

**Luke 6:40-45**  
**February 3, 2019**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

I am so aware that we are going through two verses or so a week that I want to make sure we haven't lost the big picture of what's going on. Jesus is teaching his twelve disciples. He's preparing them to be spiritual leaders because He knows He is facing the cross and will ascend into Heaven. He's pouring into His disciples on different topics.

Last week, we ended our study in v.39 in which Jesus introduces a new topic. He presented a parable that raised the question, "Can a blind man lead a blind man? This parable is the first of four key teachings in this section of verses that teach us some important lessons about ministry. As a quick refresher, our takeaway from this parable, as His disciples, is that we must be sure that we see clearly enough to guide others in their spiritual walk. While there are blind people who develop a keen sense of direction, it is not likely any of them will be hired as airplane pilots or wilderness guides. Jesus was referring primarily to the Pharisees who were leading the people astray (Matt. 15:14; 23:16). If we see ourselves as excellent guides, but do not realize our blindness, we will only lead people into the ditch (Rom. 2:17-22).

**Transition:** Today we will pick up where we left off. Let's read v.40-42 and learn three more important lessons about ministry. Let's begin.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

V.40:

- A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

V.41:

- "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

V.42:

- How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.40: What is the principle teaching in this verse? [If the teacher teaches error, so will the students. The student is inevitably limited by the limitations of their teacher.]

**Observation:** Jesus reminds us that we cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves, nor can we be all that our Master is. In fact, the more we strive to be like Him, the more we realize how far short we fall. This is a warning against pride, for nothing blinds a person like pride. The best example to follow is the life and conduct of Jesus. If we spend time with Him in the Word, especially the Gospels, we will become like Him with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Q: What's the value of being "fully trained?" [The student is thoroughly prepared and equipped, to be fully qualified or made fully adequate. In ancient Judaism, the purpose of a disciple's training was to make him a competent teacher, or rabbi, in his own right. By definition, a disciple did not have more knowledge about the law than his teacher.]

Q V.41-42: Jesus continues the image of "the eye" as He prepares His disciples for ministry. What's His concern? [That we must be able to see clearly enough to help our brother see better. It certainly is not wrong to help a brother get a painful speck of dirt out of his eye, *provided we can see what we are doing*. One who is unable to see his or her own imperfections while seeing so vividly the imperfections of others is clearly a hypocrite. The emphasis here is on being honest with ourselves and not becoming hypocrites.]

**[Read Luke 6:43-49]**

V.43:

- "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

V.44:

- Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars.

V.45:

- The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.43: Luke included two additional sets of teachings at this point involving being known by one's fruit. What is the first teaching? [No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.]

Definitions: Let's get clear on the meaning of "good" and "bad." **Good** comes from a Greek word "kalos" which describes **that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit**. Bad comes from a Greek word "sapos" which describes that which is rotten, putrefying, corrupt, disgusting, perishing, rank, foul, putrid, worthless. It described things that are unusable or unfit

Q: What does the good tree represent? [The disciple of Christ]

Q: What does the bad tree represent [False teachers]

Q: What does the fruit represent? [One's character revealed by words/action]

Q V.44: Jesus makes a statement of the obvious. You can tell by someone's fruit if they are a follower of His or not. [X-REF Matt 7:15-16]

Q V.45: I love this word picture. In order for a good man to "bring good things out," what must he first do? [Store up *good* things in his heart.]

Q: Does storing up good things in your heart happen naturally? [Let people engage – take your thoughts captive when the thoughts are not good. And not only take them captive, but store in your heart something positive to replace it. This is part of “guard your heart for it’s the wellspring of life. We have to be intentional about this.]

Q: The rest of this verse talks about the evil man storing evil thoughts in his heart. Can he help that? [No. X-REF Matt 12:33-34]

**LOOK:**

Today’s passage reminds us that we cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves, nor can we be all that our Master is. In fact, the more we strive to be like Him, the more we realize how far short we fall. This is a warning against pride, for nothing blinds a person like pride.

**Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 194). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*Self* (vv. 39–42). The four striking figures in this section teach us some important lessons about ministry. To begin with, as His disciples, we must be sure that we see clearly enough to guide others in their spiritual walk. While there are blind people who have a keen sense of direction, it is not likely any of them will be hired as airplane pilots or wilderness guides. Jesus was referring primarily to the Pharisees who were leading the people astray (Matt. 15:14; 23:16). If we see ourselves as excellent guides, but do not realize our blindness, we will only lead people into the ditch (see Rom. 2:17–22).

Luke 6:40 reminds us that we cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves, nor can we be all that our Master is. In fact, the more we strive to be like Him, the more we realize how far short we fall. This is a warning against pride, for nothing blinds a person like pride.

Continuing the image of “the eye,” Jesus taught that we must be able to see clearly enough to help our brother see better. It certainly is not wrong to help a brother get a painful speck of dirt out of his eye, *provided we can see what we are doing*. The crowd must have laughed out loud when Jesus described an “eye doctor” with *a plank* in his eye, performing surgery on a patient with *a speck* in his eye!

The emphasis here is on being honest with ourselves and not becoming hypocrites. It is easy to try to help a brother with his faults *just so we can cover up our own sins!* People who are constantly criticizing others are usually guilty of something worse in their own lives.

The illustration of the tree reminds us that fruit is always true to character. An apple tree produces apples, not oranges; and a good person produces good fruit, not evil. Believers do sin, but the witness of their words and works is consistently good to the glory of God. In terms of ministry, servants of God who are faithful will reproduce themselves in people who are in turn true to the Lord (2 Tim. 2:2).

The last image, the treasury, teaches us that what comes out of the lips depends on what is inside the heart. The human heart is like a treasury, and what we speak reveals what is there. A man who apologized for swearing by saying, “It really wasn’t in me!” heard a friend say, “It had to be in you or it couldn’t have come out of you!”

We must be honest with ourselves and admit the blind spots in our lives, the obstacles that blur our vision, and the areas within that must be corrected. Then we can be used of the Lord to minister to others and not lead them astray.

**Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 221)**

6:40–45. Jesus also noted that a person becomes like the one whom he emulates (v. 40). Therefore His disciples should emulate Him. One must rid himself of a sin before he can help his **brother** with that sin (vv. 41–42). And often one’s own sin is greater than the one he **criticizes** in someone else—a plank compared with a **speck of sawdust**. The point is that one cannot help someone else become righteous if he is not righteous himself. To seek to do so is to be a **hypocrite**. Jesus also pointed out that a man’s words will eventually tell what kind of **man** he is (vv. 43–45). Just as people know the kind of **tree** by the **fruit** it **bears**, so people know from what a person says

whether he is righteous or not. In this case **fruit** stands for what is said, not what is done: **out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.**

**Stein, R. H. (1992). Luke (Vol. 24, pp. 213-216). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

**6:40 A student is not above his teacher.** We find parallels to this verse in Matt 10:24–25 and John 13:16. The major issue in interpreting this verse involves whether the two parts are to be understood as antithetical or synonymous. It appears that the former is more likely, so that we have a contrast between a “student” (literally a “disciple” as in Luke 6:20) and his teacher, who is Jesus.

**But everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.** Since the disciples are not greater than Jesus, they must therefore train themselves fully in order to be like Jesus. How is this “training” to be accomplished? Jesus was gracious, forgiving, and did good; so the disciples should be gracious, forgiving, and good.

**6:41–42** These verses (cf. also Matt 7:3–5; GT 26) are loosely linked with what has preceded in that if a blind man leads a blind man he is like a person having a beam in his eye while trying to correct another’s faults. This is also an example of hyperbolic language found quite often in Jesus’ teachings. It powerfully illustrates why one should not judge and condemn (Luke 6:37–38). The judgment of others always exposes the reality that the “judger” is imperfect. At times the one judging may be blatantly imperfect and unaware of this. One who is unable to see his or her own imperfections while seeing so vividly the imperfections of others is clearly a hypocrite. This parable may be aimed at Pharisaic Christians picking out specks in the eyes of Gentile Christians, but there is no way of demonstrating this.

## **The Lukan Message**

This passage continues Luke’s emphasis on the necessity of love for enemy. This Lukan emphasis stands in continuity with the teachings of Jesus and the other Evangelists, as the parallels in the other Gospels reveal (Matt 7:1–5; 10:24–25; Mark 4:24–25; John 13:16). Nevertheless, the importance of this teaching in Luke is most clearly seen in his greater parallelism (note again his love of “fours”) and his collecting of so much related material together in this one section (6:27–42).

## **Context**

Luke included two additional sets of teachings at this point involving being known by one’s fruit and the two foundations. They are connected with what has preceded in that the love of enemies (6:27–32) and the nonjudgmental attitude (6:37–42) prescribed by Jesus only stem from an inner character that can produce such good fruit (6:43–45). Only out of a good heart (6:45) can flow the good fruit described in 6:27–42. The Sermon on the Plain then ends with a concluding exhortation that stresses the need to build one’s life on a sure foundation (6:46–49), i.e., the unshakable foundation of Jesus’ teachings (6:47) in the sermon begun at 6:20.

Some have suggested that these sayings are meant to combat “false prophets” (cf. the parallels in Matt 7:16–18; 12:33–37). Luke, and probably Jesus as well, was more concerned, however, with the application of these truths by believers (Luke 6:20, 27).

## **Comments**

**6:43 No good tree bears bad fruit.** Although the terms *kalon* (“good”) here and *agathos* (“good”) in 6:45 are different, no major distinction should be made between them. (Cf. 8:15, where they are used together.) Most probably this is due to the former term fitting trees better and the latter fitting persons better. “Bad” is to be understood in the sense of “unfit” and thus uneatable rather than “rotten,” for the next verse describes good fruit as edible, not decaying. This proverb simply states that a tree is known by the fruit it produces. A bad tree produces hate and judgment of others, whereas a good tree produces a love even of enemies and a noncondemning attitude.

**6:44** Several other sayings use this imagery of bearing fruit. In Sir 27:6 we read, “The fruit discloses the cultivation of a tree; so, the expression of a thought discloses the cultivation of a man’s mind.”

**6:45 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.** This verse applies the analogies of the previous two verses to people and in particular to the human heart. The expression “heart” is commonly used by Luke to refer to the inner being of an individual out of which attitudes (Luke 2:35; 16:15) and values come (12:34). An evil heart produces critical and judgmental attitudes (5:22; 9:47), doubts (24:38), and wickedness (Acts 8:22); but a good heart produces good fruit (Luke 8:8; note especially 8:15, which is a Lukan addition to the parable). As a result one should guard his or her heart (21:34). What makes a heart “good” is not explicitly stated in this verse, but Luke no doubt intended his readers to interpret this verse in light of such passages as 3:7–9, which calls people to repent and bear good fruit, and especially 6:27–42, in which Jesus instructed the repentant, i.e., believers, about how to bear good fruit. In the next account Luke gave an example of a centurion who out of the good treasure of his heart loved Israel and built a synagogue for them in Capernaum (7:5).