

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

Luke 6:20-42

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book): Year C - Epiphany 7 (Proper 3), Text: Luke 6:(20-26) 27-42
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary): Year C - Epiphany 7, Text: Luke 6:27-38

Editor's Note: *Epiphany 7 and 8 do not always come up in the three-year cycle, unless the date of Easter is very late. These are the equivalent of Propers 3 and 4.*

Commentary One (Luke 6:20-31)

Luke 6:20–31 consists of a discourse in which Jesus teaches His disciples how to reflect His mind and manner in their relationships with humanity at large. Luke's Sermon on the Plain is much shorter than the Sermon on the Mount; it consists of only 30–32 verses. Verse 20 refers to Jesus speaking — not preaching.

In the section under review, Jesus focuses on how the poor and lowly are received into God's Kingdom. True righteousness demonstrates itself in true love, in serving the needs of others with concern and compassion.

Verses 6:20–21: While Matthew casts the Sermon on the Mount in the third person and qualifies the statements, “poor in spirit, hungering for justice,” Luke portrays Jesus as addressing Himself directly to “you poor” who are following Him. In the four Beatitudes and the four Woes of the third Gospel, Jesus most likely addressed those who actually were poor, hungry, and weeping. Luke sees the hopes expressed in Isaiah 61:1 and Psalm 39 fulfilled in Jesus.

Verses 6:22–23: Luke devotes more space than does Matthew to the persecution that eventually overtook Jesus' followers. He adds that “people will hate you, exclude you, revile you, and defame you.” In their suffering, Jesus' followers experienced a special relationship with Jesus as “the Son of Man” — a title that Jesus uses in each of the three passion predictions that Jesus offers in each of the four Gospels. The term is derived from Daniel 7:13. The message is: “Those who walk in step with Jesus, but out of step with the world and its systems, can expect to pay a price.”

In the Old Testament narrative, the message of the prophets was anything but popular. They too paid a price for proclaiming the word of God with boldness! After all, who wants to be told that we mere humans

own nothing. Who wants to be told that being blessed has nothing to do with what we (supposedly) possess and enjoy? It has to do only with the degree to which we reflect the mind and manner of Servant-Messiah Jesus in all that we think, say, and do.

Verses 6:24–26: This section consists of a series of woes that are cast on those who live to amass wealth, on those whose constant desire is to be well-fed, on those who love nothing more than to possess and use “earthly toys,” on those who seek the acclaim and applause of those among whom they live. However, the basis on which Jesus applauds His followers is altogether different from that on which human applause is based.

Verses 6:27–28: No matter how badly others might want to treat us, we are to respond to them as Jesus would have responded to them. Although we are not called to endorse their manner of behavior, we are to try to win them for membership in Jesus' back-to-front, upside-down servant Kingdom.

Verse 6:29: If someone strikes us on the right cheek (with the back of their right hand), we are to offer that one the opportunity to strike us on the left cheek (with the palm of their right hand). Furthermore, if someone wishes to take our outer coat, we are to offer that one also our inner shirt. After all, true wealth has nothing to do with what we use to cover our body. It has only to do with the faith that fills our heart and directs our life.

Verse 6:30: Jesus' followers are to respond to the pleas of those who beg, and if someone sees fit to steal something from us, we are to let things be and not seek the return of that which has been taken from us.

Verse 6:31: We are not to treat others as they treat us or respond tit-for-tat. We are to treat others as we would like to have them treat us. The model for our behavior pattern is the lifestyle of Him who dwells beside and within us. The Servant-King Jesus is God's

true wisdom, the One who is greater (by far!) than Solomon ever was (see Matthew 12:42).

Verses 6:32-38: It is easy to love our neighbors when we are generally on good terms with them; it is much harder to show love to those who oppose us (i.e. our enemies). “Even sinners love those who love them,” Jesus says. The calling of a disciple of Jesus is more than that. Our Servant King showed his love for us “while we were still enemies” (Romans 5:10). In taking up our own cross in loving service, we are called to do the same.

Verses 6:39-42: In this section, Jesus speaks about the odd situation of a blind man leading another blind man. Since neither man can see, Jesus says that both men will fall into a pit. However, this is just the set up.

Jesus goes on to say that a disciple is not above his master but will be like his master when he is fully trained. Hence, someone submitting to a “blind” master will become “blind” just like his master and will fall into a pit. A master should remove the log from his own eye so that he can see clearly to remove the speck from his disciple’s eye. Otherwise, the master may blind his disciple through false teaching and both will fall into a pit.

This section therefore tells us that masters and disciples must both avail themselves of the means of grace. Otherwise, both will become blind. As a result, blind disciples will submit themselves to blind masters, and both will fall into a pit.