke 6:2) “But some of the Pharisees said, “Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

“Why are you plucking? Why are you doing these things?”

(Luke 6:3) “And Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read...”

What Jesus is saying by this particular statement is that “You guys are experts in all the law, and you don't get what it says.” And that, here again, is fundamentally the point. I mean, how many times have we read through Scripture, and it's given you the answer to things, but people are still walking up to me going, “Do I have to do this? Do I have to do that?” I'm going, “Haven't you read?” Why are you misunderstanding what God is saying? It's because our heart can't think in the terms of

joyful communion with God. Our hearts can only think in terms of, “We just don't want to get struck by lightning.” And that's the way we move in our lives. That's everything that we do, and we think in terms of the lists that are given to us rather than the heart of the law.

So, Jesus gives this wonderful example in the Old Testament, and if you pick up with me, it reads this way, “Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry...”

Now, David was one of the greatest characters to pull out because there's no way that a Pharisee, scribe, or Sadducee is going to tear down David. King David. He was the greatest and of course, we know David sinned in many ways. He was not a perfect guy. Nevertheless, they have him on a pedestal. They're not going to knock him down. So, Jesus picked a really good example to give, and the way that it reads is,

“... when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,

(Luke 6:4) how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?”

“Didn't you guys remember reading that?” “Well, yeah, but we try not to think too much about that.”

If you look with me in 1 Samuel 21, it's the very passage in which he was running from Saul. There are a lot of details that we could go into, and I don't want to go into all of them, but it's very interesting to me that he not only goes to the priest and gets the holy bread to eat, but he also lies to the priest. He says, “I'm here on a venture for Saul.” And he's running from Saul. So, he's lying and he's not really putting his trust in God. Nevertheless, he is the anointed king, and this is the point that Jesus is going to bring out. He's the anointed king. Now, as he comes to the priest, the priest is going to give him the bread and let me just remind you, not only this priest, but all 85 priests will be slaughtered because they did this. So, David is responsible for their lives in this. I won't go into the details of that, but Jesus is bringing this up for one reason,

and that is you have David going in to where the priests are in the temple and he's eating bread. Now, not just that he's eating the bread, because as you look in 1 Samuel 21:5, as David will answer the priest, the priest is a little shaky because he knows that Saul's not happy with David and wants to kill everybody anyway. So, the priest is going, "I don't know if I want to help you." And David goes, "You need to help me."

And David gives this as his reason,

(1 Samuel 21:5) "David answered the priest and said to him, 'Surely women have been kept from us as previously...'"

In other words, "We've not defiled ourselves in relationships if we're coming into the holy place."

"... when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey..."

In other words, "This is an unholy procedure. We understand that. But we are holy men because we're on a holy mission. I'm the anointed king." I'm just kind of telling you what he's saying here in the passage.

“... how much more then today will their vessels be holy?”

In other words, “Because we are holy, I am an anointed king, therefore, though this seems to be out of character for you to give us this holy bread, it's all wiped out because of who I am.” Basically what he's saying.

(1 Samuel 21:6) “So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away.”

And let me just say this, it's just a little cut, but I can't resist. No cooking on the Sabbath. Well, how could the bread be hot? They had to light a fire. So, somebody's not reading the law. But within the passage, what we know is, and here again, without going into all the details of this, in Leviticus 24, they would have this bread, the 12 cakes that they would have representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and it was an interesting picture of God communing with His people. But it was always to be changed every Sabbath. So, we know that this day is a Sabbath. How do we know that? They've just taken the bread off, and they

put the new bread on. So, it's the old bread that they give to him, but the fact that it is the day in which they're exchanging bread is telling us that David's doing this on the Sabbath. They're going to have a hard time answering that and there's only one reason why they would let it go, and that is David is God's anointed.

So, the ending result is, if you look at Luke 6:5,

“And He was saying to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.””

He was declaring to them what makes this legal is the Lord is present, and remember, it was the bread of the Presence, the face of the presence of God. As Paul will say, even the face of Christ, the presence of God is with you. So, God was there, and God was having fellowship with His 12, think about it, as they're in the field on the Sabbath, which is exactly what they should be doing.

What made the day holy? What made the day holy is the fact that Christ was present and it was because He was anointed that made everything right. The problem was is that they were so immersed in the law that they couldn't see the person of Christ, and it's one of the problems that

we oftentimes have. We get so much into Scripture, “Well, I can't do this. I can't do this. I can't do that.” And God goes, “Just look at Me. Everything is forgiven.” And look at the fellowship that you can have.

There are some great passages, but I just want to kind of show you how this works and how our tendency oftentimes misconstrues things. In the Gospel of Luke, in Chapter 10, you have some interesting examples, and we won't once again, read all of Luke 10. But if you look in verse 17 in particular,

(Luke 10:17) “The seventy...”

At this time, He had 70 disciples that He had sent out to do great work, and can you imagine they actually saw Satan falling? Christ says, “I saw Satan falling from the sky because of what you were doing.” What a magnificent thing. I mean, talk about a victory, right?

So, the way it reads is,

(Luke 10:17) “The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.””

(Luke 10:18) And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

(Luke 10:19) “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.””

You go, “Wow, that's something to celebrate.” Not only are we celebrating victory, but we're celebrating our great accomplishments, and that's what we should do, right? No.

(Luke 10:20) “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

Now, the point of the matter is that we're so impressed with our victories and accomplishments that we forget the source of the power, and the source of the power is God's mercy. What brings Satan down? The mercy of God. What do you think saved you? The mercy of God. We can get so immersed in pursuing certain things, and maybe even the impression that those things make that we're so focused on those things that we missed what the message is all about.

Same thing is true when you look in verse 25, where a certain lawyer comes to Jesus, and of course, he's coming for the purpose of tripping Him up, and the one question that he asked is,

(Luke 10:25) "... "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?""

Now, right away, he's off course, "What shall I do?"
Something that you have to do. So, Jesus plays along with it.

(Luke 10:26) "And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?""

And he goes, "Well," and he quotes out Deuteronomy 6, Leviticus 19. He quotes it perfectly.

(Luke 10:27) "And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

(Luke 10:28) And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.""

Yeah, that's the hard part. There are a lot of verses I can really quote well, but it's the doing that's the hard part. And he says in verse 29, I guess it got him thinking when Jesus goes, "Ok, you didn't need to do it." And he goes, "Ok, let me just make sure what we're talking about here. So, who is my neighbor?" It's very interesting that he actually feels like he's got the one beat, loving God with all his heart, because in a Jew's mind, especially in a lawyer's mind, one of the key things to loving God is condemning other people. He actually quotes the end of Psalm 139, which we like the beginning, but they love the end of Psalm 139 because it says, "I hate all those that do evil, and I just want to kill them." And they love that. So, to them that was loving God, going against people that were wicked. So, he goes, "I just want to make sure. Who do You perceive to be my neighbor or what does God perceive to be my neighbor?" And so, He tells the story. We're all familiar with the story of the good Samaritan, and I like the way that He starts off. Of course, we know that he's trying to justify himself because verse 29 says he's trying to justify himself.

(Luke 10:30) “Jesus replied and said, “A man ...”

Now, Jesus is going to use this phrase, “a certain man,” verse 33, “a certain Samaritan.” He doesn't want you to know specifics because all forms of human identity are a non-issue in this. The issue is the heart and the tendency of man to perceive, “I'm so concerned with looking superior and better than everybody else that I literally overlook my own depravity.” Scripture will talk about that. How I can so easily see a speck in somebody else's eye and miss the log that's in mine.

(Luke 10:29) “But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

(Luke 10:30) Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho ...”

Treacherous place to go; precipices; places where bandits would come off to the side and in the valley. It was a deep valley and a great gorge, and so it was really easy to attack people.

“... and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.”

I mean, talk about a bad day.

(Luke 10:31) “And by chance a priest...”

I like those words, “by chance”. So, it just happens that a certain priest comes by, and then he goes down. Of course, the Pharisees going to go, “I relate to this guy. I can relate to this guy.”

(Luke 10:31) “... a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”

Why? Because this is a despicable guy. He stinks. He is repulsive. “He's probably a Gentile anyway.” So, I'm sure there's all kinds of reasons, “I'm holy. I've got to be holy when I go into the temple.” All kinds of reasons why he would think this way.

(Luke 10:32) “Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”

(Luke 10:33) “But a Samaritan...”

Once again, Samaritans were about the worst people in the Jewish mind that you could relate to, and we know that it even infiltrated the disciples, because if you remember in Luke 9, they ask, “You want us to call on fire

and consume these Samaritans?" So, they even fell for that.

In fact, in John 8, the Jews were saying to Jesus, "You are a Samaritan and You are controlled by the devil." So, they would equate the two together. So, a Samaritan is not necessarily one of the best guys in the world.

(Luke 10:33) "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion."

The one thing that seems to be missing in the whole thing. Now, once again, "I'm so concerned with looking superior that I'm overlooking my own depravity." It's just the nature of man. "I've got laws, I've got a reputation, I've got things I have to protect." And God goes, "What about the weightier things, like mercy, justice, doing the right thing? What about those?"

"... he felt compassion,

(Luke 10:34) and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on

his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

(Luke 10:35) “On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’”

Now, let me just say this, from what we understand, historically in antiquity during the time of the Romans; it took 132nd of a denarii to take care of a night at a hotel. He gave him 2 denarii, not 132nd. 2 whole denarii. So, what we're seeing is a generosity that goes beyond, right? But not only this, but if you look at the passage, it says he took care of him all during the night. How do we know that? Because the next day he's giving the innkeeper more money. The next day. So, all during the night he was taking care of this stranger. Think about that. And then he states this, “And if you need more, you spend as much as you need, and I'll repay you every cent.” Now, what that's stating is this limitless lovingkindness and this is what Jesus is wanting to convey in the story. But the tendency is to think in terms of our own personal altruism, “We're a

pretty nice person. We're a benevolent person. We gave some money on the Internet to these poor people that need our help." Well, how often do you do that? Well, some of you do it every month. You can do it every month. Let me ask you something. Because you do it every month, did that mean that you loved him like yourself? Because I've got news for you. You get hungry every single day, and if it were you that you were taking care of, you would use limitless resources. If you ever needed more, you would get more. Jesus is conveying a message that we don't normally think about, that true mercy is not the way we think because we don't think right. We think in terms of, "We'll give a certain amount of money on a particular day. Wow, are we really nice people." And God goes, "You have no idea. You've not even come close to the commandment that I've given you." And this is one of the reasons why the commandment will never be fulfilled by virtue of you thinking through it, because you don't even think, you can't think compassionately.

Jesus ultimately goes,

(Luke 10:36) “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man...”

And he goes, “I'm going to have to go with the last guy. The guy that showed mercy.”

(Luke 10:37) “... Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”””

Something's got to change. I mean, a major event. Now, it's very interesting that this whole chapter ends with the story of Mary and Martha. The fundamental picture of this is that we're so busy serving, we forgot the person that we're serving. We're so busy serving; we've got things to do. I mean, you know yourself. We had family over and I told my wife, “I'm going to have a heart attack.” We had 12 in our household spend the night. I'm going, “I can't do this every day.” But you realize that after a while, you're just concentrating on the chores that you have to get done rather than the people that you're visiting with, but that's just our nature. It's because we think that way. Fundamentally, when you're looking at these passages, what He's saying is you don't see what

Scripture is actually saying because your heart can't see it. Which brings us to our fundamental point.

Scripture tells us in 1 John 1:9, if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive your sins; He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Now, what that passage is saying is He does it, He cleanses you. Are you faithful? You can't be faithful. You can't even think right. But He is faithful. He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Romans 6:23, I mean, how many times have we quoted that wonderful verse? 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.'

It's not only the fact that God is faithful. He's given us a gift, and He's given us power.

(Romans 1:16) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

It's the power of God that changes people. You can't see this. I can't see this. This is why the gospel is so important. I come across people all the time, "I'm working at it. I'm trying to do better." And they just keep falling back into

the same patterns. They keep going back to the same places, and the fundamental problem is that they've gone to the wrong power source, them. But you and I believe that when we come to Christ, He not only makes all things new, He changes my perspective, and I'm walking in victory. I'm not walking in defeat. I welcome the trials in the sense of God's making me stronger in this, and Paul will even say, "Look, if He takes my life, I'd rather go anyway; if He leaves me here, I've got a work to do." But we literally live in a no-lose situation if in fact we're walking by faith. We walk by faith, not by sight. It's a whole different way of thinking, and what Luke is trying to convey to us is you might be an expert on Scripture, but it doesn't mean you understand what it says.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask that You change our hearts. Only You can do this. We don't think straight. We think in terms of not only have to, but even when we think of doing nice things, we think of it in a

segmented way, or maybe at a convenient moment. It's certainly not Your heart. It's not a heart of compassion. It's not a heart of mercy. It's not the heart of God. Lord, I know that I'll never have that except by Your Spirit.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is to come to Christ and call upon Him to save you from your wicked ways, from the way you think, from the way that you perceive things; to call upon His name, He will answer you and He'll show you great and mighty things. God will hear; God will change.