

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Luke 6¹² – 6⁴⁹
Work Book

Hearing the Word Luke 6:12 – 6:49 Leader's Guide

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Nigel Barge, December 2011

Scripture Quotations taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP
www.blueletterbible.org

Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



LOOK – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
 - a) What questions does it raise -
Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
 - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
 - a) the surrounding text
 - b) the Book of the Bible
 - c) the whole Bible
 - d) the place in the Bible Story



LEARN – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



LIVE – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace*
 - c) Jesus / his salvation**
- 2) What should I do?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27)

Reading Narrative

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. Exodus is mainly narrative (story), the most common type. To approach narrative correctly we need to keep in mind the following principles.

1 In General: It is *God's* story

The whole Bible recounts the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and the fall in Genesis, the rest describes how God works out his unfolding plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus. The OT prepares for the arrival, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The NT recounts these and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about Jesus. Therefore:

a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

So as we read, we should be asking – 'what does this show about Jesus; what is He doing?'

b) Everything is relevant.

In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often we are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read Bible narrative – knowing how it ends – we should be asking 'what relevance has *this* part of the story to the *main* story?'

2 In particular: 'Follow the camera angle'

A film director focuses the viewer's attention on particular shots to tell 'his story'. In the same way each narrator in the Bible is selective about what to tell us. They leave out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what they are trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question, 'Why is he telling me this and in this particular way?'

3 Warts and all

Human beings often get things wrong. The Bible narrative faithfully records errors, even by people who are elsewhere commended. For instance, Moses murdered a man, King David committed adultery, and Peter, who was praised for realising Jesus was the Christ, was minutes later roundly scolded when he tried to stop Jesus being the Christ through suffering! (Exodus 2:12; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 16:16-23)

So we can't treat every thought or action in a narrative as something to copy, just because 'it's in the Bible'. We must ask the Holy Spirit to use the rest of Scripture to discern good examples to follow, and bad ones to avoid.

Background to Luke's Gospel

The Author

Luke was a doctor and friend of the apostle Paul, who calls him 'the beloved physician' and 'fellow worker' (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24). He began to travel with Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10). He was close to Paul near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11).

He may have come from Antioch in Syria, or Troas, or Philippi in Macedonia. He was a Gentile (i.e. not a Jew). Indeed he is the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament.

He had carried out careful research (see Luke 1:3, 2:51). He also wrote the story of the early church in the 5th book of the New Testament, whose full title is: 'The Acts of the Apostles'. It takes us up to Paul's imprisonment in Rome but not his trial, suggesting Luke finished writing it before that event.

The Date of writing

Luke wrote his gospel before he wrote Acts (see Acts 1:1), probably before 63AD.

The structure

A	The introduction	(1: 1 - 4)
B	The birth of Jesus	(1:5 - 2:52)
C	The start of Jesus' ministry	(3:1 - 4:13)
D	Jesus in Galilee	(4:14 - 9:50)
E	From Galilee to Jerusalem	(9:51 - 19:44)
F	Jesus in Jerusalem	(19:45 - 21:38)
G	The death of Jesus	(22:1 - 23:56)
H	The resurrection of Jesus	(24:1 - 53)

Its purpose

Matthew and Mark probably wrote their gospels before Luke. Unlike them Luke had not himself witnessed Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, but he had personal contact with many eyewitnesses who had. He addresses both his Gospel and Acts to someone called Theophilus. This may have been a real individual: could he have been an official in Roman government?... Someone who wanted details of Christianity before Paul's trial in Rome?... Someone who paid Luke's expenses while writing? Actually, the name means, 'friend of God', so it might refer to anyone, in any time or place, who *wanted to know the Gospel and be a friend of God*.

The Themes

Five themes keep re-occurring in Luke's Gospel:

1 Salvation

a) a historical event

Jesus Christ's coming to earth as a man is the centre point of history. Luke points out the exact time and situation of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2). Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem (9:51) where he completes his work, commits his Spirit to the Father, and dies (23:46). On the third day he rises from death. Forty days later, having promised to return, he ascends to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Meantime, the Good News of this salvation is offered to all by the power of the Spirit (Acts 2:38,39).

b) for all mankind

From the announcement by the angels of 'good news ... for all people' (2:10) to the genealogy of Jesus stretching back to Adam (3:38), it is clear the non-Jews are included too. This does not deny the importance of Israel. Luke begins and ends his Gospel with people in Jerusalem and shows it to be the ultimate destination of Jesus' earthly ministry (1:8; 2:22, 36; 9:51-53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28).

2 The 'outsiders'

Luke shows that people seen as 'weak' are equally welcome in the Kingdom of God, by recording Jesus' interaction with them. This includes:

a) Women

Women are central to the story. At the beginning, the angelic announcement of His birth was to Mary (1:26-38) and at end, the truth of His resurrection was given first to the women at the tomb (24:1-11). He ministered to women in various settings (7:11; 7:37; 13:11; 21:1-4) and it was women who helped finance Him and His apostles (8:2-3).

b) Children

The accounts of Jesus' birth show the importance and value of a child from the womb (1:41!). At various times he intervenes to heal the child of a distraught parent (7:12; 8:42; 9:38)

c) The poor

Jesus himself was from Nazareth (4:16) – a poor, insignificant town (John 1:46). His birth was to an unmarried girl and witnessed by the 'outcasts' of society, the shepherds (2:8-20). The offering at His birth was that of the poor (2:24; Leviticus 12:8) and the message he preached was for the poor (4:18; 7:22). He died with common criminals (23:32,41).

d) Gentiles

Luke's Gospel is known as the non-Jewish (Gentile) Gospel. Luke, himself a Gentile, is writing to another Gentile, Theophilus (1:3). He records the faith of

a Gentile Roman Centurion: Jesus says he had ‘not found such great faith in Israel’ (7:9). Possibly out of deference to his non-Jewish readership, Luke seldom quotes the Old Testament.

3 The Holy Spirit

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is explicit throughout the Gospel, in:

a) the birth of John the Baptist (1:15,41,57) **b)** the conception of Jesus (1:35)
c) Simeon’s prophecy about Jesus (2:25-27) **d)** John’s promise that Jesus would ‘baptise with the Holy Spirit’ (3:16) **e)** the baptism of Jesus (3:22)
f) the temptations of Jesus (4:1) **g)** the power of Jesus’ ministry (4:18)
h) the joy of the Spirit (10:21) **i)** the promise of the Spirit for His followers (11:13; 12:10-12; 24:49), fulfilled at Pentecost, as Luke records in Acts 2.

4 The humanity of Jesus

There is no clearer way of demonstrating Jesus’ humanity than noting his recourse to prayer. Through this he shows:

- a) his own dependence on the Father through prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46).
- b) his identification with his disciples, as He similarly instructs them in prayer through
 - i) parables - the friend at midnight (11:5-13) the unjust judge (18:1-8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:10-14)
 - ii) teaching on prayer (6:28; 11:2; 22:40, 46)

5 The deity of Jesus

Luke presents Jesus as God in an *oblique* way. (This fact was not acknowledged during his time on earth). This is the key theme of the first 5 chapters:

1:17 John prepares for the Lord
1:32 called Son of the Most High
1:43 Mary mother of ‘my Lord’
2:11 Saviour who is Christ the Lord
2:49 in ‘His Father’s house’
3:22 God says ‘you are my Son’;
4:34 The Holy one of God

4:41 the Son of God
5:8 the Holy presence
5:13 able to cleanse an individual
5:20 a forgiver of sin
5:32 (righteous one) calling sinners to repentance
5:34 the bridegroom

Study 1

Luke 6:12-16

Part of the ‘motley crew’?!

Background information and Word List

In the preceding chapter Luke has shown how the Jewish religious leaders and many ordinary people rejected Jesus and his claim to be the Messiah (literally, the promised one ‘anointed’ by God as King). After a night spent alone in prayer, Jesus chose twelve particular followers.

- 13 *disciples* learners, followers
apostles people with a special charge and authority from Jesus Greek *apostolos* = one who is sent out
- 14 *Peter* Greek *Petros*, the extra name Jesus gave to Simon, *Petra* means *rock*, so *petros* is a *piece* of rock, i.e. *a stone*
- 15 *Bartholomew* literally, *son of Tholomai* of our surnames *MacDonald*, *Donaldson*. This friend of Philip (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:13; Acts 1:13) is called *Nathanael*, a given name, in John 1:45; 21:2.
- Matthew* sometimes called Levi (see 5:27; Matthew 10:9)
- 16 *Zealot* Zealots were a radical group violently opposed to Rome. This description, however, may mean only that he was characterised by fiery zeal.
- Judas, son of James* also known as Thaddaeus (see Mark 3:18)
- Iscaiot* possibly ‘man of Kerioth’ (a town in Judea) (see John 6:71; 13:26). He was the only disciple not from Galilee - (Jesus, from Nazareth, was of the tribe of Judah (2:4; Mt.1:3,6).

Bible Connections

- 12 *prayer* Luke often draws attention to importance of prayer for Jesus e.g. 5:16; 9:18,28; 11:1.
see also Mark 1:35; 6:46 Matthew 14:23
- 13 *choosing the Twelve* see also Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19
- 14 *Simon Peter* When Jesus first met him (John 1:42) he named him *Kepha*, Aramaic for ‘rock, stone’. That appears in Greek letters as *Cephas*, used in 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5 and Gal 2:9. Translated into Greek, *Cephas* is *Petros*, not previously used as a man’s name. It is written in English as *Peter*.

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace?

c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 2

Luke 6:17-26

Enjoy God's 'upside down' Kingdom

Background information

6:20-49 is sometimes known as the 'Sermon on the Plain' (or level place) as distinct from 'the Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew 5 - 7. Some think one sermon lies behind both accounts, but there are many differences between them: Luke's is just 29 verses long, where Matthew takes three chapters. Or maybe Jesus said similar things more than once.

The 'blessings and woes' make a mockery of the world's values. They praise what the world despises and reject what the world admires.

Word List

17	<i>level place</i>	perhaps somewhere on the mountain side
	<i>Judea</i>	area about 80 miles S of Galilee, around Jerusalem
	<i>Jerusalem</i>	capital of Judea, site of the Temple
	<i>Tyre and Sidon</i>	coastal area 40 - 60 miles N.W of Galilee. Historic sea ports founded c 2,500 yrs before this event.
18	<i>evil</i>	Greek word is 'unclean'. <i>see</i> 4:33
20-22	<i>blessed</i>	happy / fulfilled
22	<i>Son of Man</i>	A title Jesus uses of himself - stresses his humanity yet hints at his being divine. (cf Daniel 7:13,14)
23-26	<i>woe</i>	'alas' or 'how terrible'; expression of regret and compassion, not a threat.
23	<i>prophets</i>	people called by God to speak on his behalf, here referring to the Old Testament prophets

Bible Connections

18	<i>curing those with evil spirits</i>	<i>see also</i> 4:33
19	<i>power coming from Him</i>	<i>see</i> 5:17; Matthew 9:20; (c.f. Mark 6:5)
20-22	<i>beatitudes</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 5:3-12
21	<i>hunger</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 55:1-2
	<i>weep...laugh</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 61:2-3
22	<i>exclude/insult</i>	<i>see</i> John 9:22; 15:18-21; 16:2; Isaiah 51:7
24	<i>rich/comfort</i>	<i>see</i> James 5:1-6; Luke 16:25
25	<i>well fed/hungry</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 65:13
	<i>laugh/weep</i>	<i>see</i> Proverbs 14:13
26	<i>false prophets</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 7:15

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace?

c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Be gracious like God

Background information

The heart of this sermon is the need for love. In New Testament Greek there are four nouns translated in English as 'love'. Jesus is speaking of *agape** love, not *eros* (romantic love), *storge** (natural affection) or *philia* (friendship). He means love for even the unlovely i.e. love that arises because the 'lover' is loving, and chooses to love.

v31 is often referred to as the 'Golden Rule'. It appears in some earlier cultures, but only in the negative form (*Do **not** do to others what you do **not** want them to do to you*). Jesus seems to be the first to have given it in the positive form. *See also* Matthew 7:12.

Word List

- 29 *Cloak / tunic* outer / inner garment
- 30 *give* continuous tense i.e. habitual attitude
- 32 'sinners' The unreligious (like tax collectors) were not allowed into the Temple; so could not offer sacrifices.
- 35 *without expecting to get anything back* A better translation of the Greek is 'never despairing'.
- sons* our relationship with God the Father *see* Rom 8:14-16
- Most High* a title for God *see* e.g. Daniel 7:18. It stresses the absolute nature of His authority c.f. Genesis 14:18-22.
- Ungrateful* lit, *acharistous* means 'without grace' (*charis* meaning grace).

Bible Connections

- 27 *love* Examples of *agape* love: Jesus praying for those who nailed Him to the cross: Luke 23:34
c.f. The first Christian martyr, Stephen: Acts 7:60.
God's love for sinners: Romans 5:6,8,10
1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 4:19
- do good* Jesus 'went about doing good' himself *see* Acts 10:38
- 27-35 *see also* Matthew 5:38-48 and Romans 12:9-21
- 30 *give . . .* *see also* Luke 6:38; 21:1-4; Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11;
- 32 *credit* Charis (greek) - grace (lit. means 'what to you grace is there')

*pronounced a-ga-pay, stor-gay

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2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Do unto others as God has done to you!

Background information

In this section Jesus applies some of what he has said already.

It is possible to group v 36 with the preceding verses, as the New International Version does; but if seen as an introduction to vv 37-42, it sets the tone of leadership under God, as disciples express to others the mercy they themselves receive from God.

Our approach to judging our fellows is a consequence of the way God has treated us – ungrateful and wicked as we are (35).

A forgiving spirit is a sign of being forgiven!

Word List

- 38 *lap* Greek *kolpon* refers to the fold in outer garment made as it hung over the girdle; it was used as a kind of pocket.
- 40 *above his teacher* At this period, a learner's only source of information was his teacher.

Bible Connections

- 36 *mercy* see Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:3
- 37 *do not judge* see also Matthew 7:1-5; 18:21 -35, James 2:13; but compare Galatians 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13; 1 John 4:1-3
- 38 *give* Elijah and the widow 1 Kings 17:1-16

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 5

Luke 6:43-45

Watch your mouth!

Background information

Jesus uses another metaphor, one from the countryside, familiar to all his listeners. A man's deeds show what is in his heart.

Word List

45 *the heart*

Jews reckoned the *heart* as the place of thinking and the *gut* as the place of emotions. Modern English would say we *think* with our *minds* and *feel* with our *heart*.

evil

A strong word associated with the devil, to include evil spirits (Luke 7:21) and the evil one (Matt.5:37)

Bible Connections

See also Matthew 7:16,18,20

43 *good and bad fruit*

see Matthew 12:33-37; Mark 7:20-23

fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:19-24

45 *the reason for what we say*

see Proverbs 4:23-24; James 1:14-15,26

the tongue

James 3:3-12

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c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Put your mouth where your money is!

Background information

Jesus tells the disciples a story to illustrate the importance of acting on the teaching they have received.

In the Middle East, rain is sporadic. For much of the time, the intense sun leaves the ground baked hard. So when rain does come, much of it quickly runs off, combining into streams that can suddenly turn into torrents powerful enough to wash away everything before them.

(The route such water carves out for itself is called a *wadi*, which looks like a river bed, but is dried up most of the time since it does not come from a spring. E.g. look up images of ‘Wadi Qelt’ on-line, to see a steep gorge made by a wadi’s erosive power. The road going East from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30) runs beside it.)

Word List

46 *Lord* To call someone ‘Lord’ is to admit we owe allegiance to that person.

Bible Connections

46-49 Parallel in Matthew 7:24-27

46 *honouring God* *see also* Malachi 1:6

47 *hearing and doing* *see also* James 1:22-25; Luke 11:28

48 *founded on rock* *see* 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:19-22; Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:4-8

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Sharing the Word

Use

Hearing the Word can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. *

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

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Luke 6 WB