

Jesus, the Master Teacher



SABBATH—MAY 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Luke 8:22–25; Luke 4:31–37; Luke 6:20–49; Luke 8:19–21; Luke 10:25–37; Deuteronomy 6:5.

MEMORY VERSE: “They were amazed [surprised] at his teaching, because his message had authority [power]” (Luke 4:32, NIV).

“WHEN CHRIST CAME TO THE EARTH, HUMANS SEEMED TO BE REACHING THE LOWEST LEVEL. The very foundations of society were falling down. Life had become false. . . . Men were disgusted with lies. They turned instead to lives of unfaithfulness and a love of worldly things. Forgetting their future with God, they lived for the present.

“They forgot to recognize God. They stopped treating humans honorably. Truth, honor, honesty, and mercy were leaving the earth. Greed and ambition gave birth to distrust. The ideas of duty and human rights were thrown out as a dream. The common people were treated as animals by those who wanted power and wanted to climb high in society. Easy living, wealth, and power were the goals of these people. They were unhealthy, mentally dull, and spiritually dead. This was the kind of world Jesus lived in.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, pages 74, 75.

This kind of world also helps us to understand better why Jesus taught the things that He did.

THE AUTHORITY (POWER) OF JESUS (Luke 8:22–25)

Luke was a physician (doctor) and scholar (thinker). So, he knew what authority meant. He knew the authority of the Roman law in government matters and work. As Paul's traveling friend, Luke knew the authority that Paul commanded with the churches he founded. So, Luke understood that authority is the basis of a person's position; for example, a teacher's relationship to his or her followers. Having been with all kinds of leaders at all levels of power, Luke shared with his readers that Jesus was unequalled in His authority. Jesus was born in a carpenter's home. He was brought up for 30 years in the little town of Nazareth. He was not well-known by the world's famous people. But Jesus faced everyone—Roman rulers, Jewish thinkers, rabbis, common people, worldly and religious leaders—with His teaching and ministry (work done for God). His fellow townspeople "were amazed at the gracious words they heard from his lips" (Luke 4:22, NIV). He once brought hope to a widow in Nain by raising her dead son to life (Luke 7:11–17). The entire town said, " 'God has come to help his people' " (verse 16, NIV). The authority of Jesus over life and death excited not just Nain but "Judea and all the surrounding region" (verses 16, 17, NKJV).

Read Luke 8:22–25; Luke 4:31–37; Luke 5:24–26; Luke 7:49; and Luke 12:8. What do these verses show about the kind of authority that Jesus used?

Luke took time to record not only for his friend Theophilus but also for generations to come. He explained that Jesus had shown how special His authority was. As God in the flesh, Jesus had authority as no one else ever did.

Lots of people do things in the name of God. This would give their actions a lot of authority. How can we be sure that when we say, "God led me to do this," He really did? Discuss answers in class on Sabbath.

CHRIST'S GREATEST SERMON (Luke 6:20–49)



The golden rule says to turn the other cheek.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–Matthew 7) is often praised in literature as “the most important message of Christianity.” Luke gives parts of the sermon in Luke 6:20–49 and elsewhere. Luke put the sermon right after the “official” choosing of the disciples (Luke 6:13). For this reason, some Bible thinkers believe it is the special instructions given by Jesus to the Twelve.

In Luke 6:20–49, the sermon begins with four blessings and four woes (troubles). It also outlines other important messages of the Christian way.

Study the following parts of Luke 6:20–49, and ask yourself how closely your life follows the principles (important rules) shown here.

1. *The Christian blessedness (Luke 6:20–22).* How can poverty (poorness), hunger, weeping, and being hated lead to being blessed?

2. *The Christian's reason for rejoicing in the midst of problems (Luke 6:22, 23).*

3. *Woes to guard against (Luke 6:24–26).* Review each of the four woes. Why should a Christian guard against them?

4. *The Christian command (Luke 6:27–31).* No command of Jesus is more debated and is considered more difficult to keep than the golden rule of love. The Christian rule is positive, not negative. It includes what to do, instead of what not to do. It does not say “Do not hate” your enemy. Instead, it says, “Love your enemy.” Instead of the rule of a “tooth for a tooth,” the golden rule requires the practice of pure goodness (“turn the other cheek also”). Mahatma Gandhi¹ developed out of the golden rule a new political philosophy (study of truth) of refusing evil through the power of good. Later he used this principle to win independence for India from British rule. In the same way, Martin Luther King Jr. used the principle of the golden rule to break the evil of separation between the blacks and the whites in the United States. Where love rules, blessedness rules the throne.

5. *The Christian way (Luke 6:37–42).* Note Christ's teaching on forgiveness, giving, clean living, and accepting other people as they are.

6. *Christian fruit-bearing (Luke 6:43–45).*

7. *The Christian builder (Luke 6:48, 49).*

DEFINITIONS

1. Mahatma Gandhi—a famous leader of India.

A NEW FAMILY (Luke 5:27–32)

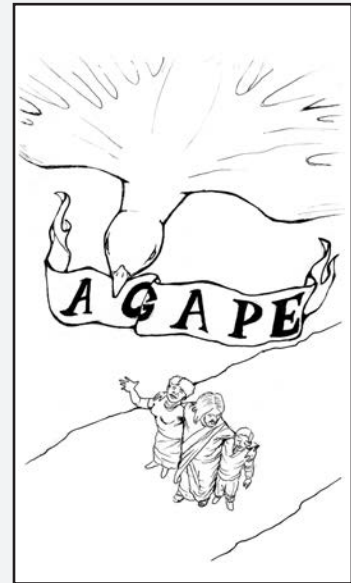
Great teachers before and since Jesus have taught about unity² and love. But Jesus broke down the separations that divide humans and brought in a new family. This family paid no attention to the usual things that divide people. Under the banner of *agape* love,³ Christ created His new family. This family shows the original and ideal principle started in the Genesis creation. This supports the idea that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27) and also equal in His sight.

Read Luke 8:19–21. Family ties are important, such as parents and children and brothers and sisters. But Jesus looked beyond flesh and blood and saw each of us in the “whole family in heaven and earth” (Ephesians 3:15, NKJV). The family of Christian disciples (followers) should be as close as the children of the same parents. To Jesus the true test of “family” is not blood relationships but doing the will of God.

What do Luke 5:27–32; Luke 7:1–10; Luke 14:15–24; and Luke 17:11–19 teach about the walls of separation that Christ tore down? (These walls so often divide humans and often with bad results too.)

The mission and the ministry of Jesus, His forgiving heart and loving grace,⁴ did not refuse anyone. Instead, they included all who would accept His call. His everlasting love brought Him in touch with all kinds of society.

What are ways that, as a church, we can better follow this important principle?



Under the banner of *agape* love Christ created a new family.



To Jesus, the true test of “family” is not blood relationships but doing the will of God.

DEFINITIONS

2. unity—being joined together as one.
3. *agape* love—love based on principle and without prejudicial feelings.
4. grace—God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely gives us to take away our sins.



The lawyer had on his wrist, but not in his heart, the answer to Jesus' question.

DEFINITIONS

5. parable—a very short story that teaches a spiritual lesson or a truth.
6. torah—the first five books of Moses.

LOVE EXPLAINED: THE PARABLE⁵ OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN: PART 1 (Luke 10:25–28)

Of the four Gospels, only Luke records the parables of the prodigal son and the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). The first one shows the wonderful love of the Father toward sinners. The second parable shows us the kind of love that we should have for other humans. We all should honor Jesus' description of a "neighbor." His command is that all humans are children of God and deserve to be loved and treated equally.

Read Luke 10:25–28 and think deeply about the two important questions in these verses. How is each question related to the Christian faith and life?

1. " 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit [receive] eternal life?' " (verse 25, NKJV).

Note that the lawyer looked for a way to inherit eternal life. To be saved from sin and to enter into God's kingdom is the most noble of all ambitions a person can have. But the lawyer, like so many, had grown up with the false idea that eternal life is something one can earn by good works. Clearly, the lawyer had no knowledge that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, NKJV).

2. " 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' " (Luke 10:26, NKJV).

During the time of Jesus, it was the custom of important Jews, such as this lawyer, to wear a phylactery on the wrist. A phylactery was a little leather bag holding some of the great parts of the torah.⁶ This includes the part that would answer Jesus' question. Jesus directed the lawyer to what was written in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 6:5) and Leviticus (Leviticus 19:18). It was the very thing that the lawyer might have been carrying in his phylactery. He had on his wrist, but not in his heart, the answer to Jesus' question. Jesus directed the lawyer to a great truth: eternal life. The truth is not a matter of keeping rules but calls for loving God fully and also God's creation, namely "the neighbor."

What clear proof shows that you have truly been saved by grace? For example, what is it about your life that shows you are justified (forgiven and made holy) by faith?

LOVE EXPLAINED: THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN: PART 2 (Luke 10:30–37)

But the lawyer wanted to praise himself as righteous (saved and holy). He asked, “ ‘And who is my neighbor?’ ” (Luke 10:29, NKJV).

An expert in the Jewish law, the lawyer must have known the answer to the question. Leviticus 19:18, which holds the second great commandment, describes “neighbors” as “children of your people” (NKJV). So, instead of giving a direct answer to the lawyer’s question or getting into an argument with him, Jesus lifts the lawyer and His listeners to a higher level.

Read Luke 10:30–37. What are the important points of this story? And what do they show about how we are to treat others?

Notice that Jesus said that “a certain man” (verse 30) fell among thieves. Why did Jesus not say the man’s race or position in society? With the whole purpose of the story in mind, why did it matter?

The priest and the Levite saw the wounded man but passed him by. They might have their reasons for not helping. But for us the questions are: What is true religion? And how should it be shown (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Micah 6:8; James 1:27)?

The relationship between Jews and Samaritans was full of hatred. And by the time of Jesus the hate between the two had become worse (Luke 9:51–54; John 4:9). So, by making a Samaritan the “hero” of the story, Jesus brought home His point, especially to the Jews, and made it even stronger than it might have been.

Jesus very carefully described the help that the Samaritan gave. The Samaritan took pity on the wounded man. He went to him, bandaged his wounds, poured oil and wine, carried him to an inn, paid in advance for his stay, and promised to take care of any balance (amount of bill that remained unpaid) on his way back. All of the Samaritan’s actions work together to show how great true love is. The fact that he did all these for a Jew shows that true love knows no limits.

The priest and the Levite asked themselves the question: *What would happen to us if we stopped and helped this man?* The Samaritan asked: *What would happen to this man if I did not help him?* What is the difference between the two?

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “In His life and lessons, Christ has given a perfect example of the unselfish ministry which has its beginning with God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world and by upholding all things, He is always working for others. ‘He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ Matthew 5:45. This ideal of ministry God has given to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of all people. By His example He might teach what it means to minister [help people]. Jesus’ whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. So, He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 649.

The parable of the good Samaritan is not an “imaginary scene, but a real event. The priest and the Levite who had passed by on the other side were in the company that listened to Christ’s words.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, page 499.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Go over the important question asked at the end of Sunday’s study. Who has not heard people say that they did whatever they did because God told them to? What are ways that God does talk to us? At the same time, what are the dangers involved in saying we are acting on God’s behalf in order to defend our actions?
- 2 Go back over the “four woes” in Luke 6:24–26. How are we to understand what Jesus is saying there? What is He really warning us to be careful of in this life?
- 3 Think about the whole question of authority (power). What is authority? What are different kinds of authority? What kinds of authority are more powerful than other kinds? How should we relate to different kinds of authority in our lives? What happens when the authorities over us do not agree?