

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 32: Luke 17:1-37

Before the offense came the command: “Love one another as I have loved you... By this all will know that you are My disciples” (John 13:34-35, NKJV). “[Bear] with one another, and [forgive] one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as [I] forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:13). And yet, “no duty required of men and women more grates upon flesh and blood than this of forgiving injuries, nothing that the most of people find harder to put in practice” (Poole).

How quickly we forget that Christ “has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (Psalm 103:10), but has suffered long and bore a life time of our injuries and offenses. His “love [has covered] a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

Christ has said that “It is impossible that no offenses should come” (Luke 17:1). It has also been said that if we have not compassion on our fellow-servant, even as the Lord has had pity on us, then we know nothing of Calvary love (Amy Carmichael).

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

Read Luke 17:1-4.

1. The word *offend*, or *skandalon*, means “to cause someone to sin, often with the idea of finality or falling away; conceived of as causing someone to stumble and fall”. How might one cause a fellow believer to sin? Read Matthew 16:23, Romans 14:13, 16:17, and 1 Corinthians 8:9.

Return to Luke 17:2. Why is the punishment equal to the offense? What can happen to the weak believer?

2. Jesus began His instruction by stating that “it is impossible that no offenses should come”. Why is this?

3. In 1 John 2:10, *skandalon* is further described as “the trigger of a trap on which the bait is placed, and which, when touched by the animal, springs and causes it to close causing entrapment... [It] always denotes an enticement to conduct which could ruin the person in question” (Strong’s Dictionary). It is “any cause that results in (or is intended for) a person sinning, whether by **preventing righteous action or by promoting sinful behavior**” (emphasis mine).

According to this passage (1 John 2:10), what is the antidote against causing others to stumble? (Also think on Matthew 22:37, 39 and 7:1-5.)

Read the parallel passage in Matthew 18:6-9. Figuratively, what measures are we to take so that we do not stumble others?

4. In verse 3 of Luke 17, Christ’s instruction shifts from offender to offended. How are we to approach our brother when he sins against us? Read Matthew 18:15.
5. Why is this our responsibility? Read Leviticus 19:17-18, Proverbs 10:12, 17:9-10, Galatians 6:1, and James 5:19-20.
6. Now turn to Ephesians 4:15. Why are we to speak the truth in love?

7. The statement, “I repent” (Luke 17:4) means, “to have a change of self (heart and mind) that abandons former dispositions and results in a new self, new behavior, and regret over former behavior and dispositions”. What attitude are we to maintain toward our brother in spite of his apparent lack of sincerity? Why?

Consider Matthew 18:21-35.

Continue reading in Luke 17, verses 5-6.

8. Why is great faith, or trust in God, needed to show love and genuine forgiveness toward such an individual?
9. How much faith is needed to accomplish the impossible? (v.6)
10. The Mulberry tree is a rapid growing, copious fruit producer. Its roots spread horizontally, remaining shallow. Similarly, what results in the life of one who refuses to obey Christ’s instruction regarding repeated offenders? (See Hebrews 12:14-15.)
11. If one has faith as a mustard seed, what will become of the tree and its roots? Compare this concept with Micah 7:19.
12. In whose ability are we to trust to accomplish this?

Read Luke 17:7-10.

13. What is required of a servant? Whose claims come before the servant's comfort? (vv.7-8)

14. Considering the preceding verses, what is our duty as Christians? (Also read Matthew 6:12, 14-15.)

15. Why do many seek acknowledgment and affirmation for simply doing what Christ requires? (vv.9-10)

Now read verses 11-19 of Luke 17.

16. What was required of the lepers to bring about the miracle? (v.14)

17. Many cry out to God for relief from their afflictions, but refuse to humble themselves when their desire is granted. (vv.15-16) Why?

18. What greater miracle did the nine forsake? (v.19)

Read Luke 17:20-37.

19. If the Pharisees did not believe Jesus was the Christ, why did they care to know when the kingdom would be established? (vv.20-21)

“Like many today, the Pharisees *said* they wanted the Kingdom of God to come; but you can’t want the Kingdom and reject the King. ‘The Pharisees asked Him when the Kingdom of God would appear, while it was right in their midst because the King Himself was there.’” (Morgan)

20. How does Satan take advantage of the believer’s craving for Christ’s return? (v.23; Matthew 24:23-27)

21. Describe the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5, 11) and the days of Lot (Genesis 13:13, 18:20) per verses 26-29 of Luke 17.

22. In what manner is the Son of Man revealed? (vv.27, 29)

23. Turn to Genesis 19 and read verses 1-29. Then, reread verses 31-33 of Luke 17. Why did Lot’s wife lose her life?

24. What does this disclose regarding the tolerance and acceptance of sin at the time of Christ's return?
25. Further, 2 Peter 2:7-8 tells us that Lot was tormented by the sinful practices of his neighbors, and yet, he lingered in the city (Genesis 19:15-16). What does this reveal about the potential effects of sin upon the godly?
26. In Genesis 19, a distinction is made between good and evil. A similar distinction is made in verses 34-36 of Luke 17. What insight do the accounts of Noah and Lot provide as to who will be left and who will be taken? (See 2 Peter 2:5-10.)
27. In light of this, what instructions are given in Matthew 24:42 and James 1:27b?