

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 6: 6-16**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 6 and today we will read verses 6 to 16.

Luke 6:1–5 speaks of the scribes and the Pharisees challenging Jesus concerning the Sabbath, because His disciples were passing through the grainfields and plucking heads of grain to eat. These people seemed to be following Jesus continually, with the sole purpose of finding something they could use against Him.

**Verse 6: “Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered.”**

The earlier account takes place in the grainfields, but here the narrative returns to a Jewish synagogue. The Lord Jesus' primary ministry on earth was preaching, so on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue to teach. At that time, there happened to be a man in the synagogue whose right hand was withered.

**Verse 7: “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.”**

Because, in the Pharisees' regulations about not working on the Sabbath, they had defined what counted as “work.” They regarded healing on the Sabbath as work, and therefore, on the Sabbath, unless it was a life-threatening illness, healing was not permitted. Now when they saw Jesus come into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and saw that in this synagogue there happened to be a man whose right hand was withered, they must have been very pleased. They had caught their opportunity and were ready to watch Jesus closely, looking for something against Him.

**Verse 8: “But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Arise and stand here.’ And he arose and stood.”**

They were secretly watching Jesus, trying to catch Him doing something wrong; but Jesus, on the other hand, openly and boldly faced the challenge of the scribes and the Pharisees head-on.

**Verse 9: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?’”**

Jesus’ statement here is very striking and very weighty. When a person has a withered hand, helping him is doing good; being able to help but refusing to do so is doing evil. Being able to save a life and doing so is called saving life; being able to save it but refusing to do so is called destroying life. This way of thinking is quite different from our usual concepts.

In the previous verses (1–5), we are told that God values life; therefore, when you are hungry, you may pluck heads of grain and eat. By the same principle, this passage also tells us that God values life and cherishes life. Moreover, He pushes the moral law even further forward—not only that the regulations of the Sabbath no longer bind in this way, because the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath—but even more: if you are able to help and you do not help, you are doing evil; if you are able to save life and you do not save it, you are destroying life.

As Jesus Himself said to them on that Sabbath: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?’”

**Verse 10: “And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.”**

Jesus not only was unafraid of their spying, but instead openly and boldly performed a miracle right in front of them, directly bearing witness to them that God is a God who cherishes life and a God who honors and values life.

**Verse 11: “But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”**

Here, we must have a deep understanding that God has always respected life, and God has always cherished life. Whenever any regulation or ritualistic law comes into conflict with life, God always chooses life. The principle of Jesus’ earthly ministry was consistently to walk on the path of life.

Then, from verses 12 to 16, the passage records the way Jesus carried out His earthly ministry. Jesus knew that His purpose in coming to the earth was to walk the road of the cross for the sins of all people. When He completed His earthly ministry, the work of salvation would have to continue; therefore, He needed a group of disciples who had been trained by Him and who would be able to carry on His work.

The way Jesus chose His disciples is, in fact, one of the best blueprints for how the church should function today. How the church ought to be organized, who should take responsibility, and how people should be raised up—Jesus gives us a very good example here.

**Verse 12: “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”**

This was absolutely not something to be taken lightly. This group of people had been following Jesus for some time, and at that moment there were likely more than just these few around Him—many disciples were following Jesus. Among all these people, who would be able to bear responsibility? Today we might look at academic background, talents, or abilities, but Jesus’ considerations were

completely different. He went up on the mountain, withdrew from the crowds, and was alone by Himself, praying to God all night. In that process, He may have gone over each one individually, engaging in repeated fellowship and communication with the Father, until He was fully certain.

**Verse 13: “And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:”**

At that time, there should have been a group of people following Him. In front of them all, according to the result of His prayer, He chose twelve men and named them apostles; an apostle is one who is sent out. This group of people was to carry on the work of Jesus Christ on the earth and was to be sent out by Him.

**Verse 14-16: “Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.”**

They were sent out two by two, forming a total of six pairs. Among these men, the ones we are most familiar with are Peter, Andrew, John, and James. Many of the others have names that feel a bit unfamiliar or awkward to pronounce. The list of these twelve apostles appears a total of four times in Scripture: in Luke chapter 6, Matthew chapter 10, Mark chapter 3, and Acts chapter 1. If you carefully compare these lists, you will notice that although the order sometimes changes, Peter is always listed first, Philip is always listed fifth, and James the son of Alphaeus is always listed ninth. In this way, we can roughly divide them into three groups, with four people in each group.

The first group consists of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They were all fishermen. According to the record in the Gospel of John, Andrew and John first followed John the Baptist. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ, he declared in John 1:29

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” As a result, Andrew and John followed Jesus. They then brought their own brothers—Peter and James—to Jesus. So this entire group were fishermen, and they were introduced to Jesus through the testimony of John the Baptist.

This group is also the one we are most familiar with. Peter, in particular, is very active in the Gospels and in the book of Acts. God used him to open the door of the gospel—first in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, and finally in the house of Cornelius, opening the door to the Gentiles. John, on the other hand, lived the longest among all the apostles. After all the other apostles had been martyred, he lived for nearly another thirty years. In his nineties, he wrote the Gospel of John, the First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation. Through him, God completed His revelation, concluded the New Testament, and ultimately concluded the entire Bible. These men were originally fishermen, with little education and no advanced training, yet in God’s hands they became powerful apostles who pioneered and expanded the kingdom of God.

The second group consists of Philip, Bartholomew (who is Nathanael mentioned in John chapter 1), Matthew, and Thomas. This group was directly called by Jesus Himself. John chapter 1 records that Jesus called Philip, and Philip then brought his friend Nathanael, also known as Bartholomew, to Jesus. Matthew, meanwhile, was sitting at the tax office counting money when Jesus personally called him. Thus, all four in this group were personally called by Jesus.

The final group consists of James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James (called Thaddaeus in other accounts), and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. This group seems to have been very politically minded. They could be considered nationalists or patriots of Israel at that time, longing for the Messiah to come and establish an earthly kingdom for Israel. Their motivation for following Jesus may have been mixed, as they hoped He would set up a political kingdom on earth.

Do not look down on these men simply because their backgrounds were not noble. After several years of training in the hands of Jesus, each of them became a great

worker in the expansion of God's kingdom, and every one of them was martyred—except Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. I am somewhat convinced that during that night when Jesus prayed all night to God, a long portion of that prayer may have been spent concerning Judas Iscariot. Jesus likely knew from the beginning that this man would betray Him. In the Gospel of John, Judas is even called the son of perdition and identified with the devil. Why would God place someone who did not belong to His kingdom beside Jesus? And yet Jesus repeatedly tried to help him. Knowing that Judas loved money and stole from the money box, Jesus still entrusted him with the responsibility of keeping the funds. In the end, however, Judas still did what he chose to do and betrayed Jesus.

Jesus began to carry out His earthly ministry, including the choosing of those who would continue His work on earth. All of this was done through prayer to the Father and in submission to the Father's will. This gives us a very important lesson. Today, as we learn to serve in the church, God, in His sovereign authority, arranges different brothers and sisters around us to serve together. Some people fit our preferences, while others may not; some may even bring disturbances or difficulties into our service. Let us learn from the example of Jesus. Whoever God places together with us is always what is best for us. When we lay down our personal choices and preferences, we will eventually see that the saints God places around us are the very means He uses to help our lives grow.

Let us pray together: Lord, You truly are our best example. Just as You used Your own life to serve those around You, and just as You submitted to the Father's arrangement in choosing the apostles who were with You, help us also to submit to all Your arrangements in the church. Teach us to treasure every coworker and every saint around us, knowing that Your arrangements are never wrong and are always the best for the growth of our lives. Grant me such a kingdom perspective and such a submissive heart. Bless my life and my service in the church. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!